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Comprehension Improvement through Reading Strategies

Nelly Patricia ÁVILA DAZA

Alba Lucia VÉLEZ CASAS

Research Report submitted

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Directed by Jair AYALA ZÁRATE

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

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COMPREHENSION IMPROVEMENT THROUGH READING STRATEGIES

Declaration

I hereby declare that my research report entitled:

Comprehension Improvement through Reading Strategies

- is the result of our own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared and specified in the text;
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Date: August 19th, 2016

Full Name: Nelly Patricia Avila Daza

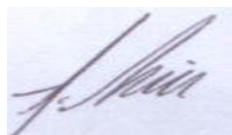
Signature:



Date: August 19th, 2016

Full Name: Alba Lucia Velez Casas

Signature:



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Abstract

This small-scale qualitative action research study analyzed the impact of using scaffolding with different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlight and visualizing) to assist participants in reading comprehension using readings from Key English Test. The study was conducted with A1 English level ninth graders according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) at two public schools in Bogotá, Colombia. Participants revealed difficulties with reading comprehension in English due to lack of vocabulary and reading skills. Data was collected through KET, surveys, students' and teachers' journals and was analyzed through the grounded theory method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The KET besides being an instrument in the investigation, served to provide material which guided the proposed lesson plans for this study supporting the application of the reading strategies taught because they provided an opportunity to use the scaffolding approach.

Research results revealed that reading strategies taught through a scaffolding approach and familiarity with the structure of KET had a positive influence on the learners' reading comprehension skills. Specifically, they helped build students own path to read, understand a text main idea, locate specific information and overcome the lack of vocabulary. This study advances foreign language reading research by extending the understanding of how learners can develop reading comprehension skills and deal with lack of vocabulary while reading in a foreign language. It also offers meaningful lessons for teachers of first and second languages.

Key words: Reading comprehension; Reading Strategies, Scaffolding; KET.

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación cualitativa en pequeña escala, analizó el impacto de usar andamiaje con diferentes estrategias de lectura para asistir a los participantes en la comprensión de lectura en inglés como lenguaje extranjero. El estudio fue conducido con estudiantes de grado noveno con inglés básico según el Marco Común Europeo para las Lenguas (MCER), en dos colegios del sector público de Bogotá, Colombia. Los participantes demostraron dificultades para comprender lecturas en inglés debido a la falta de vocabulario, habilidades de lectura y la limitada exposición a la lectura de textos en este idioma. Los datos fueron recogidos a través de exámenes (KET), encuestas, diarios de estudiantes y diarios de profesores y fueron analizados a través del método de teoría fundamentada (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). La prueba KET además de ser un instrumento en la investigación, sirvió para proveer material que guiara las lecciones propuestas para este estudio.

Los resultados revelaron que las estrategias de lectura enseñadas a través del enfoque de andamiaje y la familiaridad con la estructura del examen KET tuvieron un impacto positivo en las habilidades de comprensión de lectura de los estudiantes. Específicamente, estas estrategias ayudaron a construir hábitos de lectura, entender la idea principal, ubicar información específica dentro de los textos y superar la falta de vocabulario. En conclusión, este estudio fomenta la investigación de la lectura en un idioma extranjero, ya que extiende nuestro entendimiento en cómo los aprendices pueden desarrollar las habilidades de comprensión de lectura y manejar la falta de vocabulario mientras leen en un idioma extranjero, así como ofrece lecciones significativas para los docentes de lengua materna y segunda lengua.

Palabras claves: Comprensión de lectura; Estrategias de lectura, Andamiaje; Examen KET.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

Reading is an essential competence that allows to comprehend and to learn from texts. The process of reading implies more than decoding language or recognizing words (Nuttall, 1996); it also implies being able to understand the meaning of the text in order to respond to it. Reading is relevant for both academic purposes and for accessing general, cultural, scientific, and technological data as well, all of which come from different sources of information. Nevertheless, reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is not an easy process as it requires strategies that help learners understand general (primary) and specific (secondary) ideas and overcome lack of vocabulary.

