

FIFTH GRADERS READING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
WORKSHOPS BASED ON AESOP'S FABLES

MICHAEL ALBERTO MÉNDEZ GRANADOS

UNIVERSIDAD LIBRE
FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA CON ÉNFASIS EN HUMANIDADES
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MICHAEL ALBERTO MÉNDEZ GRANADOS

WILDER NIETO
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

UNIVERSIDAD LIBRE
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I would like to express all my gratitude to my parents who gave me my wings to fly; also to my brothers and sisters because they are the ones who give me courage to fly and to Leandro and Andrés because they taught me how to extend those wings in order to fly.

Finally, I would like to thank that special person who inspires me every day to touch the sky.

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INTRODUCTION

As learning a foreign language includes the development of comprehension and production abilities, the EFL class should be focused on teaching the four communicative abilities: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These abilities allow the students to perform different tasks that help them increase their understanding of a foreign language. Along these abilities, the EFL teacher provides his students with different skills that help them improve their communicative competence. As reading is one of the comprehension abilities that must be taught in primary school, this study presents the design of a tool that intends to analyze the development of the skills that constitute the process of reading.

This study was focused on the development of fifth graders' reading skills through workshops based on Aesop's fables, and it presents the process of research that started with field observations in the public school Marco Tulio Fernandez located in Bogotá. The study was divided into different sections that give an account on the progress of the research. First, the statement of the problem found in the school is presented. This problem was evidenced with different research tools that served to collect data and to describe the environment of the field of study. In this section, the need of implementing strategies was demonstrated in order to analyze and describe the students' reading skills development because it was found that this important ability had not been given the attention it deserved. In addition, a diagnostic test proved the strengths, weaknesses and needs that learners had regarding reading. Afterwards, a justification along with the previous research studies, the research question and the objectives of this study are presented, and these sections constitute the first chapter of this paper.

In the second chapter, this paper presents the constructs composing the theoretical framework that supported the process of the study. They were given in terms of the most important elements contained in the title,

objectives and problem question; these concepts are: reading, reading skills, reading in the EFL classroom, fables and material design. The literature presented in this chapter gave the support for the implementation of the proposal and the methodology that was chosen.

The third chapter presents the methodology by which the research was guided. A definition of the research method and approach is given and supported as well as the definition of the different tools and techniques that were implemented.

The fourth chapter presents the proposal and the specifications of the different activities and strategies that were implemented in order to tackle the problem that was stated. Moreover, the proposal reflects how the literature of this paper served to be implemented in the design of five workshops based on fables that intended to achieve the different objectives of this study.

The fifth chapter presents the analysis of the data that was collected by means of different tools used along the process of research. In this chapter an analysis of the process of reading skills development and the results that were obtained with the proposal are showed. Later, a comparison in terms of both elements –process and results- is made in order to summarize the whole analysis.

Finally, two chapters are dedicated to the conclusions and pedagogical implications that were written after the research process was concluded; conclusions were given in terms of the objectives of this paper and the results of the analysis. Meanwhile, the pedagogical implications were given in order to be taken into account in the case of further studies.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

This study was developed in the public elementary school Marco Tulio Fernández Section C. in Bogotá. This school offers the basic curriculum of study that is mandatory according to the government educational policies; its students count on teachers who help them in the development of their learning process. However, due to a lack of English teachers, the foreign language has been taught by student-teachers from Universidad Libre for many years. The initial research tasks of this study focused on the observation of a group of students attending fifth grade where some situations regarding English learning were evidenced.

During English classes, these students were very interested and eager to learn all the topics they were presented with; the activities interested them and they were always with the best attitude towards the foreign language learning.

Nonetheless, their education in English as a foreign language was neither based on a curriculum nor in any teaching program. The only English teachers they have had were student-teachers from Universidad Libre who complete their practicum and research activities at the school. As these teachers only remain there for a period of time, it has caused an unorganized teaching that is resulting in an unbalanced program that does not cover the development of the communicative abilities in English as a foreign language altogether.

During field observation, it was determined that, in spite of the fact that student-teachers from Universidad Libre have tried to solve the problem regarding the development of the abilities in EFL, reading had not been focused on and the skills that, according to the Basic Standards of competences in Foreign

Language by Ministerio de Educación Nacional¹, students should have, had not been developed constantly.

This information was gathered by means of two surveys (see appendix A and B). One of them was applied to students and the other one was applied to some teachers who work at the school.

The survey that was applied to twelve fifth graders aimed at getting to know how the process of English learning has been developed throughout latter years. It showed that although they have had the opportunity to learn English from some student-teachers, some of the interviewees found that their communicative abilities development was not balanced; some students found listening and speaking abilities easy, but very few of them perceived reading as an easy task. Even though most of them had been taught this ability, they still did not find it easy to perform. (See appendix C)

Also, during field work, a diagnosis test on reading –that was designed according to the statements of the Standards of Competences by the MEN- (see appendix D) was applied to the fifth graders in order to establish the level of their reading ability. The results of the test showed that a few students were able to understand a written text in order to perform a task; however, some of the reading skills that they already had should be kept in constant development. On the other hand, more than half of the classroom found difficult to complete some of the reading skills' tasks proposed in the test, because they lacked some practice that would help them improve their reading performance.

The information resulting from the surveys and the diagnosis test is given by means of strengths, weaknesses and needs that students have:

¹ COLOMBIA. Ministerio de Educación Nacional. *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en lengua extranjera: Inglés*, 2006.

Strengths:

- Association of known written words to drawings and pictures
- Identification of cultural elements in a written text
- Identification of elements in a short text

Weaknesses:

- Lack of some basic vocabulary such as animals (wild and domestic), habitats, basic verbs and personal pronouns.
- Lack of inference skills by means of relation between context and words known to them such as characters and places in a short text.
- Lack of skills that help them to identify the main idea of a text.

Needs:

- More class sessions dedicated to the development of reading ability.
- Development of skills that would improve their reading ability.
- A larger range of basic vocabulary related to animals, habitats and basic verbs.
- Strategies to be able to relate known elements to them to a context in order to identify the main idea of a short text.

Once these weaknesses and needs were identified, it could be seen that class sessions had to be focused on reading skills development so that students achieved the level of communicative competence of English language that is expected in fifth grade according to the Basic Standards of Competences.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

How do a group of fifth graders develop their reading skills?

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General objective

To analyze and describe how a group of fifth graders develop their reading skills by means of implementing workshops based on Aesop's fables

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To determine the strengths, weaknesses and needs regarding the reading process of the population under study.
- To acknowledge the theory and constructs regarding reading skills in order to implement them in the design of a workshop book based on fables.
- To analyze and describe the process of reading skills development of six students who worked on the activities that were proposed.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

The linguistic competence of a foreign language is based on two main skills (comprehension and production) which learners develop in their learning process. Within these two skills are four abilities: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. As seen in the problem description, the students' previous learning experiences have left them with a low level of reading ability. As reading is so

important to achieve a good linguistic competence in the foreign language, it was necessary to implement an EFL reading teaching strategy in order to make the students familiar with the process.

Moreover, a student who learns how to communicate in a foreign language just by means of listening and speaking will present a clear disadvantage when performing the abilities of his linguistic competence in other communicative contexts. It is known that language does not represent just written and spoken words, but it also represents the understanding of the context which encloses any kind of message. Since reading develops comprehensive skills, the learner who develops the ability, will be able to identify written words as well as to acknowledge meanings. However, if someone who is learning a foreign language is not taught on how to infer and comprehend the depth of any message from the beginning, later, the thinking process given in that language will not be developed as expected.

In addition, in the further stages of their process, students will face complicated tasks which require reading ability to achieve the main goals of what is assigned to them. The clearest example of this is the test that every student in Colombia has to take in order to get a high school degree: the ICFES exam. It contains a section in which English is assessed just by means of reading comprehension and written instruction following; a student who is not taught on how to read and acknowledge the meaning of written information from the beginning will face many problems in achieving his personal goals.

Thus, the importance of this research was reflected on the strategies which are lacking at Marco Tulio Fernandez School regarding the teaching of reading processes.

1.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH STUDIES

Related to the constructs and the problem of this research, some previous studies were found. Two international research projects on reading, an international article, a research developed in Colombia, and a project on reading and writing developed at Universidad Libre were the supporting references that are relevant to the development of this research study.

Undergraduate Research Project.
Universidad de Cuenca. 2011. Ecuador
Title: Strategies for integrating literature into teaching English as a foreign language for beginners. Application through Aesop's fables.
Researcher: María Esther Mendoza E.
Based on Stephen Krashen's second language Acquisition theory, María Esther Mendoza, an Ecuadorian English teacher developed a research project in which the main elements of application were Aesop's fables. She applied three lesson plans in which she established several activities that can be used as strategies to improve EFL students' linguistic and communicative competences. The strategies she used, lead not just to a reading comprehension skill development, but also to the improvement of several reading process aspects. The methodology the researcher used to achieve her objectives was a very similar methodology to the one of this research.

Master's paper.
Wisconsin-River Falls University. 2010. United States
Title: Extensive Reading conjoined with writing activities as an effective component of English as a second/foreign language programs.
Researcher: Jeong-eun Han
This study was supported by definitions of reading process and reading in second language. Also there were specified acknowledgements of the whole reading process such as word recognition, vocabulary knowledge, decoding and comprehension. The author stated as a conclusion that reading has a vital importance in the process of acquiring a second language. All these definitions, acknowledgements and conclusions served as a starting point for this study in order to research on the theory that has been stated regarding all these concepts.

Journal Article
JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Vol. 15 No. 2 Department of Education The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. 2012. Pakistan
Title: Use of short stories as a tool of teaching reading in English as a foreign language
Researcher: Aziz Ahmad
This article summarizes a research that was developed on teaching reading in English as a foreign language by means of using literature. The author established the relationship between English teaching and literature; he stated how the latter is a practical element that supports the former. He also highlighted the use of authentic material in the EFL classroom in order to develop reading skills. Moreover he provided the reader with criteria that serves

to know how to choose authentic material from literature to teaching reading in EFL. These criteria were taken into account in order to choose the authentic material (Aesop's fables) that was the main element of the proposal of this study.

Undergraduate research Project
Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana. November 2012. Bogotá, Colombia.
Title: Extensive Reading: An approach to foster student's reading in English
Researcher: Adriana Catalina Chacón Mina
A short definition of reading as a process was given in this paper. The researcher focused on this definition from a semantic point of view, and on reading's definition as an interaction between author and reader. These two concepts were the basis of the definition on reading given in the present research. Moreover, the methodology of research was an action research with qualitative approach and data collection techniques that this paper intended also to use.

Undergraduate research Project
Universidad Libre de Colombia. 2011. Bogotá, Colombia.
Title: Fortalecimiento de las competencias de lectura y la escritura en los estudiantes del colegio Antonio Nariño I.E.D. de los ciclos II, III, IV, V y VI: Eres lo que lees proyecto institucional.
Researchers: Ingrid Concepción Blandon Bolaños Sergio Alejandro Castillo Rodríguez Rubiela Cifuentes Benítez

Víctor Alfonso Escobar Osorio
Nelson Martínez González
Marisol Rodríguez Rodríguez
Sandra Viviana Rojas Castelli
Martha Liliana Vásquez Piñeros

The institutional project “Eres lo que lees” developed by eight researchers from Universidad Libre looked for establishing a strategy in the development of reading and writing skills. In a public school of Bogotá, they found a similar problem to the one this study has settled: in this public school there was a need of developing reading comprehension in L1 by means of developing reading skills. The researchers gave elements such as reading definition from a mother tongue perspective which serves to establish a general definition of the concept.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following section some information regarding the main topics of this research study is provided. Reading and reading skills development in the EFL classroom were the main constructs which enclosed the problem to solve, and among other concepts that this study paper presents we can find: reading process stages, fables, reading in the EFL classroom and material design.

2.1 READING

As the development of reading skills was the main objective of this research project, the process of reading in English as a foreign language has to be taken into account in order to find the proper strategy to be implemented in the EFL classroom. Reading has been given many definitions by scholars such as Krashen, Nuttall, Goodman and even the Argentinian psychologist, writer and pedagogue Emilia Ferreiro. Yet if their statements diverge at some specific points, in general terms they converge to form a powerful definition that is important to the EFL teacher.

As stated by Goodman, in Carrel's *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, reading is "a receptive psycholinguistic process wherein the actor uses strategies to create meaning from text."² In fact, when reading occurs the reader is able to decode meaning from a written code that means he is constructing knowledge from the text and from the previous concepts he may have. Therefore, Goodman has a semantic perspective from which he defines reading. Moreover, he talks about this ability as a process to comprehend and whose main objective is comprehension.³ It means that the product of the

² GOODMAN, Kenneth S. in CARRELL et al. *Interactive Approaches to L2 Reading* Cambridge, CUP 1988. p. 12.

³ GOODMAN, Kenneth S. *La lectura, la escritura y los textos escritos: una perspectiva transaccional sociopsicolinguista*. Argentina, 1996

process of reading is comprehension of what has been read and that “to comprehend” is the process of reading itself.

However, if we stick to Goodman’s words and say that comprehension is the main objective of reading, we would leave behind what Nuttall called *the purpose*. When we read we go beyond the meaning by establishing a purpose to do so. We always pursue an objective or a purpose and, depending on what we are reading, that purpose may change.

Along with Goodman’s definition, there is similar definition of reading that supports what has been said about meaning: “reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text”⁴ Moreover it is stated that the purpose that each individual has “determines *how* people read a text”. Therefore, it means that the way people choose to pursue in order to give a purpose to the meaning they get from a text will lead them to develop one or several reading skills.

Before going on with reading skills, it is important, however, to have a different perspective of what reading is. Authors such as Smith, give another view of reading. Without going yet to the final stages of the process, he talks about it as a cognitive process in which language and thinking are involved and, in order to understand this complex process, it is necessary to analyze it, first, from a linguistic point of view before going to the result of the process (meaning comprehension)⁵

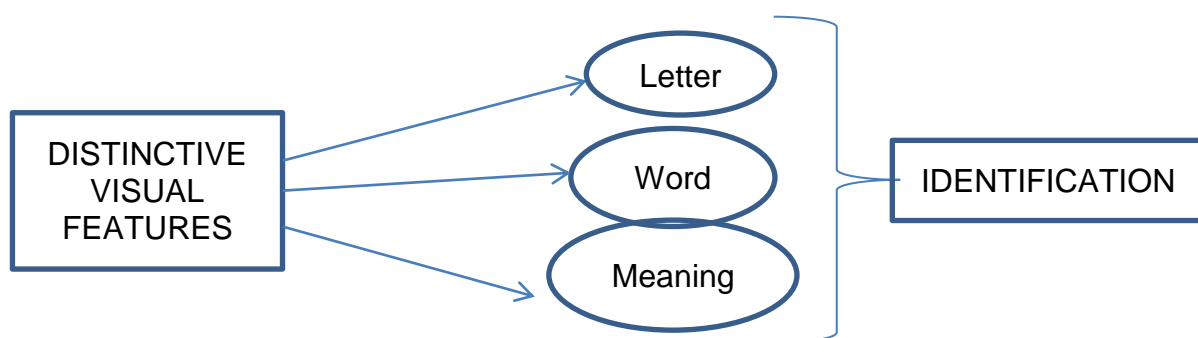
Nevertheless, when the process of reading takes place, the linguistic purposes that it may have occur subconsciously. Nuttall, states that we do not read with language purposes such as improving our pronunciation or checking grammar

⁴ AEBERSOLD, Jo and FIELD, Mary. *From reader to reading teacher. Issues and strategies for second language classrooms* Cambridge University Press, 1997

⁵ SMITH, Frank. *Understanding Reading. A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read.* Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1971

structure; *reading for meaning* is one of the main reasons we have when we go over a text. “you read because you want to get something from the writing. We will call this the **message**.”⁶

In this sense Nuttall and Goodman agree on the importance of the purpose readers must regard when facing a new text. However, they both, as well as Smith, give an importance to words, but each one in a different way. Smith says that there is an order in which the process of reading occurs: first, the reader goes over the identification of letters, then the words to finally get to the meaning. In his book, he explains it with a simple graphic:



⁷ Taken from Frank Smith’s book *Understanding Reading*

On the other hand, Goodman wrote that words should be presented to children “always as units of larger, meaningful units.”⁸

Therefore, the most consistent definition of reading is the one given in terms of semantics. Reading to comprehend, reading to get a meaning or reading with a purpose converge as the definition of reading that this study will take into account. A final definition, given by Ferreiro, will conclude what this study

⁶ NUTTALL, Christine. *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language*. Macmillan Books for Teachers, 1996. p. 4

⁷ SMITH, Op. cit. 157

⁸ GOODMAN, Kenneth S and FLEMING, James T. *Psycholinguistics and the teaching of reading* Selected papers from the IRA pre-convention held in Boston, April 1968 p.32

attempts to state: reading is seen as a process of giving meaning to a text. In Ferreiro's words: "*La lectura es toda aquella actividad de asignación de un significado a un texto que precede a lo convencional*"⁹

2.2 READING PROCESS

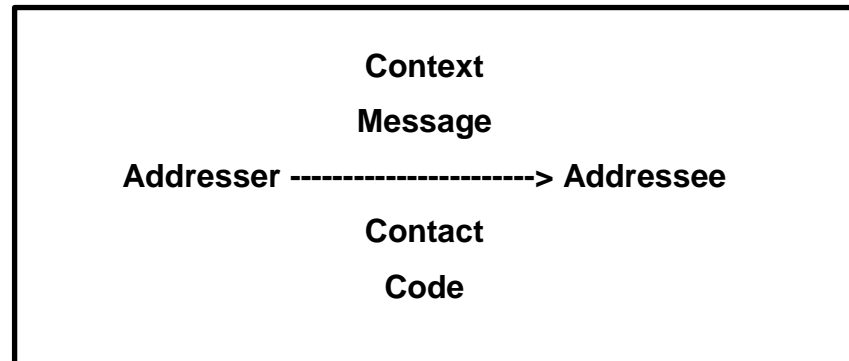
Reading is a mental activity that involves many processes inside the human brain. It is individual, which means that each person has his own process of reading and each one does this activity in a different way. However, when we read, we all have several thinking processes happening inside our minds and, although each individual develops all these mental activities in a different way, we all use them in order to read.