Many researchers around the world are concerned with the importance of this skill and how to deal with the difficulties learners face in this process (Guo, 2011; Jeon & Yamashita, 2014; Lerva^og & Aukrust, 2010; Nuttall, 1996). These studies have been directed to look for effective reading strategies that facilitate reading comprehension. One of these strategies is based on three stages of reading: pre-reading, reading and post-reading. Attarzadeh 's research (2011) studied the implications of these phases on reading comprehension and showed the effectiveness and the benefits they have for improving comprehension while reading.

We based our research on a Scaffolding Approach, which provides students with transitory supports, so that they may progress and master how to deal with the difficulties by themselves (Graves, Watts, & Graves, 1994). This gradual progress was achieved on reading by the temporary teacher's guidance in terms of exercising specially designed strategies through the three reading phases at Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco José de Caldas and Carlos Pizarro

Leongómez School in Bogotá, Colombia, where reading comprehension difficulties of two groups of forty students were evidenced in Key English Test (KET) results.

We carried out this approach designing ten lessons based on KET reading exam since this exam increases the difficulty of the texts in each one of the sections to help the students develop their reading comprehension competence in EFL gradually. This test was also used to measure the students reading comprehension before and after the implementation because it shows if the students can understand simple written information (University of Cambridge, 2011).

Consequently, scaffolding approach, reading strategies and material of international standard tests (KET) were foundations for the design of lessons which provided the students with opportunities to develop different reading skills required to understand texts in English as Foreign language.

1.2 Rationale of the study

1.2.1. Needs analysis and problem statement. We observed that students from the two schools had difficulties with reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, considering their low scores in a reading diagnostic test applied to the two groups at the beginning of this study to determine their English level as well as the previous low results of both institutions in Prueba Saber 11. These scores showed how difficulties specifically in decoding because of the lack of vocabulary, understanding the main idea and locating specific information within a text affected their reading understanding during the tests.

According to the Colombian National Standards, ninth grade students should mainly handle reading comprehension by identifying the parts of a narrative as well as its purpose when it is a medium length text; graphically representing the information of texts; understanding implicit information in texts related to topics of their interest, and appreciating reading

comprehension as an important activity for all the aspects of their lives, including the cultural elements presented in simple texts.

As stated by the parameters set by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (M.E.N) on the curriculum guidelines, Prueba Saber 11 evaluate the students' English level using the CEFR as its reference and consider level B1 to be the ideal level to be achieved by Colombian students of the senior year. This level describes a person who “can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension” (Council of Europe, 2001). The results of the test in English has evidenced that students, especially from public schools, do not achieve these goals. Many attribute the low scores to lack of reading strategies which support in mastering new vocabulary, and limited exposure to reading in general according to what we observed and the students' perception during the first test. This becomes a challenge for teachers as for the Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá (S.E.D), which seeks to provide students with a valuable level of reading comprehension as it is an essential skill required for this exam.

Furthermore, it is important to say that reading is a highly effective means of extending our command of language (Nuttall, 1996). Consequently, it is essential to foster the linguistic competencies of EFL students. Indeed, reading demands the use of specific strategies to be developed by the students, which help them to be actively involved in the language learning process.

Considering the features mentioned before, one of the purposes of this research was to promote the use of different reading strategies using the scaffolding approach to overcome the students' difficulties while reading in international standard tests (KET). These strategies were selected based on the reading skills evaluated in KET to measure the ability to understand

English in simple situations, the students' perception about their difficulties while reading in English collected in surveys and the researchers' observations made during the implementation of the diagnosis test.