Thus, authors such as Smith have called reading a cognitive process, in which the act of reading is studied at the thinking level. However, this process has been studied at many other levels. The semantic level of the process of reading is mainly taken into account for the purposes of this study. Nonetheless, other perspectives of reading that are also important will be presented as follows.

2.2.1 Reading as a communicative process. Communication is a human activity which requires a process in which language is involved. So that communication can happen, it is necessary to have certain elements participating in the process. Jakobson states that every communication process (oral or written) has to have some components that constitute it. These elements are the actors of the communication and their means. To explain the communication act, Jakobson established a model that would define and summarize how communication takes place. He established two main actors (addresser and addressee), and several elements that must be present. The message which is what the addresser wants to communicate, the contact which

⁹ FERREIRO, Emilia. Alfabetización Teoría y práctica. Siglo veintiuno editores, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 6ª edición. 2004

is the physical channel that transports the message, the code which is the common way of sharing information that the two actors have, and the context.

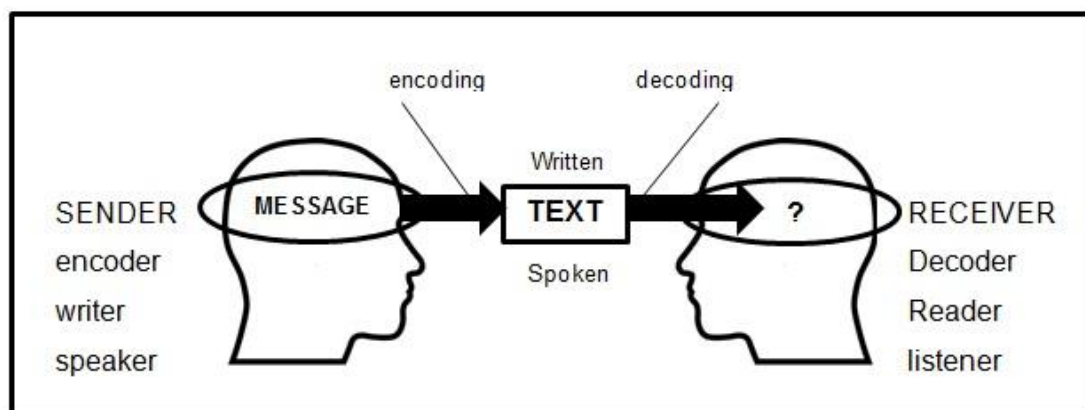


Roman Jakobson's communication model, Taken from Dr. Richard Clarke's notes.¹⁰

Although this model was the basis of this theory, it has evolved throughout time and many similar models have been proposed. All of these models have the same structure, but they may change the names of its elements or, in some cases, add more elements. This is due to the fact that communication can happen in many different ways and under several circumstances. One of these evolutions of the model has been applied to reading as a communication process. As the written form is one of the ways we have to communicate, the act of reading (and writing) has been assigned several communication models that are based on Jakobson's model. Nuttall took the base of this model and showed a similar one in which the written code is present and constitute the elements of the reading process.

¹⁰ CLARKE, Richard. Roman Jakobson "Linguistics and poetics", [Online]. Saved on April 18th 2014. Available on <http://www.rlwclarke.net/courses/LITS3304/2004-2005/05AJakobsonLinguisticsAndPoetics.pdf>

The communication process. Taken from Nuttall's Teaching reading skills in a foreign language¹¹



In this model, the actors receive different names. We will focus on the names of writer and reader as the participants of the communication process that is given by means of a written text. The role of each actor goes beyond sending and receiving a message, because in order to do that it is necessary that they encode and decode the message respectively. Thus, reading is understood as another communication process in which there is an interaction between the writer of the text and the reader.

2.2.2 Reading as an interaction. This interaction is given by means of a common knowledge that writer and reader should have. Although not every human being has the same knowledge that others may have; not in terms of experiences, nor in terms of cognition, the message that is decoded by the reader could be understood in many different ways from the one the writer meant it to be understood. Therefore, there are certain patterns of knowledge that they both share in order to communicate. In other words, in order to read and successfully understand a text we must share, at least at some degree, the following knowledge with the author of the text.

¹¹ NUTTALI, Op. cit., p. 4

- A code
- Assumptions
- Purpose and manner (Writing/Reading)
- Schema

The knowledge that a reader should share with the writer is given in terms of these patterns. The code constitutes the main problem that a foreign language reader faces when trying to get the meaning of a text. Not sharing the same language with the writer makes interaction harder and, thus, the reading process can be affected in a negative way. Then, the second problem that, even a native reader can experience is the one related to existing assumptions in a text. In a reading there can be hidden messages that the author does not consider worth mentioning; he may think that certain information is known by everyone –or at least by his target audience- or that it is a matter of common sense. However it may happen that whatever is common for a group of people, for some others it is not. Another shared element is the purpose and manner of reading. Aebersold and Field state that “when people read, they read for a purpose”¹² and that defines the way they read. However, if the purpose that a reader has when reading is similar to that of the writer, it depends on the reader himself. Finally, the last element that must be shared is the schema that constitutes the mental structure of both writer and reader.

2.2.3 The theory of schema. The way the human mind connects all the information that is stored in the brain in order to make it functional is what compose the schema (plural schemata). Nuttall defined the schema as the mental structure every human being had. All the experiences and knowledge a person has is a part of this structure that defines the view of the world that he may have. It also affects his knowledge about facts, and shapes his beliefs and cultural values. This has also been defined as background knowledge and has

¹² AEBERSOLD and FIELD Op. cit., p.14

been assigned a role in language comprehension and thus in the reading process.¹³

The role of schema is vital in the reading process and in the interaction that occurs between reader and writer through a text. All the information that a reader has constitutes the background knowledge that will serve as a starting point to comprehend a text. When reading, the new information that is received should match a previous concept that was already stored in the brain, and thus the interaction between the actors of this communicative process takes place; the reader comprehends what is being read and is able to associate new information to his personal experiences and to his own beliefs and ways of thinking. Then, after the new information has been added to his previous knowledge, it will become a part of his mental structure and will have the same function; in the future, it will be used in order to identify information and extract meaning from a text.

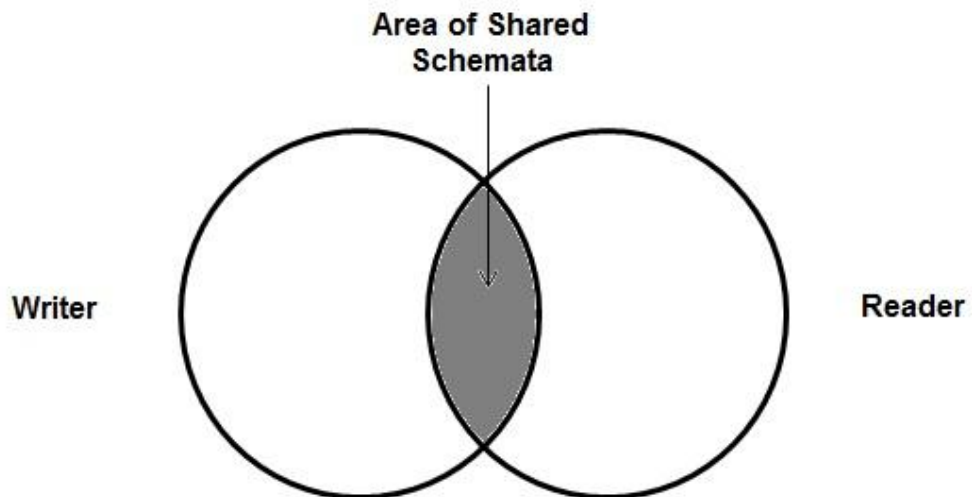
Thus, the way the reader decodes a text will always be influenced by his mental structure, background knowledge or schema. Alderson gave a perspective on the role of the schema in the reading process and said that “schemata are seen as interlocking mental structures representing reader’s knowledge. When readers process text, they integrate the new information from the text into their pre-existing schemata. More than that, their schemata influence how they recognize information as well as how they store it.”¹⁴ In that way, schema must be shared by both writer and reader in order to establish an interaction.

However, not every person has the same experiences, view of the world, nor beliefs, consequently the mental structure of each individual is unique and cannot be repeated. Nevertheless, the mental structures of individuals share common zones of knowledge that are given by the context and this is what

¹³ CARRELL, Patricia and EISTERHOLD Joan. Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. TESOL QUARTERLY, Vol. 17, No.4, December 1983 p. 556

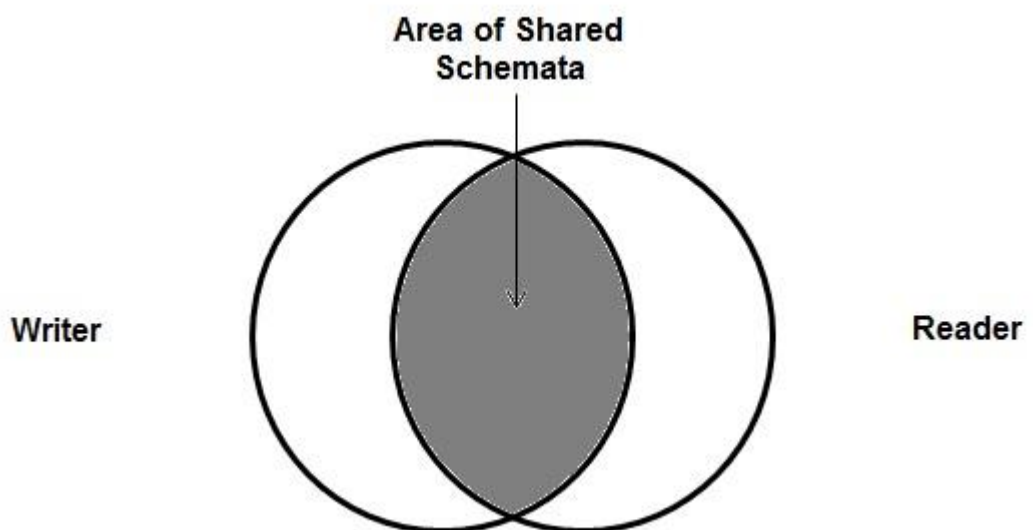
¹⁴ ALDERSON, J. *Variables that affect the nature of reading* In: Assessing Reading.. Cambridge University Press, 2000. p 33

makes communication possible. Nuttall stated that although no schema is alike, we all share –at least at some degree- the same knowledge and that it is given by the view of factual events and common sense. Thus, she says that people share a zone where their schemata are alike.



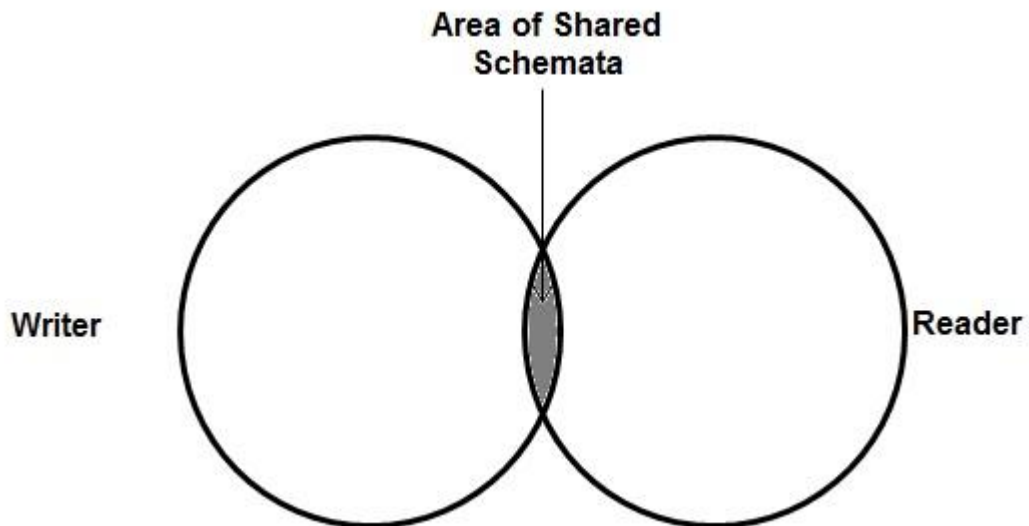
Presupposition and communication. Taken from Nuttall's Teaching reading skills in a foreign language¹⁵

This zone of shared background knowledge may vary depending on how much a context is shared between the writer and the reader. The zone may be larger,



¹⁵ NUTTALL, Op. cit., p. 4

which would make the process of reading easier, or smaller, which would make it harder.



But the schemata will never be the same in two individuals, because they have not shared the same experiences, knowledge, view of the world, and beliefs. Going beyond these definitions of schema, two other kinds have been identified in terms of reading; the formal schema and the linguistic schema. The formal schema has been defined as the information a reader has about discourse-level items such as the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. The linguistic schema meanwhile, contains the information the reader has about linguistic elements such as vocabulary and grammatical categories and how they fit together in a written text.¹⁶ The way the reader uses this information contained in his schemata –if there is any- establishes the strategies that he will use when tackling the text.

2.2.4 Top-down and Bottom-up processing. These two processes are strictly related to the schema theory. The information contained in the mental structure of a reader will dictate him which of these processes will be more

¹⁶ AEBERSOLD and FIELD Op. cit., p.17

helpful for him to use. In order to get meaning from the text a reader may tackle it at the macro level or at a micro level.

An overall view of the text at the macro level is the top-down approach. By using this approach the reader may establish an overall purpose for reading the text according to the identification of the rhetorical structure of it or even guided by the title of the text. Prediction plays an important role in this processing, for limiting the area of knowledge that will be used in order to read would help the reader to get a clearer meaning of the text. Thus, the importance of schema when reading is noted by the conscious reader. Alderson, referring to the top-down processing, says that based on the schema theory it “accounts for the acquisition of knowledge and the interpretation of text”¹⁷

On the other hand, the bottom-up processing uses the linguistic content of schemata that a reader may have. It occurs at the micro level, because it implies sub-processes such as word and syntax analysis. As defined by Carrell “bottom-up processing is evoked by the incoming data; the features of the data enter the system through the best fitting, bottom-level schemata. Schemata are hierarchically organized, from most general at the top to most specific at the bottom.”¹⁸ This means that at this level, the incoming information will look for matching previous information in terms of structure at the micro level of reading. The bottom-up processing, moreover, complements the top down processing in several ways. Before reading, the reader predicts the information containing in the text he is about to read. When reading he will corroborate that information as true or false. If the top-down processing does not satisfy the expectations of the reader, he will enter to analyze the text at the micro level in order to fill the gaps that prediction or other processes left.

Both processes top-down and bottom-up may occur subconsciously at the different stages of the reading process. Pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages are natural to every reader and the processing of the text is

¹⁷ ALDERSON Op. cit., p 17

¹⁸ CARRELL and EISTERHOLD Op. cit., p. 557

presented in each one of them. They can complement each other and they will always make use of the schemata of readers, which at the same time will set the way of reading and the strategies that can be adopted in order to tackle the text.

2.3 READING SKILLS

Reading skills may be used each one in a different way according to the purpose the reader has. They have been defined as the mental activities that occur inside the reader's brain when looking at the text. "Both teachers and researchers have attempted to identify the mental activities that readers use in order to construct meaning from a text. These activities are generally referred to as reading strategies, although they are sometimes called Reading Skills"¹⁹ This research project looks for a way of developing the reading skills that the students find meaningful in their process of comprehending the meaning of fables. Five reading skills that serve to this purpose will be presented as follows.

2.3.1 Scanning and Skimming. Speed reading is one of the most used techniques when tackling a text. Depending on the purpose that a reader has when reading a text he may use scanning and skimming reading skills in order to get what he wants from a text. The use of scanning and skimming in pre-reading stage will help the student to interact with the text in order to know what he is going to read before going to the content itself.

Both scanning and skimming are similar techniques of rapid movement of the eye through the text. "These techniques are similar in process but different in purpose"²⁰ *Scanning* is used by readers whose purpose is to look for specific words or content in a text. The ability to scan a text implies ignoring most of the

¹⁹ AEBERSOLD and FIELD Op. cit., p.16

²⁰ READING AND STUDYING SKILLS LAB. *Scanning and Skimming*. Anne Arundel Community College. [Online]. Saved on October 6th 2013. Available on <http://www.aacc.edu/tutoring/file/skimming.pdf>

content of it when looking for a specific word or sentence that will serve as a clue word that leads to an understanding point of the whole text. In a way, prediction and inference are very useful when scanning for a specific piece of information. In Barnett word's "scanning involves reading a text or part of a text rapidly in order to find specific pieces of information"²¹ From the title the reader may predict what the content of the text is about and thus he will look for information related to his predictions.

Skimming, on the other hand, is used by readers who want to get the essence of the text. Readers who skim through a text are looking for the main idea of it or for the most important part in the content of the reading. Pre-reading skimming is one of the most used techniques of speed reading. It is also useful when used with activities of prediction. Barrett states that scanning and skimming in the pre-reading stage are very useful to help the students interact with the content of the reading. Regarding skimming he says that it "involves reading as quickly as possible to get gist of a text or a part of a text"²². Thus scanning and skimming techniques are complementary techniques that can be used in the pre-reading stage along with other pre-reading activities.

2.3.2 Words attack skill. When reading in a foreign language, students will always find a problem with words and vocabulary in general. It may be related to the amount of words that a reader should know in a specific language to be able to begin the reading process; this is very usual to find in the foreign language classroom, because "it has been suggested that moderate L1 readers can recognize about fifty thousand words; yet foreign language syllabuses present only a few hundred words a year"²³

The words attack skill is a strategy "for dealing with the lexical items that really block comprehension"²⁴ and the best way of developing such strategy is by

²¹ BARNETT, M. More than meets the eye: Foreign language reading theory and practice. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, CAL and prentice-hall, 1989 p. 135

²² Ibid., p. 134

²³ NUTTALL Op. cit., p. 62

²⁴ Ibid., p. 63

following a series of steps where freeing the students from the dictionary is the first and most important one. In order to help students face the lexical problem they must be able to know when and how to use some strategies or when just to skip words. There are three concepts related to the importance of words in a text *Active, Receptive and throwaway vocabulary*. The active vocabulary is composed by those words that a reader has a complete acknowledgment of, and uses without hesitating when reading. Receptive vocabulary, are those words that the reader understands and responds to, but that he does not use confidently. On the other hand, the throwaway vocabulary, refer to those words presented on a text, and that are not worth learning, not even in the receptive level. There is some vocabulary that may be not important to the context of a reading and, therefore, it can be skipped without affecting the path that leads to the getting of the meaning.

In order to understand how a student can get to know what words are difficult, what words are important and what words he can just “throw away”, there are certain activities that can be developed throughout the three stages of the reading process: before reading, while reading, after reading. For example, before any reading process is performed, it is important that the reader has these questions in mind:

- Before Reading: Why am I going to read this? What do I want to get from it?
- While Reading: Do I need to stop and look up the meaning of this word, or can I get the gist out of it?
- After Reading: Have I got what I wanted? If not, where in the text it is hidden? Can I get at it by looking up any words? If so, which? ²⁵

In order to implement these activities there are two ways of attacking words that might be useful in the elementary classroom. These two ways, explained by

²⁵ Ibid., p. 64

Nuttall, serve also to identify the role of a word in a text in order to assign a meaning to it. The first one is the *grammatical function* which deals with the role that a word plays in a sentence, a paragraph or a text. It serves to verify the grammatical category of the word that is not understood. This way of identifying a word, is indeed, very useful for learners who are aware of what a grammatical category is and how the role of them affects the context of a text. However, as elementary students can barely recognize some of these categories, it is not advisable to go deep in the development of this.

The second one is called the *morphology of the word*. With this strategy the reader may be able to know what the role of the unknown word is by analyzing its structure. The easiest example is the analysis of verb tenses and how this modifies the word and gives a light for the reader to recognize it. In this same way a reader may be able to learn how to recognize adverbs, adjectives, nouns, etc. As it happens in the first case, the elementary school students are not able to recognize this in English yet, consequently this clue is not to be developed thoroughly with them either. However, this clue could serve to provide students with strategies to recognize words that morphologically resemble words that they know from their mother tongue and that may have a similar meaning in English. These words are called cognates.²⁶ Nonetheless, this strategy is still difficult to apply because the reader may misunderstand some words whose structure resembles that of the word in his mother tongue but that whose meaning is totally different.

Another word attack skill is the *inference from context* stated by Nuttall. It deals with the fact that if the context of a text is identified by the reader it will be a lot easier to infer the meaning of a word. Even if there are words that are not understood, they can be somehow related to the known words and the context they create, and thus the meaning of the word may be *guessed*. This is indeed

²⁶ STRATEGY GUIDE *Using the cognates strategy with Walk in the woods from Seeds of science/roots of reading*. [Online] Saved on April 18th 2014 Available on http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/sites/scienceandliteracy.org/files/strategyguides/1268813_SG_Walk%20in%20the%20woods.pdf

a very useful way of profiting the context in order to face unknown words. The word recognition skill –which can be related to these word attack skills-, is strictly related to the schema theory. The background knowledge that students use when trying to infer from context can affect the inference of the meaning of an unknown word. This guessing or prediction can give to the reader the clear meaning that the unknown word is hiding, and the role that schemata plays help him to support the inference of an unknown word starting from a known and familiar context that will give him confidence.

For a reader it is easy to understand a single sentence, a paragraph or even a whole text although there are words he does not know. From the context the reader can identify the main idea of the text and can learn how to get the meaning out of it. The success of reading establishes how much the student has acknowledged from a text and not how many words he does know. In fact, the importance of context is evidenced in the case when a reader knows all of the words of a text, but still has trouble in getting the real meaning out of it because he does not know the context enclosing it or because his background knowledge does not match the information contained in the text.

To illustrate the inference from context an activity that was proposed by Nuttal²⁷ will be presented. There will be a number of sentences with a recurring unknown word. However, this word will be contextualized so that the student can get the meaning out of it.

²⁷ NUTTALL Op. cit., p 72

Activity 5.3 Accumulating meaning: ***Tock***

Cover the numbered sentences below with a piece of paper. Now read them one at a time. After you have read the first one, make a note of what information you have about the meaning of the word *tock*. Then go on to find out how much more you know after reading sentence 2, and so on.

1. She poured the water into a tock.
2. Then, lifting the tock, she drank.
3. Unfortunately, as she was setting it down again, the tock slipped from her hand and broke.
4. Only the handle remained in one piece.

This means that all the words mentioned in the sentence that create the context must be known to the reader and that their meanings altogether lead to the inference of a single unknown word. That is why this word attack skill is very useful to avoid the use of the dictionary and the despair that unknown words bring along to a reader. Besides, it is the most important one for the purposes that this research pursued, because it is the best way to face the lexical problem in the FL by profiting the knowledge that the students have been provided with. This shows that making the student's knowledge a starting point is the first step to, confidence, thus to inference and finally to get to the final objective of reading: comprehension.

2.3.3 Text attack skills. Based on many theories on reading as a process and discourse analysis, Nuttall proposed several reading skills that she called Text Attack Skills. She established eight different kinds of skills and divided them in

two groups of four. The first four skills are focused on a bottom-up tackling strategy that deals with the micro level of a text. These skills are not used in this study therefore they are not explained here. On the other hand, the second group deals with skills that are focused on from a top-down tackling strategy that deals with the macro-level of a text. Those strategies are the following.

2.3.3.1 Text Attack Skill 5: Recognizing Text Organization. Every text has a structure that organizes it and gives it a sense. This structure will help to classify the kind of text that we are reading and, in that sense, will give coherence to the paragraphs and the ideas that are written. This has an important effect when we read because a reader will always look for understanding a connected thread of ideas that lead him to a logical meaning. However, most readers are not aware of text organization and how it would help them understand better what they read.

When a reader faces a text written in second language, the obstacles that get between him and comprehension are many. Starting with vocabulary the reader will always tend to tackle the text sentence by sentence thus, in most cases, getting the meaning of each one of them, but not finding the relation between them. This, Nuttall says, is the most common difficulty readers find when reading a whole text. They see all the reading as a puzzle and they do not know how to fit all the pieces (ideas) together. However, when a student starts by recognizing what kind of text he is reading, what the most common organization for that specific kind of text is, what the structure pattern is, it will be easier for him to find coherence among the ideas that he understands. Nuttall says that if someone “can identify the principle by which the text is organized and see how the ideas hang together, it is easier to interpret difficult sentences”²⁸

The way a text is organized came from the theory of the rhetorical structure proposed by Mann and Thompson in the late 80's. They gave a definition of what the organization of a text is in terms of rhetoric. This means that what they

²⁸ NUTTALL Op. cit., P. 106

established was the principle by which we organize what we say or what we write. They state that “it is a descriptive theory of a major aspect of the organization of a natural text”²⁹ They also talked about the way the parts of a text relate each other in order to compose a whole that will have a meaning in the process of communication. Therefore, they defined the rhetorical structure and gave it a function. “It identifies hierarchic structure in text. It describes the relation between text parts in functional terms.”³⁰

Consequently, what Nuttall establishes is a connection between the function of the rhetorical structure and the purpose of communication in terms of reading. As comprehension is the meaningful purpose that a reader has when facing a text, it is important to make him aware of the organization of what he is reading, because this will make the task of reading easier. This awareness of text structures is a part of the top-down processing that a reader uses to tackle difficult texts. Understanding a reading from the macro-level will be very helpful to get a meaning out of it.

Rhetorical structure had also been related to reading by Carrell under the same principles. At first, it was researched on the field of reading in mother tongue, but then, as the results showed, it was established that the process of understanding text organization was very similar in foreign language reading. “Recent research has shown that the rhetorical organization of narrative and expository texts interacts with the formal schemata of native English-speaking readers (...) Researchers have recently shown that formal, rhetorical schemata have similar effects on reading in English as a second language”³¹. Consequently, Carrell also stated that comprehension would be an easier goal to achieve if a reader starts by understanding the way the ideas are organized to compose the text he is reading. “Teaching various aspects of text structure ought to facilitate ESL reading comprehension, and some teachers have even

²⁹ MANN, WC. And Thompson, SA. Rhetorical structure theory: toward a functional theory of text organization. 1988. p 243.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 243.

³¹ CARRELL, P.L. Facilitating ESL reading by teaching text structure. TESOL Quarterly. Vol. 19. No 4. December, 1985 p. 727

suggested a variety of pedagogical techniques to do this teaching most effectively.”³²

This text attack skill proposed by Nuttall suits perfectly this study because the readings that students will face have a unique text organization that classifies them as fables. Recognizing this kind of text and the way it is organized will help them to get faster to the comprehension of the stories. Moreover, as this skill uses a macro-level analysis of the text from a top-down processing, this skill will suit better elementary school readers than advanced readers.

2.3.3.2 Text Attack Skill 6: Recognizing the Presuppositions Underlying the Text. The process of reading is an interaction between the writer, the text and the reader. When an author writes he puts all of his knowledge, his ideas and even his emotions on the text he is composing. When a reader faces the text, in a way, he is listening to all the author’s views and he is serving from his own views to understand what he is reading. All this thread of information shared between writer and reader is called schema. This is a bridge that becomes stronger when the reader understands what the writer wanted to say, and weaker when the reader does not get the meaning of what the author stated.

When this bridge becomes weaker and weaker, the communication gets broken and the final purpose of reading is not achieved. This has several reasons for happening. For example, when an author aims his text for a specific population and someone who does not belong to it tries to read it, this reader will not understand what the message is. In this case, underlying the text there are several presuppositions that the author assumes his readers will have and, therefore, he does not explain.

³² Ibid., p. 734

Nuttall proposes a development of this skill in order to understand better a text. At first, she divides the presuppositions in two groups and defines them as follows:

- The knowledge and experiences that the writer expects the reader to have.
- The opinions, attitudes, emotions that the writer expects the reader to share, or at least to understand.³³

She says that even if a reader understands the meaning of every word in a text, but does not share the same information that the writer expects him to have he will not understand what he wanted to say. The information that composes the writer's schemata will not be explicit in his text because he expects that this information is shared by the one who reads his words, but if that person does not have a reference of what the author is talking about, the hidden message will not be uncovered.

For example, if a sentence about public transportation in Bogotá is written using the information of someone who lives in the city, the author will assume that whoever reads it will understand and, probably, he will not write information that someone who has never been in Bogotá would need in order to understand his text.

“Transmilenio may be the fastest way of getting to your destination, but it is also the most uncomfortable one”

If a foreigner reads this sentence, although he understands 99% of the words in it, he will not know what it is talking about because he does not have any view of what a Transmilenio is. However if the author had explained that Transmilenio is a large, red bus that is very popular in the city, the foreigner reader would have understood perfectly. But authors do not do that because

³³ NUTTALL Op. cit., p. 112

there are several pieces of information that we all share and therefore he makes the presuppositions that the reader must infer.

Nuttall states that it is very important to learn how to uncover these presuppositions in order to understand the text that is being read. Although all people do not share the same schema and view of the world, every reader should learn how to identify by context implicit information that a writer expects the reader to understand. The context that encloses the communication process, in this case reading, will give the clue to understand many of the presuppositions that underlie a text. Some of them are indirect speech acts that disguise themselves as direct speech acts, irony, sarcasm, etc.

What the author of a text who makes presuppositions expects us to do in order to understand his reading is to infer it, and the reason why authors make these presuppositions comes from a theory of pragmatics. In the early 1980's Levinson defined presuppositions as "a kind of pragmatic inference"³⁴ and he says that these inferences do not depend on a semantic sense because they are "too sensitive to contextual factors"³⁵ He mentions the theory of implicature by Grice, where the latter states that not everything that is said has a plain sense.³⁶ This theory is taken by Nuttall in order to adapt it to the understanding of the reading process as a communicative process where the reader should develop skills that take him beyond the plain sense of the text.

There are several elements of the fable that will require the development of this skill in order to understand the texts. For example the characters will adopt attitudes that the young readers should identify. Moreover, the moral that every fable leaves should be shared by the students or at least understood by them.

³⁴ LEVINSON, Stephen C. Pragmatics. *Presuppositions*. Cambridge University Press, 1983. 19th Ed. 2008., p. 167

³⁵ Ibid., p.167

³⁶ GRICE, H.P. Presupposition and conversational implicature. 1981 p. 183

2.3.3.3 Text Attack Skill 7: Recognizing Implications and Making Inferences. This skill is proposed by Nuttall who based her statements on the pragmatics theories by Grice. There are two main elements that are related to each other: implications and inferences, where the latter is strictly related to the concepts proposed on the previous text attack skill.