1.2.2 Justification of problem's significance. Although Colombia is not a bilingual country, English learning is a part of the educational context and a need of the country's culture. This global language has been taken up by many countries around the world as a Second (ESL) or Foreign Language (EFL) (Crystal, 2003). Colombia is one of the countries and has adopted EFL based on the need to be involved and competitive in a global world where economy, technology, and culture are led by nations where people speak English as their first language or second language. English has become a language that should be taught based on the need to use it within our globalized context in business, education, culture, technology and entertainment. Reading can be an excellent option to start its learning due to the easy access to authentic material in this language. The relevance of this skill is mainly caused by the perception of reading as a means to interact with and learn from the world (Freire, 1983). Thus, the process of making meaning from a text becomes the most important issue to obtain information about many areas of knowledge worldwide. Indeed, reading comprehension can be seen as the main goal to work on in Colombian educational institutions to help students deal with the difficulties that affect their efficiency while being tested by the national exam (Prueba Saber 11), since they continually show a low level on it. Teachers are concerned about effective strategies that assist students in overcoming their difficulties on this skill, particularly in EFL. In light of the above, this study aims at evaluating the effects of scaffolding while using different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, mind mapping, activating previous knowledge, making

connections, highlight and visualizing) to overcome the difficulties while reading in English through KET.

1.2.3 Strategy selected to address problem. Reading comprehension requires learners to improve vocabulary. This situation can be handled through the perception that readers integrate the new information from the text into their pre-existing schemata (Wallace, 2001). Hence, readers need to implement effective strategies that facilitate them infer the schema of unfamiliar words found in the text from words they already know.

Among other studies, Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1976) and Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, & Slansky (2012) have shown that scaffolding is a successful approach that students can use in order to progress step-by-step activities, which teach the learners specific abilities that lead to the improvement of reading comprehension (Attarzadeh, 2011; Fisher & Frey N, 2015). Therefore, we selected scaffolding to assist students while reading with a structured process to infer and get the meaning of the text as a whole as well as its parts. Scaffolding was implemented through different reading strategies to provide the students with the opportunities to learn them and apply the most appropriate ones for each case.

1.3 Research question(s) and objective(s)

Based on the presented setting and difficulties that students have to overcome, our proposal is focused on using an International Standard Test (KET) to implement the scaffolding approach to improve the communicative and linguistic abilities from the two chosen groups from the public schools Carlos Pizarro Leongómez Institución I.E.D and Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco José de Caldas I.E.D.

The overall research aims of this study are:

- To promote the use of different reading strategies using the scaffolding approach to overcome the difficulties while reading in international standard tests (KET).
- To evaluate the effects of scaffolding while using different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, mind mapping, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlight and visualizing) to overcome the difficulties while reading in English through KET.

We seek to address the question: To what extent does scaffolding approach on specific EFL reading strategies influence reading comprehension of ninth graders in international standard test KET?

To answer this question, it is necessary to answer the following sub-questions:

- What are the challenges encountered by the students and teachers in EFL reading comprehension?
- What are the changes evidenced on students in EFL reading comprehension after implementing scaffolding?

1.4 Conclusion

Reading in a foreign language is a crucial ability to be developed in academic context, especially where learners have low proficiency (Perry, 2013). People may have diverse reasons for reading. For educational purposes, reading in a foreign language introduces the speaker to a new world and a new culture (Nuttall, 1996). The most important aspect is that students embrace foreign language learning in order to enlarge opportunities for meeting the challenges that the current academic environment demands, such as proficiency exams to enter or graduate from college as well as to access job opportunities. In this sense, we took into account the educational

purpose in foreign language readers who need to improve their reading skill in order to become better readers according to the latest academic tendencies and needs in the world.

The incorporation of four important concepts such as reading skills, scaffolding approach reading strategies and the familiarity with KET are the basis for adjusting the learners' needs according to the parameters stated by the M.E.N in the curricular guidelines, which also follow the development of a modern globalized society and are evaluated by different international standard tests such as KET.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Regarding the observed problem of low reading comprehension level in the students from public institutions in Colombia and how it affects their performance in the Prueba Saber 11 and their learning goals, we set the chosen approach and strategies to meet EFL students' needs. Therefore, we reviewed relevant constructs along with previous research, especially regarding reading, reading comprehension, scaffolding approach, reading strategies and international standard tests (KET). The purpose of the review was to get a grasp of how other researchers intended to improve reading comprehension.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Reading. It is a human ability that goes beyond decoding (Nuttall, 1996). It is a process that also involves identification and perception from the smallest unit of language to the largest one to draw the message (Goodman, 1967). In the present study, we aimed at promoting the use of different reading strategies using the scaffolding approach to overcome difficulties while reading in multiple choice test such as KET and Prueba Saber 11 through different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlight and visualizing). This allowed the students make progress on reading comprehension along the way.