The implications are the presuppositions that are hidden in a text, and what this skills tends to do is going beyond recognizing them to develop the skill of inferring them. The act of inferring is what we do in order to fill the gap that presuppositions, as assumed by the writer, leave to a reader. Nuttall says that “in order to infer we make use of common sense, powers of reasoning, knowledge of the world and schemata.”³⁷ Also, implications defined from a pragmatic point of view is something that is hidden in the message and that must be extracted. In Yule’s words, an implicature is an “additional conveyed meaning” and, in terms of reading, when someone is forced to make an inference it means that the text “must be more than just what the words mean”³⁸ Therefore we see how Nuttall goes beyond a semantic sense in order to develop the comprehension in terms of context, discourse analysis and pragmatics.

The use of metaphors and other literary figures on fables will make students develop this skill. They will be able to infer the real meaning behind what they read in order to understand the moral and the true message that the author wants to express. That is why Text attack skill 6 and 7 will be developed and fables will be very useful in order to achieve this purpose. If young learners learn how to tackle texts by using these skills, it will be easier for them to face more difficult texts in the future.

³⁷ NUTTALL Op. cit., p. 115

³⁸ YULE, George. *Pragmatics. Cooperation and implicature*. Oxford University Press, 1996 p. 35

2.3.3.4 Text Attack Skill 8: Prediction. The ability to predict will help to understand better what the student will read. In terms of a text, there are two levels of prediction.

- Predicting at the macro level. From the title and other elements.
- Predicting at the micro level. Guessing what the next sentence will be.

This skill can be related to the development of the text attack skill 5 (recognizing text organization). When the student recognizes what kind of text he is going to read, it will be easier for him to predict how the text will be developed. This skill is almost inherent to every reader and, according to Nuttall, “it is possible because writers organize their ideas, because people tend to think in similar ways, and because certain kinds of text (e.g. Fairy tales, recipes) have predictable structures with which experienced readers become familiar”³⁹. When students are being taught on how to recognize some specific characteristics of the structure of a text, predicting at the macro level will be much easier.

Prediction, as seen by Smith, has several reasons to exist. He says that it is a way of limiting what the student will face. When predicting at the macro level – from the title, an image or the kind of text- the reader will be able to set the limits of what he is going to read. In the case of fables, students will always predict, for example, that the stories will always be concluded with a moral. In terms of content, if the title of a fable is, for instance, “the lion and the mouse” surely the students will predict that the story will deal with those specific animals and, by no means, they will think about a human being or any other kind of animal. This in terms of prediction is what Smith called “the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives”⁴⁰ He also states that prediction is what most teachers know as guessing.

³⁹ NUTTALL Op. cit., p. 118

⁴⁰ SMITH, F. *Essays into literacy. Selected papers and some afterthought. 3 The role of prediction in reading.* New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1983. p. 21

In this project, this reading skill will be focused on at the macro level. From the title, some pictures and even the structure of the text, students will be able to develop their prediction skill in order to tackle the text with a limited perspective that will help them get to the real meaning of it.

2.4 READING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

The reading process in L2/FL is very similar to the process that occurs in L1. The definitions given on reading as a cognitive and semantic process which are taken from theories that studied the mother tongue reading process are also “useful in capturing the essence of fluent L2 reading”⁴¹. Nonetheless, this similarity does not match every aspect of reading and therefore the process is not exactly the same.

There are several factors that influence the FL reading process. The most important factors are: the learning styles, the metacognitive knowledge, the cultural orientation and the vocabulary problem. Although these elements also influence the L1 reading process, the way they influence the FL process is quite different. Regarding the learning styles, theory says that there are several ways of behaving when learning. Oxford identifies nine kinds of learning behaviors or styles and she says that they “are not dichotomous (black or white, present or absent). Learning styles generally operate in a continuum or in multiple, intersecting continua.”⁴² As reading uses many mental and cognitive processes, the learning styles must be taken into account when teaching or developing reading skills. In addition, the second factor that influences reading in the EFL classroom is strictly related to the first one. The metacognitive knowledge that a fifth grader has is being developed in his mother tongue, but regarding the FL this knowledge is very poor. However metacognition may have several phases,

⁴¹ DAY, Richard and BAMFORD, Julian. Extensive reading in the second language classroom. Cambridge University Press, 1998 p. 16

⁴² OXFORD, Rebecca. Language learning styles and strategies: an overview, 2003 [Online] Saved on September 29th 2013. Available on <http://hyxy.nankai.edu.cn/jingpinke/buchongyuedu/learning%20strategies%20by%20Oxford.pdf>

regarding learning, Oxford defines it as “identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs.”⁴³ This same definition could be applied for the metacognition in the language stage, when a learner is aware of his process regarding vocabulary, grammar, and reading process and this will influence the progress of his learning. The third factor is the cultural orientation, where the discourse analysis, pragmatics and sociolinguistic aspects must be taken into account. As a reading in FL may contain several elements unknown to students, these should be strictly guided by the teacher so that students do not find the reading process any more difficult. The final factor that strongly influences the process of reading in FL is the vocabulary problem. This problem can be tackled in many different ways. One of them is the input strategy that has been established by Krashen.

In the FL language acquisition process, reading has vital importance to achieve an acknowledgment of the language. Reading is one of the two ways of input that the student will be exposed to. By means of input the acquisition of a foreign language is more plausible than by means of output. Everything that the student is exposed to in the foreign language can be called input and all the information acquired by the learner in such way will be acknowledged and then used in a proper context. Krashen established a difference between the concepts of learning and acquisition. He says that while we can acquire language subconsciously, we, on the other hand, can learn a language by making an effort in a conscious process. In the first of five summarized hypothesis, now theories, he states that “both children and adults can subconsciously acquire language.” and that “also, both oral and written language can be acquired.”⁴⁴ So, the importance of reading in a foreign language as a mean of input, as stated by Krashen, is notable if we want the students to acquire or “pick up” some English.

⁴³ Ibid., p.12

⁴⁴ KRASHEN, S. *Second language acquisition: Theory, applications, and some conjectures*. Cambridge University press, 2013.

In order to establish an environment where input is available, teachers may choose different approaches. Regarding reading, this study will focus on the intensive reading approach. This approach focuses on few texts and work on them thoroughly. The kind of texts for every reading session must be alike, so that the students get familiar with it. Through repetition they will have the amount of input necessary to get the meaning of the texts. Intensive reading, moreover deals with the instruction and directions as given by a teacher. This means that reading and learning strategies are developed through guidance. Carrell and Carson state that intensive reading also develops learning strategies and metacognitive knowledge of students.⁴⁵ These guided activities should occur throughout the three reading stages “Teachers provide direction and help before, sometimes during and after reading”⁴⁶

Teachers also must think about the material they are going to provide students with. The reading material should be selected carefully taking into account the needs and abilities the students have. Also, the context of EFL classroom must also be taken into account when selecting the material.

2.5 FABLES

The use of literature in the EFL classroom helps students to develop their communicative competences. Literature belongs to the kind of texts classified as fiction reading. In contrast with non-fiction texts, literature serves as a way of not just teaching English, but also values and other aspects of the human spirit. Some authors agree in the use of literature in class and some others prefer the use of non-fiction. However, fifth graders would find more useful the non-fiction texts and would find them easier to apply to their real lives. “Fiction can serve two important functions in the L2/FL classroom: to teach language and introduce or reinforce human (social, cultural, political, emotional, economic,

⁴⁵ CARRELL, Patricia and Carson, Joan English for Specific purposes *Extensive and intensive reading in EAP setting* The American University, 1997 pp. 47 -60

⁴⁶ DAY and BAMFORD Op. cit., p. 87

etc.) themes and issues in the classroom”⁴⁷ and being that said, fables are the fiction texts that children may find more useful in order to fulfill the language and human goals.

Moreover, when selecting literary material the teacher also has to take into account the moralizing value it has for students. Especially with young learners this has to be a vital factor that influences the selection. “When a teacher has some autonomy in the selection of literary texts for the L2/FL classroom, two criteria that will shape the selection are (1) the cultural content of the works and (2) the relevance of the works to the lives of students in class.”⁴⁸

Aesop’s fables are the main element for the development of this research project. As authentic documents, fables have special characteristics that make them useful to be worked with children. As stated by the nineteenth century children’s writer Horace Scudder, they are very short narrations that every child enjoys in just one sitting. In addition, these children aimed texts deal with animals, and these lovely creatures are kids’ favorite company. Fables are interesting and they help to develop children imagination because they feature animals with human characteristics and finally, they lead to a moral point that will set the values that should be learnt in early life.⁴⁹ Therefore, these short narrations will be used as a resource to implement strategies for developing the reading skills in young students.

In the EFL classroom, fables have been used before as a mean of input to develop specially two main abilities in the young learners: listening and reading. This study profited the characteristics and the elements that fables have in order to develop the reading ability.

⁴⁷ AEBERSOLD and FIELD Op. cit., p.47

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.162

⁴⁹ SCUDDER, Horace E. *Fables and folk stories*. August 1890. Cambridge MASS

2.6 WORKSHOP AND MATERIAL DESIGN

The development of reading children's skills is aimed to be reached by the use of workshops whose design is supported by the existing theories on learning and teaching strategies. Among these strategies three were taken into account for the creation of the workshops: material design strategies, scaffolding instruction and collaborative learning tasks.

2.6.1 Material Design Strategies. When planning classes, one of the important elements to take into account is the materials and resources teachers will use in their lessons. The design of resources or material for one or several lessons must take into account the following aspects:

- Clarity on the lesson topic that is going to be supported by the material.
- Several aspects regarding the context of the class.

The clarity of the lesson topic must be present when designing material. Thus, teachers find easier to give an objective and several achievements indicators in the activities proposed.

The context is, however, the most important aspect to be taken into account. As every learning environment is different, the material design must regard the elements surrounding the class. "For many teachers, designing or adapting their own teaching materials, enables them to take into account their particular learning environment."⁵⁰ In addition, the most important element that should be taken into account is the audience to which the workshop aims. It has to be clear that every learner has its own way of learning so the individual needs of the students should be given a careful look at.

⁵⁰HOWARD, Jocelyn and MAJOR, Jae. Guidelines for designing effective English language teaching materials. [Online] saved on October 31st 2013 available on: <http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL9/pdf/Howard.pdf>

Being these aspects the most relevant ones when designing material, it must be said that both impact and content are vital for the success of your classes and that these elements are achieved through a careful designing.

2.6.2 Workshops. Workshops are compendia of several activities that are thought to be developed in one lesson. These activities aimed to the development of specific abilities on part of the students and usually include several strategies that include the usage of several learning strategies. The workshop is a common tool that teachers use to make students practice concepts they are taught by means of tasks that are meant to be developed by them without any help. The effectiveness of workshops lays in its design, in the activities that it proposes, the objectives that it pursues and the way of instructing the tasks.

The instructions must be written carefully and they must look for a reaction on the learner's part. Whenever a student's reads an instruction he must feel that it is his teacher who is asking him to do something. Thus, it can be seen as a way of interaction between teacher and learner.

2.6.2.1 Scaffolding Instruction. Scaffolding is a term that was coined by Vygotsky in the late 70's. It describes the interaction between learner and teacher and the assistance that the latter gives the former in terms of instruction. It improves the learning process by reducing the gap that there is between the learner and the knowledge with the help of an instructor. "One way to scaffold instruction for English language learners is to differentiate learning tasks and materials and provide a variety of verbal and academic supports, from both teacher and more proficient peers, so that students are able to meaningfully engage in content area learning and acquire the necessary language and academic skills necessary for independent learning."⁵¹

⁵¹ DELLICAPRINI, Margo. Scaffolding and differentiating instruction in mixed ability ESL classes using a round robin activity. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. XII, No. 3, March 2006. [Online] Saved on October 31st 2013 available on <http://iteslj.org/>

The way the instructions are given in the workshops that supported this study, base their structure in these theories of scaffolding. They intend to help the learner understand his task in order to get closer to the knowledge his asked to get.

2.6.2.2 Collaborative Learning. Collaborative learning is a method used in classrooms to have the students work with their peers. With collaborative learning, it is intended that students learn through their classmates' knowledge, experiences and opinions. It is important that the instructions given for collaborative learning activities are clear, because collaborative learning does not imply the acting of teachers in the learning experiences of students with their classmates. In other words, collaborative learning looks for collaboration among peers without interference of teachers or instructors. Thus, "Collaborative learning shifts the responsibility for learning to the student"⁵² and it gives him the control of his way of acquiring knowledge with his classmates.

In the workshops proposed by this study, collaborative learning is a strategy that aimed at analyzing how it works in the development of some specific reading strategies. The material and workshops that supported the studies of this paper were designed taking into account the context, the audience, and the different teaching and learning strategies that both teachers and students use in the EFL classroom.

⁵² DOOLEY, Melinda. Constructing knowledge together. Extract from Telecollaborative Language Learning. A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration. 2008 p. 21-45

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The researcher now presents the methodological approach, techniques and data collection tools which were used to achieve the general objective of the research. As the process of research was given through the participation in the reality of the EFL classroom, in which the researcher not just observed the field of study but also interfered with it, this study was developed under the steps of the **action research** method.

The reason why this method served as the best way to achieve the purposes of this project lays in the characteristics of identifying a problematic situation, and coming up with a proposal that intends to solve it. As stated by Carr & Kemmis making reference to a seminar on Action Research which was held at Deaking university, Geelong, Victoria in May 1981, "*Educational action research is a term used to describe a family of activities in curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programs, and systems planning and policy development, these activities have in common the identification of strategies of planned action which are implemented, and then systematically submitted to observation, reflection and change. Participants in the action being considered are integrally involved in all of these activities.*"⁵³.

The steps followed by the action research method served to settle the objectives and the path by which this study was developed throughout the research time.

- Field observation
- Planning
- Acting
- Reality transformation (through didactic strategies regarding reading skills development)

⁵³ CARR, W & KEMMIS, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, knowledge and action Research*. Deaking University press. P 162

- Result Analysis
- Study Reflection

Once the method of research was established, the approach which was used is described and supported as follows. Action research method, often works under the **qualitative approach**. As this research and practice tended to be a subjective work, because the reality of the field of study affected the researcher directly, the qualitative approach served to collect the needed information to evidence the problem. In addition, as the object of study was merged in the social field, the researcher was helped by the reflective methods of analysis of the chosen approach.

By means of teacher's interviews and student's surveys, data was collected and analyzed under the view of the qualitative approach; observation and everyday progress in the field of study was also collected in a field journal which served to control every class session. At the same time, the student's production was also collected, analyzed and structured as evidence of the result of the research.

3.2 TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tools and techniques that were used for data collection served to make a diagnosis of the level of reading skills development the children had by the time the research started. Moreover, these tools were useful when analyzing the final results given in terms of reading skills development. Thus, these techniques, served to achieve the specific and general objectives of the research.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

Observation is the immersion that the researcher does into the field of study in order to have contact with it through the five senses. The interaction between the researcher and the students is the clue that will give participant observation its characteristics. Kawulich defines participant observation as "the process

enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities.”⁵⁴

During the first weeks, the participant observation took place in every class students attended; three observations were made in order to determine how the school classes were given. This was done with the final purpose of establishing statements regarding the general context of the school and the specific context of the fifth grade. Then, the observation was limited just to the description of English classes in order to start implementing the research plan. These observations were registered in a field journal that was of personal use of the researcher and that later served to collect the necessary data to analyze and describe.

3.2.2 Surveys

Survey is a tool by which the researcher gathers specific information from different people under study in order to find a converging point among all the statements made by them. ”The survey is a non-experimental, descriptive research method. Surveys can be useful when a researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed.”⁵⁵

Two surveys were applied during the first week in order to describe the attitude that children and the institution had towards English learning and especially towards reading process in EFL (see appendix A and B). One of them was applied or addressed to 12 fifth graders and the other one was applied twice to different teachers of the school. The students’ survey was designed with six questions, four opened and two closed, that aimed to get information about their learning experiences regarding English. The goal this survey pursued was the establishment of information that later would serve to describe the situation that was evidenced in the statement of the problem. On the other hand, the teachers’ survey was composed of five opened questions that aim to get

⁵⁴ KAWULICH, Barbara B. Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2), Art. 43. [Online] Saved on April 23rd 2014. Available on: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0502430>.