Foreign language reading is a complex process that includes prior knowledge, word recognition, metacognition, intratextual perceptions, syntactic, phonemic and graphemic features recognition (Bernhardt, 1991). According to Grabe & Stoller (2001), reading is the relations of the elements mentioned above to drawing meaning and interpreting information appropriately from the text. Likewise, Alderson (2000) defines reading as a "process of interaction between a

reader and the text” (p. 3). In this sense, for this study reading is a complex process that includes knowledge, word recognition, metacognition, intratextual perceptions, syntactic, phonemic and graphemic features recognition to interact with a written text.

2.2.2 Reading Comprehension. It requires the learners to obtain the message from the writer, bearing in mind the knowledge of the context (Quiroga, 2010). This message is abstracted and built by a reader from his/her own interpretation of the text meaning (Rudell & Unrau, 2004). Moreover, the interpretation is supported by the schemata or hypothetical mental structure that represents concepts and has been created through previous experiences in the world (Ajideh, 2003).

Regarding vocabulary knowledge, the lack of vocabulary can be confronted with the use of pre-existing schemata. Previous schemata in the brain, which are stimulated by keywords or statements into an active specific context, activate new words (Cook, 1989). The ability to anticipate meaning of unknown words is crucial for reading and for listening as well (Goodman, 1967). For our study and according to the context where it was carried out, *reading comprehension* means the ability of EFL learners from public schools in Bogotá to understand the main idea and specific information given in a written text. Thus, it can be improved through the use of different reading strategies to deal with the lack of vocabulary and other difficulties. Therefore, teachers can provide strategies allowing connections to be established between the previous and the current knowledge through prediction (Floyd & Carrell, 1987). They help readers to activate the previous schema to infer new ones from the context, topic or meaning (Chia, 2001).

One form that teachers can support this process is through the stages of pre-reading, while reading and post-reading (Appleman & Graves, 2012) where the student/learner can

develop specific abilities. In this sense, these three moments through scaffolding guide the students to achieve reading comprehension of a text and overcome the possible difficulties with new vocabulary.

2.2.3 Reading Strategies. Recently, reading instruction has concerned many researchers (Ghavamnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2013; Maarof & Yaacob, 2009; Tsai, Ernst, & Talley, 2010) who have helped the students to grow into skilled readers. Different reading strategies and concepts have emerged to support students' self-reliance and increase their reading comprehension. For instance, Duffy (1993) defines reading strategies as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (p. 232). Likewise, Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris (2008) states that reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text. Thus, these strategies can be taught to help students improve reading comprehension, since they provide the students with specific procedures to overcome difficulties such as lack of vocabulary while reading.

Reading strategies should be teachable to benefit students and strengthen their comprehension in reading tests (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). Additionally, another research work (Block, 1986) has also illustrated how readers perceive an assignment, what textual cues they pay attention to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand. Janzen (1996) has stated that reading comprehension strategies are categorized from elementary strategies such as simply rereading problematic segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more complex reading comprehension strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge.

Research about reading strategies has been concentrated on readers who struggle in understanding different types of texts and they have been addressed in a first language and a second language. Therefore, reading strategies can be trained to support and assist the students' reading comprehension while reading in English as foreign language.

2.2.4 Scaffolding. The idea of Scaffolding as a teaching strategy refers to an exercise that empowers a learner to sort out a difficulty, perform an assignment or reach an objective (Wood et al., 1976). Additionally, it facilitates students' transition from assisted to independent performance with temporal teacher instruction (Cooper et al., 2012). It shows the students' progress where they go from total dependency to taking the majority of the responsibility to complete the task (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). For this point, Vygotsky (1978), referring to the zone proximal development, suggests that children can become independent after using repeated experiences guided by adults. In the same manner, scaffolding can be used through repetition in order to train autonomous students in developing habits of reading in EFL.

This process was gradual as students progressed, bit by bit, from situations in which the teacher had the majority of the responsibility to situations in which students had all the responsibility (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). Consequently, they became more independent every time they read (Anderson, Armbruster, & Roe, 1990). Thus, it was necessary to draw a path and guide students through some tasks which were increasingly difficult (Reiser, 2004).

Hence, reading strategies such as guessing the meaning from the context, inferring meaning from text clues, and predicting background knowledge to monitor comprehension by verbalizing a confusing point to overcome problems with word recognition or comprehension, as (Vacca & Vacca, 2005) become essential steps to implement the lessons based on scaffolding approach. Different levels of text complexity also provide the students with opportunities to

improve their reading comprehension gradually (Brown, 1999). In this way, the students can start reading isolated words, then simple sentences and compound one to finish reading more complex text.

Likewise, the three phases of reading (pre-reading, while reading and post-reading) are the base of the scaffolding (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2005). These phases help the students to structure mental and reading process in order to create a way to address reading. In this way, students get ready to face the text through pre-reading activities, interact with it to discover new worlds and information in while reading activities, and revise comprehension of the text and consider the author's ideas in post-reading activities (Appleman & Graves, 2012).

The two main goals of pre-reading activities are: to establish the purpose for reading and to activate the students' prior knowledge of the topic (Graves, Juel, Graves, & Dewitz, 2011). In this phase, teacher develops activities which relate the reading to students' lives, motivates them, activates and builds background knowledge, provides text-specific knowledge, pre-teaches vocabulary, pre-teaches concepts, pre-questions, predicts, directs setting and suggests strategies (Clark & Graves, 2005). Hence, these activities can be planned to activate the student's previous knowledge about the topic of the reading and get ready for what they have to face while reading stage.

In the case of *while reading* activities, their aim is comprehension (Graves et al., 2011). During these activities, the teacher implements silent reading, reading to students, oral reading by students and modifying reading. Thereby, activities and path to read can be designed and implemented by the teachers to facilitate students' understanding of the text. These activities can be focused on specific parts of the text, such as the main idea or different parts of speech in order to increase their comprehension and develop different reading skills.

2.2.5 Key English Test (KET). This is an international standard test that demonstrates a person can use English to communicate in simple situations. It is designed by Cambridge University and is developed using the principles and approaches of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the internationally accepted system for describing language ability (University of Cambridge, 2011).

The test was designed to evaluate learners in A2 (which is the level of the participants of this research according to the CEFR), the ability to use English in simple situations. This test in reading section mainly shows that candidates are able to understand the main message and some details of a variety of short factual reading texts such as signs, notices, instructions, brochures, guides, personal correspondence and informative articles from newspapers and magazines. Candidates should also have strategies for dealing with unfamiliar structures and vocabulary (University of Cambridge, 2011). This section of KET has a similar structure to Prueba Saber 11, national exam implemented in Colombia to students in senior year.

2.3 State of the art

2.3.1 Previous research on Scaffolding. Scaffolding has been a concept that several researchers (Cooper et al., 2012; Izquierdo Castillo & Jiménez Bonilla, 2014; Scharlach, 2008), among others, have worked to foster autonomy during the last years. These studies have demonstrated the benefits that scaffolding brings to the students' transition from assisted to independent performance with temporal teacher instruction. However, we focused our study on the use of scaffolding for improving the students' comprehension while moving from one reading stage to another.

Additionally, Appleman & Graves (2012) showed that the use of scaffolding during the three phases of reading mentioned above, can help the students to structure mental and reading

processes in order to create a way to address reading. Therefore, students get ready to face the text through pre-reading activities, interact with it to discover new worlds and information during reading activities, and revise comprehension of the text and consider the author's ideas on post-reading activities.