⁵⁵ THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN. Survey Methods [Online] Saved on: April 23rd 2014. Available on <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/survey.html>

information about their thoughts regarding the teaching of English language in the school. It was addressed to two teachers of the elementary section of the school.

3.2.3 Diagnostic Test

The diagnosis test is the tool by which the researcher is able to establish where a specific problem is in order to start working on it. "It is clear that a diagnostic test is primarily used to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses and provide detailed feedback for both teachers and learners to make decisions."⁵⁶

In this research, a diagnostic test on reading was implemented during the third week in order to determine what the strengths, weaknesses and needs regarding reading skills were. It was designed according to the standards for foreign language teaching given by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional of Colombia (see appendix D). In addition, the test was designed with six activities that included the performance of different reading skills, and was addressed to the group of fifth graders whose reading skills were intended to be analyzed.

3.2.4 Field Journals

Field journal or field notes are the written accounts of the events of a class. These notes are a characteristic of qualitative research approach which focuses on description and subjectivity. "Field notes refer to transcribed notes or the written account derived from data collected during observations and interviews."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ ZHAO, ZHONGBAO. An overview of studies in diagnostic testing and its implications for the development of diagnostic speaking test. *International journal of English Linguistics*. Vol. 3 No. 1, 2013. p. 43

⁵⁷ SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY. Observation and field notes. [Online] Saved on April 23rd 2014 available on: http://hci.cs.siu.edu/NSF/Files/TeachingPD/How_CI_Observation%20and%20Field%20Notes.pdf

Eight field journals were used to collect and analyze data during the observation and application stage. During the observation stage, three field notes were collected in order to describe and evidence (a) the environment of the school (b) the teaching methods of the fifth grade's teacher (c) the interaction between students and teacher. On the other hand, during the application stage five field notes were collected in order to describe and evidence (a) the development of the proposed activities on the student's part (b) the process by which they develop their reading skills by means of the activities (c) their attitude towards the class. These aspects constitute the categories of analysis that later were used in order to determine the results given by the process of reading skills' development. The field notes were also a process given in terms of reflections made by the researcher in order to register, consider and analyze the events occurred during the classes in order to improve the didactic and pedagogical strategies of the researcher and the proposal.

3.2.5 Workshops

Workshops are a teacher's pedagogical and didactic tool that pursues a learning objective by means of the development of several activities in a single lesson. Five workshops were presented to students throughout the application stage. Each one of the workshops presented pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities along with a fable and several drawings and elements that aimed to attract students' attention. All the workshops shared the same basic structure; however, depending on the different reading skills that are aimed at being developed, the activities and tasks that were proposed vary significantly. This didactic strategy was designed and implemented in order to analyze and describe how a group of six fifth graders developed their reading skills. It was addressed to the students so they could improve their reading process and it can be also addressed to the teacher who intends to analyze this process.

These techniques and tools were implemented throughout the time of research and practicum. They were applied to a specific population and they settled the

methodology of the research. Moreover, the field notes, and the workshops established the categories of analysis that were later used in order to conclude the study. On one hand, the field notes gave a reflective account of the process of the development of the reading skills. On the other hand, the workshops served to establish the results of that process.

3.3 POPULATION

This research project took place in the fifth grade of the public elementary school Marco Tulio Fernández Section C. which is situated in the area of Engativá in Bogotá. Students who attend the fifth grade are children within the ages of 10 to 14 years old. Most of them live with their families in the same area where the school is located which allows them to ease the attendance to class. Some of them, however, come from institutions run by Bienestar Familiar; children whose parents are not around live in foster houses with other kids on the same condition and are distributed among different public schools in Bogotá to receive their basic education.

Students count on their parents and institution help; they are provided with school uniform, means of transportation and health care. None of the students present neither physical nor mental disabilities. On the contrary, all of them are very smart and creative children who learn very eagerly anything that is taught to them. In English classes, specially, they are very interested in the topics they are presented with; the activities interest them and they are asking questions all the time.

During the whole process, all the fifth graders participated in the various activities that were proposed. However, the applications of the workshops were implemented with six students who were chosen randomly by means of an activity where the whole class participated. Although the whole group was guided through the reading skills development process, only those six randomly

chosen students' process was analyzed. This sampling was done in order to avoid interruptions in the process. As attendance to schools and desertion is common in public schools, the analysis process was safe from being interrupted by one of these reasons thanks to sampling. Finally, in the data analysis the identity of the students was kept to them; consequently, they were identified using numbers from one to six (Student # 1 – Student # 6).

4. PROPOSAL

TITLE. READING AND LEARNING WITH AESOP

4.1 PRESENTATION

The pedagogical strategy proposed in order to reach the general objective of this study was a reading workbook containing five workshops which were designed based on five of Aesop's fables in order to establish how the process of development of some reading skills was given. This design was based on the different learning and reading strategies in order to fulfill the needs students had (which were evidenced in the problem that this paper intended to solve).

The activities of the workbook were applied to six fifth graders who attend the public School Marco Tulio Fernandez, section C. Moreover, the workshops were developed during a whole month in which the students were guided with instruction and direction on how to follow the sequential progress of the activities.

Each one of the workshops contained in this workbook followed the same basic structure. All of them contained one of Aesop's fables per workshop. Moreover, the students were guided through the reading process by means of different activities stages.

- Pre-reading

During the pre-reading stage presented in each workshop, vocabulary and prediction activities were presented to students.

- While reading

During the while-reading stage scanning, skimming and words' definitions were given to the students in order to help them improve their reading process.

- Post-reading

Post-reading stage was presented to students by means of different activities where it was possible to measure the comprehension level that was achieved during the session.

Although all of the workshops contained the same stages, the activities presented in each of them were different. Consequently structure varied depending on the activities proposed.

4.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

To analyze the progress of the development of six students' reading skills while working on the workshops based on Aesop's fables.

4.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROPOSAL

The workbook presented as a tool of analysis was designed in order to have a closer look at the needs of the students of the public school Marco Tulio Fernandez, section C. In addition, its contents were designed in order to analyze the progress of the development of five reading skills.

As workshops and Aesop's fables were the main elements that constituted this workbook, the theoretical background that supports these two elements justifies the use of them in the workbook. Working with Aesop's fables enabled the teacher to get the students' attention because they like to read stories that are fantastic and that leave a message. Fables, with their moralizing characteristic worked perfectly in the EFL classroom not just in terms of language teaching but also in terms of ethical and moral values teaching. Moreover, the activities that were proposed supported this aim by means of letting students work together in order to apply the morals they learnt in their everyday interaction with their teachers and peers.

4.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOPS

These workshops constituted the embodiment of the current research study which in turn was the didactic strategy. They were designed taking into account some pedagogical principles on what reading as a process is; each workshop had a series of activities grouped into pre-reading, while reading and post-reading, and all of them matched an objective stated in terms of leading students to develop or enhance their reading skills.

All objectives were sequenced in a progression keeping in mind the way students performed the tasks and achieved the indicators that showed their development of reading skills. These objectives were registered in each one of the workshops' lesson plans. In addition, the workshops are described as a research tool and each one of them is presented with one or several objectives in terms of development, analysis and description of the activities performed by the students. These objectives are presented in the following description in order to be taken into account for process of analysis of the workshops as a research tool.

The workshops were presented with the title of the fable that corresponds to the activities proposed, and its description was given in terms of (a) the characteristics of the *reading process* that were taken into account for its designing (b) the reading skills that were intended to be developed, and (c) the assessment criteria that were later taken as the categories of data analysis.

Workshop No. 1

The fox and the grapes

Objectives: To make the students get used to recognizing known words in order to develop the words attack skill and the skimming technique.

Reading skills to be developed: words attack skill, skimming and prediction

Description: This workshop aimed mainly at the development of the words attack skill by means of activities related to the vocabulary that students already knew. This vocabulary would help them to build the *schema or mental structure* that would be used in order to understand the context of the fable. The students would establish a relation among words such as fox, grapes, tree and jump, and would relate this small schema to the context of the story. In addition, along with words attack skill, skimming and prediction were worked on in the different activities.

The activities presented in the workshop were divided among the three reading stages; they proposed tasks such as **skimming** the text, underlining known words (**words attack skill**), drawing the most important vocabulary and retelling the story by means of coloring the correct drawings.

Assessment: The assessment of this workshop was guided by three main elements that compose the criteria for the data analysis; concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.

The process of development of the three reading skills and the attitude of the students were assessed in terms of qualitative description, while the performance of some tasks was given according to the parameters of the following rubric which was the guide that was taken into account in order to analyze how the development of words attack skill was given.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This item was assessed according to how the student recognizes the known words and then relates them with the content of the fable in order to retell the story on the post-reading activities.

YES

The student recognizes some known words and relates them to the development of the story thus being able to retell it.

PARTIALLY

The student recognizes some known words, but he cannot relate them to the development of the story.

NO

The student cannot recognize any known word, nor relate it to the development of the story.

Workshop No. 2
The lion and the mouse

Objectives:

- To continue with the development of words attack skill in order to establish the progress that students show.
- To establish the progress students have made regarding scanning and skimming techniques.
- To make the students get used to answering specific questions in order to develop prediction as a reading skill.
- To analyze how presuppositions influence the predictions and inferences that students make about the text.

Reading skills to be developed: scanning, prediction, presupposition, inference and words attack skill.

Description: This workshop intended to start developing **prediction** and **inference** of the text. The pre-reading and post-reading activities that helped students to develop these skills, were designed so that the learners could use their presuppositions about wild life in order to infer the information that the author of the fable did not show in an explicit way (lions eat mice). Thus, it would be evidenced that reading as an interactive process between the author – the text- and the reader helps developing the *reading process*.

On the other hand, during the reading activities **scanning** and **skimming** techniques were also intended to be developed. By means of tasks in which students were asked to look for specific information (new vocabulary), it was possible to determine the acknowledgement they had of it. This information, was later linked to the development of **words attack skill** in order to analyze

the progress the learners showed regarding the use of this skill in order to understand the story.

Assessment: The assessment of this workshop was guided by three main elements that compose the criteria for the data analysis; concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.

The progress of the development of reading skills such as presupposition, inference and prediction was determine in terms of qualitative description. In the same way, the attitude of the learners was described and analyzed. On the other hand, the following rubric was used in order to determine how the students used the words attack skill in order to complete the tasks proposed in the workshop.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC	
This item was assessed according to how the student uses the acquired information regarding new vocabulary in order to relate it to the content of the story and its main idea and events.	
YES	The student recognizes 5 to 10 given words and relates their meanings to the development of the story and its main idea.
PARTIALLY	The student recognizes 1 to 4 given words, but he cannot relate their meaning to the context of the story.
NO	The student cannot recognize any given word, nor relate it to the development of the story.

Workshop No. 3
The mother crab and her son

Objectives:

- To introduce the use of text organization as a reading skill in order to make the students get used to recognizing the elements that compose a fable.
- To determine how text organization helps the students to understand the content of a fable.
- To continue working on the development of skimming technique in order to establish the progress students have made regarding this skill (technique).
- To keep on working on the development of presupposition and inference skills in order to analyze how the students interact with the text in order get its meaning.

Reading Skills to be developed: presupposition, inference, skimming and text organization.

Description: This workshop was designed in order to focus the activities on the development of **text organization skill**. The fable that is presented along with the reading activities has an important element that the students were asked to recognize by means of using the **skimming** technique in order to determine how the rhetorical structure (the elements contained in a fable) helps the learners to get the gist of the text.

In addition, the pre-reading activities aimed at the development of **inference** in order to analyze if there was any improvement in the use of this skill, and also to determine if it helps the students to understand the text. These activities also

intended to establish if the interaction between reader and writer based on **presuppositions** was of any help for the students to get the gist of the fable.

Assessment: The assessment of this workshop was guided by three main elements that compose the criteria for the data analysis; concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.

The attitude of the students, the development of the class and the way students participate in the pre-reading activities showing how they infer elements from a context were described in terms of qualitative analysis. On the other hand, the performance of the activities that intended to determine the use of text organization skill was assessed as follows.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC	
This item was assessed according to how the student identifies the dialogues presented on the fable and their relation to the main idea of the text.	
YES	The student recognizes the structure of the dialogues presented in the fable, relates them to the characters and the main idea of the text.
PARTIALLY	The student recognizes the structure of the dialogues presented in the fable, but does not relate them to the characters, or the main idea of the text.
NO	The student cannot recognize the structure of the dialogues presented in the fable, nor relate it to the main idea of it.

Workshop No. 4

The wolf and the goat

Objectives:

- To work on activities that aim at the development of presupposition, prediction and inference in order to determine if these skills can be shared by the students in order to easily get to a common understanding of the context of the story.
- To aim at the development of words attack skill in order to analyze the progress that students have made regarding the use of known and new vocabulary in context.

Reading skills to be developed: Prediction, presupposition, words attack skill and inference.

Description: This workshop implements the theory of collaborative learning in order to have the students work with their peers and share the common knowledge they may have regarding a specific topic. During the pre-reading and post-reading activities, the students were asked to discuss some predictive questions with their classmates. These activities intended to determine how the *area of common knowledge* of their schemata helps to develop **presupposition, inference and prediction** skills. In order to do this, the moral of the fable was not presented to the students so that they had the opportunity to infer it according to their classmates' opinions and to what they had understood from the content of the text.

In addition, during the pre-reading and while-reading activities, the development of **words attack** skill was aimed at in order to analyze the progress the students had made when using this skill in order to understand the fable.

Assessment: The assessment of this workshop was guided by three main elements that compose the criteria for the data analysis; concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.

Presupposition, prediction and inference skills' development was described in qualitative terms according to the answers students gave to the questions proposed. Also, their attitude was described according to the way they worked with their classmates and participated in class and in the different activities of the workshop.

On the other hand, words attack skill's progress was analyzed under the terms of performance of the pre-reading and while reading activities.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC	
This item was assessed according to how the student uses the known vocabulary and presuppositions in order to understand the main idea of the fable and to infer the moral given by the text.	
YES	The student recognizes the known vocabulary, relates it to the text and is able to infer the moral of the fable correctly.
PARTIALLY	The student recognizes the known vocabulary in the fable and relates it to the main idea of the text, but cannot infer the moral given by the story.
NO	The student cannot recognize the known vocabulary in the fable, nor relate it to the main idea; therefore he cannot infer the moral given by the text.

Workshop No. 5

The mouse of the city and the mouse of the farm

Objectives:

- To work on the development of text organization skill in order to determine if the students use the skill to recognize the elements that compose the fable and that lead to the understanding of the text.
- To present students with presupposition, inference and prediction peer-activities in order to analyze how these skills were developed.
- To present words attack skill activities in order to establish the level of skill development that each student has so far.

Reading skills to be developed: Words attack skill, presupposition, inference, prediction and text organization.

Description: As well, as the previous workshop this one focused on collaborative learning in order to determine how the students use the *area of common knowledge* they may have to infer and predict the events of the story. During the pre-reading and while-reading stages, the learners were presented with tasks that lead to the development of **presupposition**, **prediction** and **inference** activities. Once again the moral of the fable was not given in explicit terms, so the students had to infer it according to the comprehension of the text and to their classmates' opinions.

Also, the development of **words attack skill** was aimed at with the pre-reading activities in order to establish how the learners used the known and new vocabulary in context in order to get the gist of the fable. Finally, the

development of **text organization** skill was aimed at by means of tasks such as recognizing and classifying elements presented in the text.

As this was the last workshop, the analysis of the development of the different reading skills presented the final results of the process that the students had been through during the five classes dedicated to the implementation of the didactic strategy.

Assessment: The assessment of this workshop was guided by three main elements that compose the criteria for the data analysis; concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.

Reading skills such as presupposition, inference and prediction were analyzed under qualitative parameters that gave the final results of the process of development of these skills. In addition, the attitude of the students was described in the same qualitative terms were it was analyzed how the students participated and interacted with their classmates.

On the other hand, the performance of tasks that aimed at the development of words attack and text organization skills was analyzed in under the terms of following rubric.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC	
This item was assessed according to how the student uses the different reading skills in order to identify the main idea of the text and infer the moral of the fable.	
YES	The student recognizes the known words and relates them to the main idea of the text, he also recognizes the text structure elements that strengthen the understanding of the main idea and thus he is able to infer the moral of the fable.