Considering another study conducted by Attarzadeh (2011), students from Iran were conducted through the three reading stages by using scaffolding strategies such as modeling, guiding, and practicing to reduce students' dependence while reading. This allowed the students to face different types of texts which improved their second language proficiency in reading. In relation to our study, we designed lessons based on the three reading stages to foster reading skills while they handle different types of text provided by KET.

Fisher and Frey (2015) implemented scaffolding on reading to a group of one hundred students from seventh and eighth grade in the USA. This study was carried out through short texts which provided students with opportunities to practice specific reading strategies. To make this possible, the teachers modeled the process and allowed students to work collaboratively in order to reduce their dependency. This methodology allowed students to get used to some reading practices and improve their comprehension. Although this study is different to ours in terms of population, kind of texts and implementation structure, it has many similarities in terms of strategies and methodology implemented.

As shown in the next section, how other researchers shared with us the implementation of scaffolding to improve reading comprehension in reading tests through different reading strategies.

2.3.2 Previous research on Reading Comprehension. Reading comprehension is a huge term that addresses many different aspects. Even though, this research is focused on reading in English as a foreign language (EFL), not many researchers have written regarding this specific topic. That is why we will describe studies on reading in a second language, which brings us closer to our purpose. Different studies (Alkhaldeh, 2012; Echeverri & McNulty, 2010; Quiroga, 2010) have concerned and contributed to teaching reading in English as a second language around the world. Among these studies, we can highlight three which have influenced our research.

For our research, the most relevant correlate is vocabulary knowledge, since we noticed the students' lack of vocabulary affected their comprehension in reading tests. In this regard, the study of Lervåg and Aukrust (2010) stated that vocabulary knowledge should be a significant determinant in L2 learners reading comprehension development. This study was carried out with second-grade students in a Norwegian school. It presented the lack of vocabulary as a limitation in the progress of the reading acquisition skill. In their conclusion, the authors mentioned that vocabulary training should be provided to L2 learners as a first concern. Thus, in our pedagogical intervention, we provided students with an inferring strategy in the first sessions to help them identify the meaning of unknown words in order to obtain a better idea of what they were reading.

This prior idea was confirmed in Guo's study (2011) which concluded with the importance of vocabulary knowledge for successful L2 reading. This research was conducted in a group of adults who presented limited vocabulary knowledge and were tested through different standardized reading tests. During the implementation, the students were evaluated to determine the relationship between their L2 language-specific knowledge (vocabulary and syntactic

awareness) and the L2 reading comprehension. This point reinforced our idea of providing students with appropriate reading strategies such as making inference to overcome the lack of vocabulary and consequently, improve reading comprehension.

Jeon and Yamashita (2014) could identify extensive findings from a group of sixth graders. This study evidenced that reading comprehension in L2 has four correlates which must be considered in teaching: L2 decoding, L2 vocabulary knowledge, L2 grammar knowledge and first language reading comprehension, which are affected by age, L2 proficiency, L1-L2 script and language distance. To obtain these findings, the researchers implemented different reading tests which required specific reading correlates in order to be evaluated. In this point, we can identify that KET, in our research, became a useful tool to work and evaluate reading comprehension and its correlates.

The prior studies have demonstrated that different reading strategies can be used in order to influence the reading comprehension according to the aims of each research.

2.3.3 Previous research on the use of Scaffolding to improve reading comprehension in international reading tests. Safadi & Rababah (2012) compared the traditional method with the scaffolding strategy through the results of pre-tests and post-tests, and found that reading phases improved the inferential level, thus the students related the previous schemata with new ones to infer meanings in order to solve the problem with lack of vocabulary. It has guided our research to implement Scaffolding to overcome this difficulty presented in our students while reading in English as Second language.

Meanwhile, Stinnett (2010) and Liang (2011) have found students are able to improve their reading comprehension and it was appreciated in multiple-choice exams. These two studies' findings showed us that scaffolding has positive effects on the performance students present in

multiple-choice exams such as Prueba saber 11, and took us to select different reading strategies implemented through Scaffolding to provide the students with training to face texts taken from this type of test.