PARTIALLY	The student recognizes the known vocabulary in the fable and relates it to the main idea of the text; he recognizes elements of text structure that gives him clues to infer the moral but cannot infer it.
NO	The student cannot recognize the known vocabulary in the fable, nor relate it to the main idea; he does not identify the elements of text structure such as who, what, where and when, therefore he cannot infer the moral given by the text.

4.5 PRESENTATION OF THE WORKSHOPS

The example of one of the workshops contained in the workbook (see appendix I), show how the reading stages were clearly presented along the worksheet so that both students and the teacher were able to know what stage they were working on. Each workshop had the same basic structure and the same design patterns. Moreover, the fable was presented with big letters, pictures and images, so that the students were able to relate the text to these visual features. In addition, there were hints and clues that help students to get familiar with the context of the story they were working on.

On the other hand, each one of the workshops was presented along with a lesson plan for teachers (see appendix J) so that the activities, pedagogical objectives and reading skills to be developed are clear enough in further implementations of the proposal.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the analysis of the data collected in the workshops taken as students' samples, and the observer's field notes. First, the researcher read information gathered in each of the research instruments to identify commonalities among observations made which had to do with how students developed their reading skills through workshops based on fables.

5.1 FIELD NOTES ANALYSIS

First, information gathered in each of the five field notes was read in order to analyze the issues pertaining to each of the reading skills in order to describe how students develop their reading process. Second, general *afterthoughts* or **reflections** regarding the development of the lessons was mentioned in order to give an account of the pedagogical issues that caused an impact on the evolution of proposal's implementation. These issues were identified, classified according each one of the reading skills and analyzed as follows:

- **Words attack skill**

The process of development of this reading skill was evidenced in the field notes corresponding to the first, second and fourth workshops' implementation. It was observed that most of the students in the group used the illustrations or drawings provided in each workshop to guess and deduce the meaning of some words or the whole statements in the reading of a text. For instance, in the implementation of workshop # 1, teacher showed a picture of a fox trying to catch a bunch of grapes and asked the students for the vocabulary of the scene. As they already knew the vocabulary to describe the picture, they all gave the correct words as the teacher pointed each one of the elements in the picture. Some students named the objects in the picture using English, while some others resorted to the L1 to describe the picture. By means of pictures and definitions, students identified new words and expressions such as "one hot summer's day", "give up", "walk away" and "sour"; some of them translated what

they understood to the L1, while some others pointed at the pictures in order to identify the new words in the context of the fable. At the end of this session, the students developed an activity in which they were to choose and color the correct drawings of a comic that retold the story they read. This final task gave an account of how the students used the vocabulary in the context of the fable in order to evidence its comprehension. Although most of the students completed this activity correctly, thus demonstrating the implementation of words attack skill, some of them showed an attitude of boredom and annoyance towards the task of coloring pictures.

Field note #1 afterthoughts: Regarding the development of this skill, it proved to be useful for the students, because they were able to recognize words that were later used in context in order to understand the fable. However, the activities that involved coloring pictures were **reconsidered** for the implementation of the next workshop due to the bad attitude of two students towards the tasks. Regarding pedagogical issues, the guidance given by the teacher had to be re-thought-in order to avoid the use of L1 by the students.

In the introductory part of the session dedicated to the second workshop, students used the words they already knew in order to ask for a chance of holding two stuffed animals that the teacher took to the class (a lion and a mouse). Moreover, during the development of this class, students identified new words by means of definitions and pictures; some of the students that in the previous lesson used their mother tongue in order to translate unknown words, kept silent during the development of this lesson, because they were told that using Spanish will result in not getting a chance of holding any of the toys; however, as well as in the previous workshop, most of them used the pictures and, in this case, the stuffed animals in order to use the vocabulary in context. The use in context of new given and known words was evidenced by means of a post-reading activity where the students constructed sentences with this vocabulary in order to retell the story they read; some students composed sentences such as “lion eats mouse” which are grammatically correct, but that

due to the context of the fable, where the story tells that the lion did not eat the mouse, they were wrong. On the other hand, most of them constructed sentences such as “mouse bit rope” which are both grammatically and contextually correct. Although not all the students completed the task correctly, at least this time, all of them showed to be interested in completing the tasks.

Field note #2 afterthoughts: Regarding the pedagogical implications of the development of the lesson it was seen that translation was avoided completely. However the measures taken in order to avoid it did not result in the use of words in English, but in a silent period. This issue was taken into account for the implementation of the next workshop. On the other hand, regarding the development process of words attack skill, an advance was evidenced in terms of usage of words in context; the students seemed to recognize the tasks they were put through and they performed them without doubts. However, the results showed that the activity proposed was found hard to perform. As coloring was found as boring in the previous workshop, it was decided that a most difficult task had to be implemented; however, at the end of this session a balance between level of difficulty and level of interest was considered for further implementations.

During the application of the fourth workshop, the teacher instructed the learners to recognize known vocabulary. The students had to organize some scrambled words in order to match them to a picture. When the students were asked to share the product of the task, the teacher asked them all to be quiet and to point at the picture that matched the word the teacher read. The students, who in previous lessons translated the words into Spanish, were now able to point at the pictures that matched the read word. Nonetheless, one of the students pointed at the wrong picture when the teacher read the word “roof”. It was evidenced that the use of words attack skill was acknowledged, and that it helped them in their reading process, because L1 and silent periods were avoided. However, it is also shown that the skill has to be worked on several times because students need to mechanize the use of this strategy in order to

put it into practice. During some reading activities, the comprehension of the story was assessed in terms of multiple choice questions that aimed at the use of the vocabulary acquired through words attack. This activity showed the results of the development of this strategy in terms of how the students used it to comprehend the story.

Field note #4 afterthoughts: Regarding the pedagogical issues, it was seen that during this lesson, translation and silent periods were avoided. In fact, silence was used against these problems in order to have all the students participate in the pre-reading tasks; without having to use English to speak all the students felt confident to participate by pointing to the pictures. Although these measures did not guarantee the effectiveness of the development of words attack skill, they avoided completely the use of L1 during the lessons. On the other hand, regarding the development of this skill, students were interested in the task of organizing scramble words and almost all of them completed the task correctly which evidenced that they use the words they recognize in order to answer questions that give an account of comprehension. This shows that the attention of the students was gotten and the level of difficulty suited them.

- **Scanning and skimming**

The process of development of scanning and skimming skills was registered in the field notes that correspond to the implementation of workshops 1, 3 and 5. Following the instructions given by the teacher during the development of workshop # 1, all the students skimmed through the fable in order to underline the words they could recognize and understand. All the students spent some time in finishing the task; during the process, some of them asked the teacher whether they should underline a known word more than once or not, some others asked if the words in the title of the fable were also to be underlined. All the students recognized and underlined an average of nine words (fox, grapes, run jump, one, two, three, tree and walk) that had already been taught to them in previous lessons. Also, it was evidenced that while most of the students underlined single words, some others were able to recognize complete

expressions such as “one hot summer’s day”. Even though all the students knew words such as walk and jump, just two of them were able to recognize these words because of their morphology; they asked the teacher whether they should underline words like walked**ed** or jumping**ing**; without understanding what the suffix of the word meant, they were able to get the meaning of the verbs in base form. Also, it could be registered that some students asked the teacher to repeat the instructions in order to know what information they should look for, and some others just asked their classmates what they had to do.

Field note #1 afterthoughts: During this lesson, the time students spent in completing the task of skimming the fable for known words was registered on the field notes in order to determine if during the next lesson dedicated to develop scanning or skimming they improved the speed at which they completed the task of looking for specific information in a text. In addition, it was seen that some students recognized words thanks to their morphology, which means that they use a feature of the words attack skill in order to complete the task of skimming; the combination of reading skills was henceforth taken into account as it was seen that reading skills development cannot be guided in terms of working on them separately.

Regarding the pedagogical issues, it was noticed that the instructions that were given to the students were not clear enough, because some of them asked the teacher to repeat them while some others just asked their classmates. This event was due to the fact that the instructions were written and read in technical terms. “Skim through the text for known words”. This issue was taken into account for the design of the instructions of the following workshop.

In the implementation of the third workshop, skimming skill was retaken in terms of a task guided by instruction. This time, the students were asked to **look at the fable** in order to recognize and underline a special element of the fable: dialogues. The implementation of a different strategy in order to instruct students was successful, because the verb “to look” was accompanied with TPR instruction when read by the teacher. Therefore, all the students understood what they had to do in order to complete the task. Compared to the previous workshop, when skimming for the dialogue in the fable the students spent less time in finding the element they were supposed to underline. All the students found it very easy to look for the dialogue presented in the text. They recognized the speeches of each character thanks to the quotation marks that enclosed them. Also, this task was thought to be developed along with the recognition of text organization or rhetorical structure features; the students already knew that (dialogues) the element that composed a part of the organization of the text was enclosed in quotation marks.

Field note #3 afterthoughts: Taken into account the time the students spent in order to complete the task of skimming for specific information during the previous lesson, it could be determined that they spent less time in completing the same task. However, it has to be said that although both tasks aimed at the development of the same reading skill, the purposes for using the same skill were different in each one of the workshops. It is probable that the students took less time in skimming the fable in this workshop because they found it easy to identify the information they were asked for; therefore, it means that the partial improvement of this skill is due to factors regarding difficulty level. For the design of the next implementation where scanning or skimming were involved, this issue was taken into account so that the analysis can truly determine if an improvement in the process of development of these skills was given. On the other hand, regarding reading skills development, the combination of reading skills tasks was implemented; this proved that when students use several reading skills in order to achieve a single purpose, they

find easier to do so. This time text organization features were combined with skimming strategy in order to find relevant information in the text.

During the fifth and last lesson, it was shown that the students really developed their scanning and skimming skills. When they were asked to look at the fable in order to find known words, places, characters and time expressions they did it very quickly. Therefore, it could be determined that the skill was really developed, because this time the text was longer, and the students were asked to find more elements. In addition, it was made evident that the students used the words attack skill and text organization in order to complete the task of identifying known words and elements of the rhetorical structure. The students constantly read aloud words such as cat, mouse and farm. They recognized those words and used them in context in order to classify them according to their role in the organization of the text.

Field note #5 afterthoughts: Scanning and skimming skills development was evidenced to be improved in terms of the speed at which the students find specific information in a text. In addition, the implementations process showed that combining two or more reading skills in order to achieve a single purpose results in the successful understanding of a text and its context.

- **Prediction, presupposition and inference**

Prediction, presupposition and inference are three reading skills that were aimed to be developed altogether; the use of presuppositions in order to infer and predict events in a text helped the students to understand better the context of the fables they read. All through the five workshops these three skills were used and developed; however, the evidence that gave an account on the process of development of them was registered on the field notes corresponding to the lessons 2, 4 and 5.

During the implementation of the second workshop, students had to answer some predictive yes or no questions. As the plot of the fable was based on the presupposition that lions eat mice, the predictive questions the students answered were given in terms of a possible friendship between a lion and a mouse and the possibility that a lion ate a mouse. Given the title, most of the students inferred that the fable was based on the natural confrontation that is given between felines and mice. However, they also made use of the context that the teacher presented in order to make other assumptions; two stuffed animals were taken into the class as well as a picture depicting a little mouse in front of a big lion. Some of the students made comments regarding the expression on the lion's face. Some of them said "he is happy" while some others used their mother tongue to say he looked kind. So, the students guessed that even though lions generally would eat a mouse like the one the teacher was showing, that was not the case of the specific lion depicted in the picture. However, some students just relied on the general presupposition and, without taking into account the context, stated that in fact the lion would eat the mouse. Later, during the post-reading activities, students were able to answer questions that would confirm if the predictions they made at the beginning of the class were right or not. As all the students confirmed that in fact the lion did not eat the mouse, their answers evidenced the understanding of the plot of the fable.

Field note #2 afterthoughts: The implementation of the second workshop served to evidence the use students made of presuppositions in order to infer hidden information in a text. It also proved that these presuppositions sometimes are useful in order to make predictions and sometimes they are not. As one of the students relied just in the presupposition in order to predict the story, it was considered that in order to implement further activities that aimed at the development of prediction skill, the context that encloses the text should be presented in a more explicit way. Although the pictures and the stuffed animals worked as a contextualization for most of the students, another way of

presenting context had to be thought in order to help the student who presented problems in developing the prediction, presupposition and inference skills.

In the session that was dedicated to the implementation of the fourth workshop, collaborative learning was implemented in order to help the students who presented problems in the previous lessons that were dedicated to the development of these three reading skills. Students were asked to form two groups of three people each one. Right after that, the teacher read the instructions (look at the picture and discuss with your classmates) in order to have the students discuss about some predictive questions. Each student had an image depicting a goat standing on top of a house and a wolf passing by under him. For some minutes, the students discussed the context presented on the picture and started giving their opinions about what would happen in the development of the story. Once they discussed and came to some agreements on the answers, they started to participate as the teacher asked each one of the questions.

As well as in the previous workshop, the fable presented in this lesson was based on presuppositions regarding wild life; therefore, none of the students had any trouble in inferring that the plot of the fable was based on the fact that wolves eat goats in order to survive. In addition, the context given by the image, and the different opinions of the class helped to get to a common agreement on the predictions of the story: “The wolf is not going to eat the goat” “the wolf is walking” “the goat climbs the house”. Those were some of the events that the students predicted thanks to the context shown in the picture. Later on, during the post-reading stage the students were asked to form groups once again in order to infer the moral of the fable that was not presented to them during the reading stage. In groups the students discussed about the multiple options presented to them and it was evidenced that their opinions regarding the context of the story led them to infer correctly the moral of the fable.

Field note #4 afterthoughts: Regarding pedagogical issues, collaborative learning was the strategy that was implemented in order to help the students that presented any trouble on the development of prediction and inference skills based on presuppositions and context. This strategy proved to be very useful in order to solve the problem; when working together, the area of common knowledge of students was evidenced to be shared among them and this eased the task of predicting and inferring facts from a given context. As this strategy proved to be worth of using it was taken into account in the design of the last workshop. Regarding the development of the skills, it was seen that students' predictions are used in order to understand the contexts of fables; this was evidenced as they could easily infer the moral of the fable based on what they comprehended in the story.

In the lesson that was left to the implementation of the fifth workshop, collaborative learning was again implemented as a strategy in order to help the students with the tasks they were presented with. During the pre-reading and while-reading activities the students worked in groups of three and answered predictive and inference questions; they were given some time in order to discuss about their knowledge regarding the characteristics of the city in contrast to the features of the country. Some of them talked about the differences in people's life style according to where they lived. Some others talked about food, nature and environment of both places. Statements such as "the city is noisy", "the farm is beautiful", "in the farm there are animals" and "in the city there are people" were given by the learners. These opinions helped them to infer the presuppositions underlying the text and later, from what they understood from the fable they were able to infer the moral in the same way they had done during the previous workshop.

Field note #5 afterthoughts: regarding the development of the skills, it was seen that this time the predictions were more precise. It was due to the fact that students were provided with more elements (pictures, vocabulary, and their own experiences) than just their presuppositions. It was evidenced thus, that working on this skill has to be done very carefully and that students must be provided with enough elements in order to really rely their reading process on the development of this skill. In addition, collaborative learning proved to be a powerful strategy in order to help students who present any problem regarding the development of reading skills.

- **Text organization**

The process of development of text organization skill was registered in the field notes that correspond to the implementation of workshops 3 and 5. During the implementation of the third workshop, the students were asked to identify the dialogues of the characters of the fable they were reading. None of the students had any trouble in identifying the dialogues; however, when the students were asked to draw the two characters of the fable and to classify the dialogues according to the context and the structure of the text, most of them were not able to do it properly. The students wrote expressions such as “said the mother crab to her son” understanding them as a part of the dialogue. This showed that although the students identified this element of the rhetorical structure (also helped by the use of scanning and skimming), they did not understand the content of the speech of the characters.

Field note #3 afterthoughts: Regarding text organization skill development, it was worked along with scanning and skimming skills. However, this combination proved to be useful just in terms of finding information that apparently was meaningless to the students. The rhetorical structure should have been worked along other reading skills such as words attack so that the students could find easier to get the gist of the speeches they were reading.

This issue was registered in order to take it into account for the design of further activities that aimed at the development of text organization skill.

During the implementation of the fifth workshop, text organization skills' development was worked on once again by means of implementing activities in which several reading skills were combined. The teacher presented the students with a task in which they had to scan for known words, characters, places and time expressions in order to classify each one of those elements in a chart that served to organize the structure of the fable. Most of the students classified the identified elements correctly. However, the instructions were not properly followed by them. In order to identify the elements of the text, the instruction asked to underline characters with red color, places with blue color and vocabulary related to food with black color. As just two students followed those instructions, it could be registered that the written instructions was not clear enough. Nonetheless, that issue did not affect the understanding of the elements that were identified.

Field note #5 afterthoughts: Text organization proved to be a reading skill that should be worked on very carefully. It was evidenced that working on this skill alone do not help the students to develop nor to acknowledge its function. Therefore, this skill should be aimed at along with words attack skill, scanning and skimming. Also, it was registered that instructions should be written more carefully so that the students can follow them easily.

5.2 WORKSHOPS ANALYSIS

Data collected from each one of the workshops was analyzed in detail taken into account the development of the reading skills by each one of the six students that performed the tasks presented to them in each one of the lessons.

First, each reading skill was matched with activities that intended to develop them in the different workshops, then they were classified, described and quantified (if possible) in detail for each one of the students (see appendix G). The information that is provided here is a summary of the results gathered from this individual analysis. The following chart presents the most common patterns resulting from the development of each reading skill in the different workshops. These patterns were taken from the assessment criteria that were established according to the objective of each workshop.

Y = YES	P = PARTIALLY	N = NO	Student					
Workshop	Criteria		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
No. 1 The fox and the grapes	The student recognizes the known words and then relates them with the content of the fable in order to retell the story on the post-reading activities.		Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
No. 2 The lion and the mouse	The student uses the acquired information regarding new vocabulary in order to relate it to the content of the story and its main idea and events.		Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
No 3. The mother crab and her son	The student identifies the dialogues presented on the fable and their relation to the main idea of the text.		N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
No 4. The wolf and the goat	The student uses the known vocabulary and presuppositions in order to understand the main idea of the fable and to infer the moral given by the text.		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
No 5. The mouse of the city and the mouse of the farm	The student uses the different reading skills in order to identify the main idea of the text and infer the moral of the fable.		Y	P	P	Y	Y	P

- **Reflection on the *process* and *results* analysis:**

Field note / Workshop #1: Five of the students used the words attack, the skimming and prediction skills properly in order to get the context of the fable. However one of the students failed in one exercise; he did not acknowledge the amount of words that was necessary in order to retell the story. In addition, the attitude of one girl was not the best; nonetheless, it can be seen that this workshop helped to develop the reading skills properly. It was acknowledged that the attitude of the girl towards the coloring activities had to be considered in

order to make the rest of the tasks more varied in order to aim at different learning styles.

Field note / Workshop #2: This workshop evidenced how five of the students used the known and new given words in order to understand the context of a fable. The development of reading skills such as words attack, presupposition, prediction and inference was partially given as a result of the implementation of new tasks that aimed at attracting students' attention. However, one of the students was not able to perform the tasks properly and consequently the way reading skills such as prediction were presented had to be reconsidered.

Field note / Workshop # 3: It is evidenced that development of text organization skill helped just half of the class to get the meaning of the whole text. Although 3 students got the meaning of the fable by the end of the class being helped by the teacher and their classmates, it is seen that this reading skill did not work for them. It was established that in order to improve the development of text organization, this skill had to be presented in tasks where the use of other skills such as words attack was included.

Field note / Workshop # 4: The implementation of collaborative learning in this workshop resulted in the successful use of words attack, presupposition, prediction and inference skills. The trouble that some students had presented regarding words attack and prediction were overcome thanks to the application of this teaching strategy. Also, the situation regarding the attitude of some students towards the proposed tasks was solved thanks to the fact that students enjoy working in groups. As an afterthought of this workshop, the researcher considered the implementation of collaborative learning, as well as the integration of all the reading skills in multiple tasks that were later included in the last workshop.

Field note / workshop # 5: The development of all the reading skills was evidenced with the implementation of this workshop. In terms of knowledge, all the students completed the tasks successfully, showing thus that the reading skills helped them in the task of getting the meaning of a text. However, three students did not follow the instructions properly which resulted in misunderstandings when completing some of the tasks. Later, it was acknowledged that the lack of precision on the writing of instructions led to that situation. On the other hand, collaborative learning proved to be worth of implementing in further pedagogical proposals. As a final acknowledgment several aspects were taken into account: (a) reading skills should be developed altogether in different tasks, (b) material and activities design should take into account the different learning styles in order to get the attention of the students, (c) instructions must be given very carefully in order to avoid misunderstandings regarding the tasks that are to be completed.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- The pre-reading, while-reading and post reading activities proposed in the workshop based on five Aesop's fables served to analyze and describe how the development of six fifth graders' reading skills was given.
- The acknowledgement of information such as strengths, weaknesses and needs of the students regarding reading served as a starting point to plan, implement, describe and analyze the proposal that intended to improve their reading skills development process.
- The design and implementation of a workshop book containing five Aesop's fables and different activities and strategies allowed the students to develop five specific reading skills that helped them achieve the purpose of their reading process.
- The students showed an improvement in the process of developing their reading skills when they worked on activities that aim at working on these skills altogether. However, when the activities proposed the development of a single reading skill, the students did not find easy to enhance it, nor to use it properly as a strategy that would improve their reading process.
- The workshop book showed that the development of reading skills is given by means of a continuous progress. Each time the students were presented with an activity that aimed at the development of specific reading skills, they showed an increasing use of them and it helped them to understand the texts they were presented with.
- The literature, methodology, techniques, tools and pedagogical strategies, such as collaborative learning, that were implemented in the

process of research, proved to be useful in order to achieve the general and specific objectives of this study.

- This study contributed to improve the didactic and pedagogical strategies that the researcher implemented during the application of the proposal. The progression made in terms of reflection and actions, resulted in the improvement of the practicum teaching of the researcher.

7. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

- As the results of this study showed the progress by which the development of reading skills was given, it is advisable to continue with this process by means of implementing more texts that are worked along even more challenging tasks and reading activities.
- A further proposal that aims at working on the development of children's reading skills must implement activities that focus on these skills altogether, for it was showed that reading skills complement each other as strategies to achieve the different purposes that reading may have.
- It is important that a further process of EFL reading teaching is continuous, and that the development of reading skills is given by means of more powerful proposals. Thus, reading programmes such as *extensive reading* should be considered to be implemented as a mean of continuing this process.
- As this study showed that pedagogical strategies such as collaborative learning prove to be useful in the EFL classroom, it is strongly recommended that they are paid even more attention in further studies. Also it is advisable that learning theories such as learning styles are given a more careful look when designing reading material, for it was evidenced that some activities did not get the attention of some students and it resulted in bad attitudes towards the workshop.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH PROJECT EVIDENCE SURVEY

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

1. ¿Hace cuánto estudias en el colegio Marco Tulio Fernández?

2. ¿Habías estudiado inglés anteriormente? ¿En dónde?

3. ¿Te gusta el idioma inglés? Si ___ no ___
¿Por qué?

4. Cuando estudiabas inglés ¿Cómo eran tus clases? ¿Te gustaban? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Qué se te facilita más del inglés?

Hablarlo ___ Leerlo ___
Escucharlo ___ Escribirlo ___

6. ¿En alguna de tus clases leías o escribías textos cortos en inglés de acuerdo a ilustraciones o dibujos?

Sí ___ No ___

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PROJECT EVIDENCE SURVEY

Teacher's name: _____

- ¿Hace cuánto tiempo ejerce la docencia en el colegio Marco Tulio Fernández?

- ¿Considera que el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera es importante en el proceso educativo formal de los niños de primaria? ¿Por qué?

- ¿Cómo considera que ha sido el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera de los estudiantes del colegio Marco Tulio Fernández?

- De acuerdo a la suma de algunos antecedentes de trabajos de investigación adelantados por los estudiantes de la Universidad Libre, se ha corroborado que el Colegio Marco Tulio Fernández en la sección de primaria no tiene un programa curricular para el área de inglés. ¿Por qué cree usted que no se la ha prestado la atención necesaria a esta necesidad?

- ¿Considera que el colegio debería ofrecer mejores oportunidades para el aprendizaje del inglés a los estudiantes?

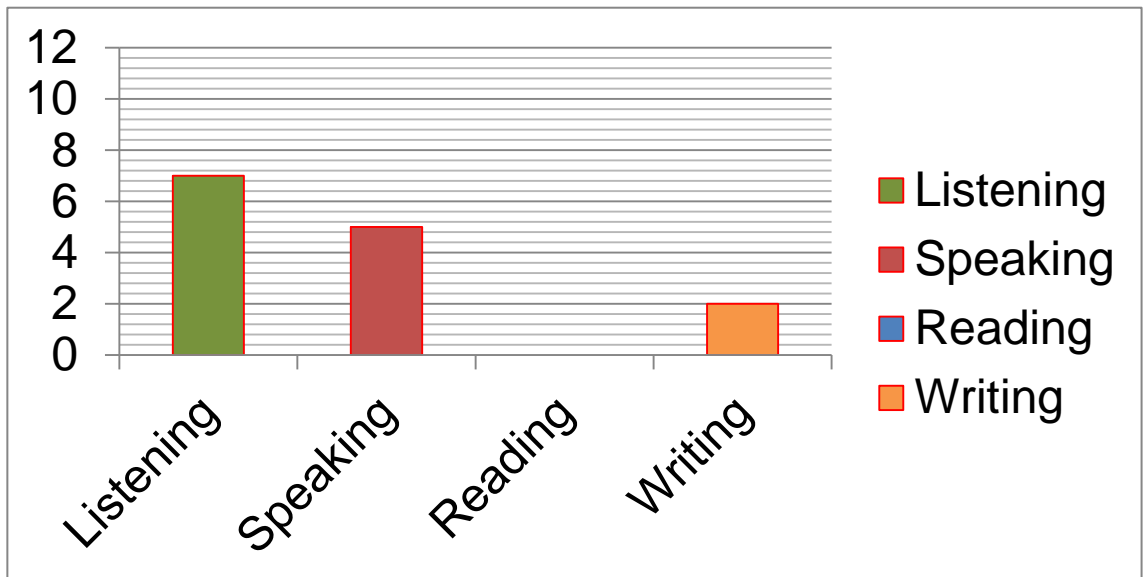
APPENDIX C

RESULTS TAKEN FROM SURVEY APPLIED TO STUDENTS

Results of question Number 5:

1. ¿Qué se te facilita más del inglés?

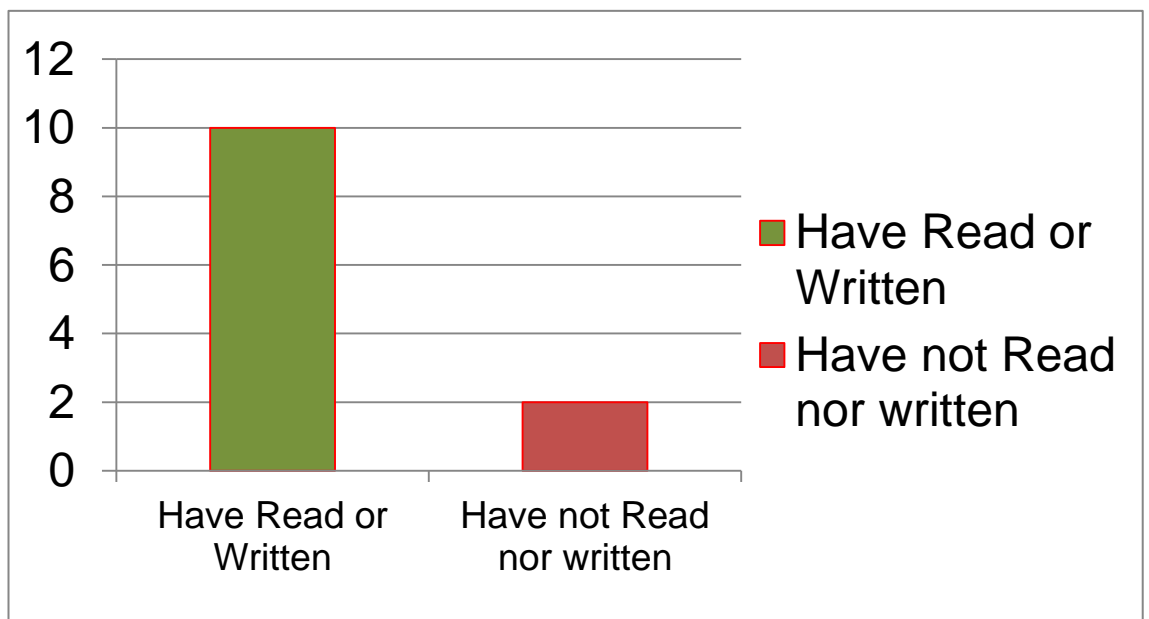
Hablarlo ___ Leerlo ___
Escucharlo ___ Escribirlo ___



Results from question number 6:

¿En alguna de tus clases leías o escribías textos cortos en inglés de acuerdo a ilustraciones o dibujos?

Sí ___ No



APPENDIX D

DIAGNOSTIC TEST ON READING Colegio Marco Tulio Fernández Sede D. Teacher: Michael Méndez

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Read the instructions carefully and answer each one of the following questions.

1. Assign each letter to a drawing according to its description and write it in the square
 - a). In the city there are many cars.
 - b). In the farm there are many animals.
 - c). In the forest there are many trees and many animals.
 - d). In my house I have a dog.

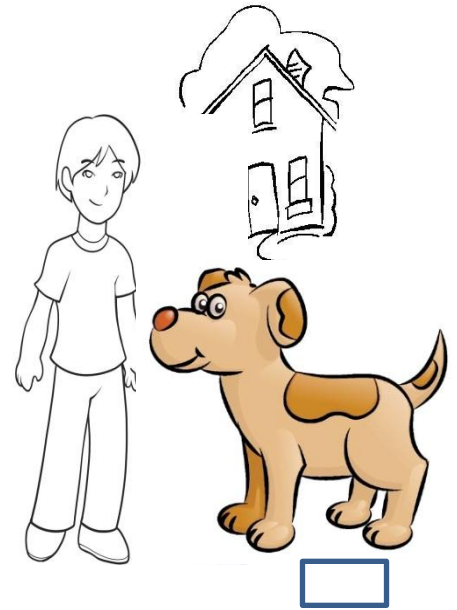


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6th November 2006

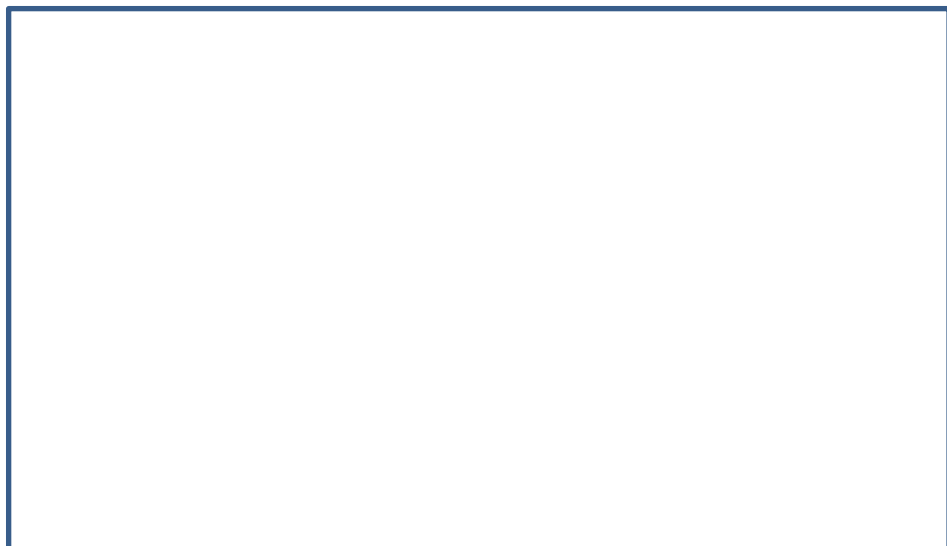
Stephen Willshaw



2. In the square, draw the main idea of the following text.

THE FARM

Long time ago in a farm, an old farmer had a dog. This dog and his friend, the cat, went out to play with the other animals. There was a cow, a pig and a hen. They all lived in the farm and every day they played different games and the farmer was very happy to have these beautiful animals.