A further study by (Dabarera, Renandya, & Lawrence, 2014) in Singapore with government secondary school students revealed that the usage of scaffolding strategies is related to a positive relationship between raising students' awareness and improving in reading comprehension. To reach this conclusion, the researchers implemented the test International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) from the University of New South Wales before and after the intervention. This exam is skill-based and assesses students every year. During the process, the teachers modeled reading strategies and reduced assistance gradually. The evaluation and pedagogical intervention are both equivalent to the processes implemented during our research.

2.3.4 Justification of research question/objectives. The research question was conceived thinking about the possibility of influencing reading comprehension of ninth grade students to face different International Standard Tests. The idea of using this kind of test emerged from the need to make reading comprehension visible. Therefore, we selected KET, a very similar exam to ICFES (Instituto Colombiano para el fomento de la Educación Superior) tests applied to senior students in Colombia as well as different reading strategies which helped the students to handle their reading difficulties in English. KET allowed the students to be familiar with the structure of the test during the implementation stage. Besides, the structure of KET provided the students with reading activities in the lessons that gradually increase their degree of difficulty, leading students to move from simple to more complex levels of comprehension.

The scaffolding approach was considered as the instrument to train students to be autonomous at the moment of reading while inferring or guessing the meaning of words in the context of a text because we noticed with the application of the proficiency test that students were too dependent of external aids like the dictionary.

2.4 Conclusion

For the purpose of this research, previous studies that have proved that the use of different reading strategies can improve reading comprehension have been taken into consideration. Likewise, the theory has clarified that scaffolding is an efficient approach to guide the students from the easier reading strategies to the more complex.

The definitions of constructs and the existing studies are a tool to articulate and support the present research project. The present chapter described the theory that explains how to deal with the problem under study and reinforce the idea of implementing seven reading comprehension strategies to overcome the reading difficulties in ninth grade students from both public institutions, which were mentioned in the previous chapter. The planning and implementation of those strategies and the scaffolding approach during the three stages of reading in an EFL classroom to face an international standardized test are explained in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of the type of study to address the context needs in which it was carried out. The chapter also presents a brief discussion about the ethical considerations of the study, an account of the participants, and of the data collection instruments is also given to present the way they were piloted and used during the pedagogical implementation that later permitted their examination to check the effect and effectiveness of the reading strategies applied as well as the ways in which validity and reliability were achieved.

3.2 Type of study

The current study was a small-scale qualitative action research (Burns, 2010), in which the teachers intended to use Key English Test (KET) as the tool to measure the students' reading comprehension before and after the implementation, and as the material to plan the lessons of the intervention detecting the effects of the implementation on it. This study was conducted with two specific groups and in two different institutes where students revealed difficulties with reading comprehension because of the lack of vocabulary and reading strategies in the result of the diagnosis test. We proposed scaffolding as an approach to implement different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlighting and visualizing) in order to help participants face difficulties and improve their reading comprehension.

To collect data, the study followed the five steps suggested by Creswell (2012): determining the participants; obtaining permissions needed, considering what type of information to collect, selecting and designing the instruments to do it and administering the data

collection process. This process was always guided by the research question to achieve the proposed objectives.

3.3 Context

This study was carried out in two different public schools at Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco Jose de Caldas and Colegio Carlos Pizarro Leongómez IED in Bogotá, Colombia. The involved schools' main purpose is to offer quality education to the population of low socioeconomic status in their community. The two schools offer three hours a week of English language instruction and the English syllabus is based on the *Estandares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006): Ingles*, in which students are required to achieve a B1 level from ninth grade to eleventh grade. The Ministry of Education (MEN), through the Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior (ICFES), applies an exam to test all Colombian students in eleventh grade to determine if students have reached a B1 level based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages -CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). However, the students from ninth to eleventh grades at these two schools show an A1 level of English proficiency based on the results from the diagnosis test.