3. Match the sentences of column A with the drawings of column B

A

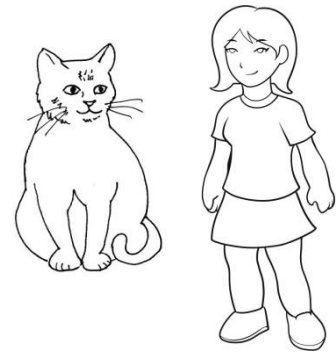
- She has a cat

- He has a cat

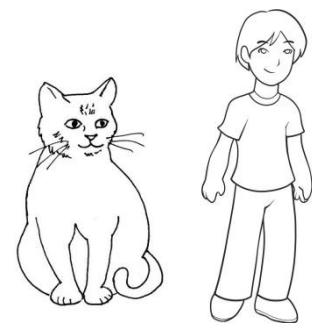
- He has a dog

- He is fat

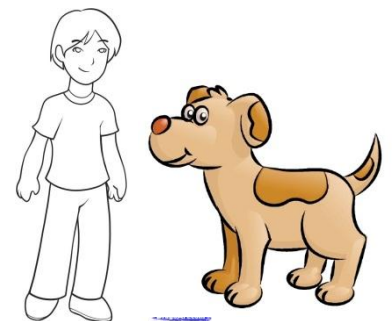
B



DingoArt.com



DingoArt.com



DingoArt.com

4. Match the sentences on the right with the drawings of the traditional seasons of the year.

In December, I like
to dress the Christmas tree



In Halloween, I eat
too much candy



On my birthday,
I cut the cake



The Independence Day
of my country is on July 20th



5. In the text underline the names of **PEOPLE** with **RED** and the names of **PLACES** with **BLUE**.


In Colombia, our president is Juan Manuel Santos. He lives in Casa de Nariño which is located in Bogotá the capital city of the country. Colombia is a very big country because it has many cities: Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla and Cartagena are some of the main cities in my country. I live in Bogotá, where my president lives. It is a very big city and my family lives there too. My grandfather, Aurelio, is from Barranquilla but he lives in the city center in Bogotá. I love my Grandfather because he taught me to love my country although he does not love our president.

6. Write the names of the characters and the names of the places of the previous story in the following chart.


Who? (Names of the characters)	Where? (Names of the places)

APPENDIX E

FIELD JOURNALS: OBSERVATION

		
<p>Field Note No 1</p>	<p>Field observation</p>	<p>Date: February 14th 2013</p>
<p>Observer/Participant: MICHAEL MÉNDEZ GRANADOS</p>		
<p>Observation objectives: To get in contact with the environment of the school and its community.</p>		
<p>Description of the environment:</p> <p>The classroom is composed by 24 students, boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 14. The room was organized in 6 rows of 3 to 4 students each one. The room was not small but it was not big either. It was a medium size classroom taking into account the number of students. However there were too many desks without being used that were along the classroom and keep people from walking freely.</p> <p>The students were taking a lesson on mathematics about multiplication. The teacher was giving instructions to some exercises and gave some time to develop them. At the end of the class the teacher assigned some homework that the students copied on their notebooks.</p> <p>Regarding the behavior, the students play and talk among them. However, there are a couple of girls and a boy who do not interact too much with their classmates. They can last a maximum of two minutes in complete silence before getting into playing and talking once again.</p>		
<p>An Afterthought: In this class the students seemed to be very eager to learn. They are very creative and full of energy. This could be profited by a teacher who wants the students to learn.</p>		



		
Field Note No 2	Field observation	Date: February 21st 2013
Observer/Participant: MICHAEL MÉNDEZ GRANADOS		
<p>Observation objectives: To establish the teaching method of the public school Marco Tulio Fernandez section C. as well as the facing of daily situations that occur in the classroom.</p>		
<p>Description of the environment:</p> <p>In this class the students are taking another lesson in mathematics. The teacher controls the behavior of the students by using his voice tone which is very high. He is constantly making questions in order to get their attention and he does reflections about behavior when is necessary. The students are constantly standing up and talking to their classmates and playing with objects and toys. The teacher, makes a pause from time to time to organize the students and the classroom. Once they are quiet they last two minutes and half in complete silence and then they start talking again.</p> <p>The teacher tries to control these situations by making the students participate. When there are other teachers in the classroom the students misbehave a lot and the head teacher must interfere in order to bring order to the class.</p>		
<p>An Afterthought: With a good voice tone and a little bit of energy, the group of students is not that difficult to deal with.</p>		



Field Note No 3

Field observation

Date: February 28th 2013

Observer/Participant: MICHAEL MÉNDEZ GRANADOS

Observation objectives:

To establish the teaching method of the public school Marco Tulio Fernandez section C. as well as the facing of daily situations that occur in the classroom.

Description of the environment:

The teaching method is too vertical. However, there is a good deal of participation on part of the students. The teacher uses a text book in order to dictate some exercises of mathematics and thus the students get to practice the topics they have studied before. The teacher gives some time to the development of the exercises and then he makes the students participate and correct their own mistakes.


The teacher stays in the front part of the classroom all the time and on rare occasions he walks through the rows. The students do not ask too much questions but they participate very eagerly when they are asked to. He motivates them with funny comments when it is necessary and he lets them go to the rest room whenever they ask.

In general he has got a very good control of the group.

An Afterthought: With a good voice tone and a little bit of energy the group of students is not that difficult to deal with.

APPENDIX F

FIELD JOURNALS: APPLICATIONS EXAMPLE

		
Field Note No 4	Workshop No4. The wolf and the goat	Date: November 12 th 2013
Observer/Participant: MICHAEL MÉNDEZ GRANADOS		
<p>Class objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students use the information they know about wolves and goats (presupposition) to make predictions of the story. • The students use the known words found in the text and use them in context to understand the main idea. • The students infer the moral of the fable based on the main idea of the fable. 		
<p>Description of the activity:</p> <p>In order to start the class the teacher organized the students and asked them to be quiet while he gave the instructions. Then he showed a picture related to the fable that would be read on that session and started asking questions to the students.</p> <p>The class was divided in groups so that the students were able to discuss some of the questions that the teacher and the workshop proposed. Once the students in their groups came to an agreement on the answers they participated and let the rest of the groups know the answers. Then the teacher gave some time for the development of the pre-reading stage of the workshop, and right after that, he starting reading aloud the text as the students repeated.</p> <p>Finally the students completed the rest of the workshop in their groups and then talked about the moral of the fable and its value to their lives. The students were very happy for they got the main idea of the text thanks to the activities of the workshop.</p>		
<p>An Afterthought: This activity showed how collaborative learning helps the students build knowledge through other people’s opinions. This workshop evidenced that the students like to work better in groups than individually and that the development of reading skills sometimes can be worked in a collaborative way.</p>		

APPENDIX G

DATA ANALYSIS FOR EACH ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This is an example of how the individual reading skills' development was analyzed

WORKSHOP No 4		
Reading skill to be described: WORDS ATTACK SKILL		
Student	Grade	Description
# 1	5.0	The student recognizes scrambled words, organizes them and uses them in context in order to understand the main idea of the text. Then he answers the proposed questions properly which evidences how the student put the known vocabulary in context.
#2	5.0	The student was able to recognize scrambled words and to organize and rewrite them in order to identify them in the text. Then the next activities show that he acknowledged the main idea of the fable by putting in context the words that he recognized.
#3	4.0	The girl is able to recognize known words in the given text. She can read and write them and thus she is able to understand the main idea of the fable. She answers the questions proposed that evidence her understanding and her way of putting the known vocabulary in context. However, once again her attitude keeps her from developing all the activities. Although she has shown that she is capable of organizing, matching and rewriting words she did not performed this task. Therefore she must be offered a wide variety of activities so that she does not get bored.
#4	4.1	As well as her classmate, this girl is able to perform all the activities. The words attack skill tasks have shown an improvement of her reading process. However her attitude towards the workshops is not the best.
#5	4.7	The student is able to recognize, organize and rewrite scrambled words that he would later use in context. The words attack skill served him to understand the reading and its contents. However, he failed to match one of the words showing that the skill does not work on him at the 100%.

#6	5.0	The student recognizes scrambled words, organizes them and uses them in context in order to understand the main idea of the text. Then he answers the proposed questions properly which evidences how the student put the known vocabulary in context.
<p>Analysis comments: This reading skill was measured thanks to an activity proposed in the workshop that was graded with numbers. That is why the students are given grades in order to evidence the development of this skill.</p>		
<p>Results comments: This skill proved to be worthy of being worked on. In spite the two exceptions, students seem to enjoy organizing words and using them in context in order to understand the main idea of a text. However, this workshop proved once again that variety must be taken into account when working on the different reading skills.</p>		

APPENDIX H

EVIDENCES OF THE APPLICATION

Students enjoyed drawing and coloring words they recognize.

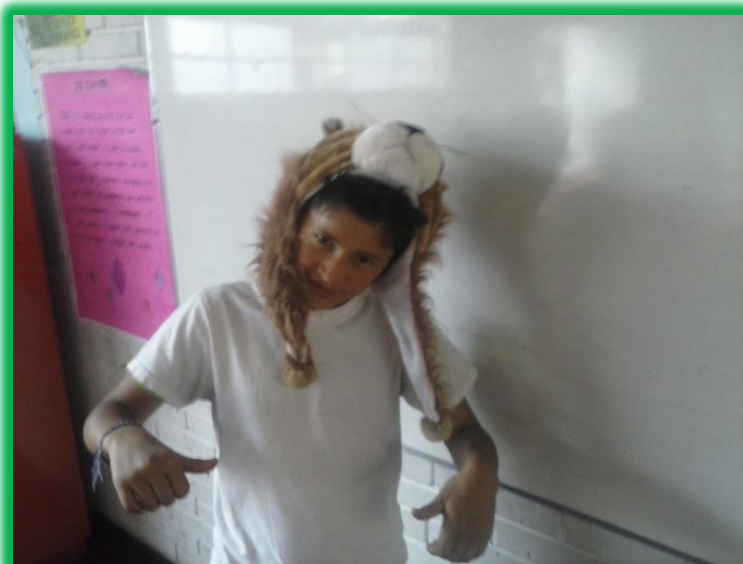


Learners completed the tasks they were presented with along the workshops.





After the implementation of the second workshop, students enjoyed playing with the stuffed animals that served as class materials.



APPENDIX I

WORKSHOP EXAMPLE

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

PRE-READING

1. Look at the picture and discuss with your classmates:

- Do you think the wolf is dangerous?
- Is he going to eat the goat?
- Do you think the goat is scared?
- How do you think the story goes? Tell it to your classmates.



VOCABULARY

2. Organize the words and match them to the correct picture.

UOSEH



LFOW



OROF



TAGO



3. In the squares, write the words you organized

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Wolves and goats are natural enemies? Wolves often hunt goats to eat. However, it is not easy for the wolves to hunt the goats, because goats know how to climb high places.



READING

4. Read the fable, underline the known words and then answer the questions

The Wolf and the goat

A goat was on the roof of a house, and looking down, he saw a wolf passing under him. Immediately, he began to insult and attack his enemy.

He said:

"Murderer and thief, why do you walk near my house?"



Get out of here!!"

And then the wolf said:

"Silence, my young friend."

And then he walked away.

- What animal was standing on the roof of the house?

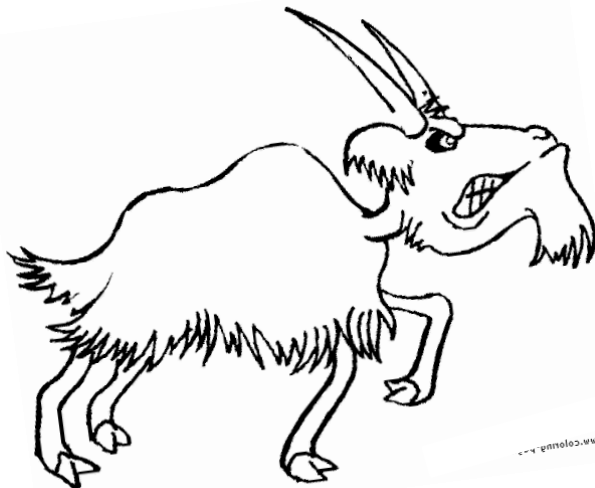
- What animal was passing under the house?

- The expression “walked away” in the text means

- a. The wolf ate the goat
- b. The wolf insulted the goat
- c. The wolf left the place and continued walking
- d. The wolf climbed to the roof of the house

- Why do you think the goat insulted and attacked the wolf?

- a. Because wolfs eat goats and he thought the wolf was going to eat him
- b. Because he was angry and wanted to attack somebody
- c. Because the wolf insulted the goat first
- d. Because the wolf was ugly and the goat was scared



POST-READING

5. Discuss with your classmates your opinion about the moral of the fable
 - Were your opinions similar?
 - Did you agree on a common moral?

6. What was the moral of the fable? Choose the correct one

Moral: It is easy to insult your enemies so that they don't eat you



Moral: It is easy to be brave from a safe distance.



Moral: Climb to the roof of the houses to insult your enemies



APPENDIX J

LESSON PLAN EXAMPLE

Workshop No 4	
Title:	The wolf and the goat.
Date:	November 12 th 2013
Number of students:	Six Fifth graders.
Lesson Length:	2 hours.
Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students use the information they know about wolves and goats (presupposition) to make predictions of the story. • The students use the known words found in the text and use them in context to understand the main idea. • The students infer the moral of the fable based on the main idea of the fable.
Reading Skills to be developed:	Prediction, presupposition, words attack skill and inference.
Reading Stages	
Pre-reading	At this stage, students will find four questions to discuss with their classmates and to participate in class. These questions are going to be answered based on the title of the fable and a picture depicting a goat that climbed to the roof of a house and a wolf walking nearby. These questions are going to measure the presuppositions students have about wolfs and goats and that will lead them to predict the story of the fable. Right after that, there is an activity of words attack skill in which the students will have to organize the scrambled letters of four known words

	and then they will have to match them to the correct picture that is given in a column. Then they will have to write the words they organized, so that they can acknowledge the correct spelling of them.
While-reading	At this stage, the students will read the fable individually and then they will underline the known words. The four words they organized in the previous stage must be underlined in the text and related to its context in order to understand the main idea of it (words attack skill). They also have to answer some literal information questions that will serve to assess if the students were able to relate the words to the context of the fable and got the main idea.
Post-reading	At this stage the students will center their attention on the moral of the fable. They are going to be asked to discuss about the moral with their classmates so that they all can infer it based on the main idea of the text. Three different options of moral will be shown to the students so that they can choose what they think is the correct one. They will infer the moral based on their presuppositions and on the context of the text.
Comments:	<p>This workshop focuses on inference as a reading skill. This skill will be assessed by means of the while-reading and post-reading activities.</p> <p>The fable presented on this workshop does not give the moral in an explicit way, so that the students can infer it from the context of what they read and the presuppositions and predictions they made.</p> <p>The moral has been given more attention on this workshop so that the students can acknowledge better this important element of the fable.</p>

	Finally, collaborative working has been implemented on this workshop in order to have the students interact with their classmates as well as with the text.
--	---

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES TO EVALUATE LEARNERS

There will be three aspects to be taken into account in the assessment of the class. Concepts acknowledgement, performance and attitude.
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Concepts acknowledgment

This item will be assessed according to how the students use the known vocabulary and presuppositions in order to understand the main idea of the fable and to infer the moral given by the text.

1-2	The student cannot recognize the known vocabulary in the fable, nor relate it to the main idea; therefore he cannot infer the moral given by the text.
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3-4	The student recognizes the known vocabulary in the fable and relates it to the main idea of the text, but cannot infer the moral given by the story.
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4-5	The student recognizes the known vocabulary, relates it to the text and is able to infer the moral of the fable correctly.
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Performance

This workshop has its own way of assessment, for it has concrete activities to be developed by the student. Moreover, pronunciation will be assessed in quality and not in quantity throughout the different stages of the class.

Attitude

Students would be graded by their participation, and on how did they communicate to their classmates and teacher by giving and receiving information about the known words of the fable.
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