3.3.1 Participants. Two groups of forty students from ninth grade between 13 and 16 years old participated in the study. They belong to middle socioeconomic levels and come from Bogotá, Colombia. The placement test results placed most of these students in a basic level of English as a Foreign Language, which corresponds to A1 in the CEFR. In regards to their reading skills, the participants could read isolated words about basic vocabulary related to colors, animals, numbers, months, days, nationality, family members and some actions. However, they needed to infer the meaning of words from a text to get the main idea and they showed

difficulties to comprehend a text because of lack of vocabulary and reading strategies. Some of the causes of the students' low performance in reading are the lack of habits of reading in Spanish and the little exposure to English texts.

3.3.2 Researcher's role. The role of the researchers was mainly of participant-as-observer. The researcher became part of the participants' educational lives (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007); the researchers should be present during the implementation to observe the changes and be part of the process. In this study, the researchers were immersed in observation of the participants' reactions toward the scaffolding strategy implemented to make necessary adjustments to the instruments and procedures used in this study.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations. Research ethics concern conducting investigations in moral and responsible ways (Burns, 2010). To guarantee this, two types of permission must be considered: first, permission from the school board; second, consent to inform and gain the students' participation. In this study, a consent letter and a consent form were used (**Appendix A: Consent Letter for the Principal** and **Appendix B: Consent Letter for Participants and their Parents**). The former was to inform the school principals about the research project and to obtain approval. The latter was written to inform the students about the research project and gain their consent and that of their parents' to participate.

3.4 Data collection instruments

Researchers collected data, which were gathered by applying one multiple-choice test to analyze the reading comprehension level of the students who participated. A survey (**Appendix D: Initial and Final Survey**) was also applied before and after the implementation to know and compare which reading strategies the students used to read in English and their perceptions about their reading comprehension. Two teachers' journals helped to track the researchers' perception

upon the effectiveness of the use of scaffolding and reading strategies while the participants read. Moreover, the journal written by the students gathered data about students' perception of the reading strategies used and their own reading comprehension during the implementation. These instruments permitted participants to express their ideas as well as the researchers to recognize and validate their findings by monitoring and observing what happened in connection with the research problem.

3.4.1 Descriptions and justifications.

3.4.1.1 KET. KET are multiple-choice exams used to establish reading comprehension progress through efficient scoring (Bensoussan & Ramraz, 1984; Hammerly, 1984). This test is very similar to Prueba saber 11 and it was taken from KET (University of Cambridge, 2011). The advantages of this instrument are the versatility, objectivity of scoring, ease of analysis and provision of diagnostic information (Aiken, 1987). This study used one multiple-choice test before the pedagogical implementation to make a diagnosis of the reading comprehension (Appendix C: Diagnosis and Progress Test) as well as after the pedagogical intervention to compare the scores at the beginning with the ones at the end of the project so as to establish the progress in reading comprehension. This exam also provided with the material to guide the implementation. Thus, we designed worksheets using different sections of this exam.

3.4.1.2 Surveys. They are used to gain information about specific issues through factual and attitudinal responses (Burns, 1999; Burns, 2010). The data gathered through surveys is used to describe existing conditions and compared between specific events (Cohen et al., 2007). For the study, this instrument was used at two different points to measure the difference in status “before” and “after” identifying changes during the research, based on the pedagogical implementation. At the beginning of the study and at the end of the research, the same survey

format was implemented to collect information on participants' reading strategies and habits in English (Appendix D: Initial and Final Survey). These two surveys allowed us to compare the participants' initial and final perceptions about reading in English and the strategies they use.

3.4.1.3 Teachers' Journal. The class observation and reflection of the teacher was collected post-class in order to examine, from the teacher's view, the effects of planned lessons in students' behavior while reading. It is a flexible instrument of data collection (Burns, 1999), which might be used to rebuild posterior lessons in terms of the former success or failure. There, the crucial aspects of the class were documented as far as the teacher's observations and feelings. Everything observed was registered with the corresponding timing and conditions (large classes). Since the present study involved two different researchers in two different contexts, the teacher's journals (Appendix E: Teacher's Journal Format) provided material for further interaction and analysis among the researchers. The teachers established online communication in order to share experiences constantly and reciprocally. The researchers looked for additional isolated circumstances evident during the classes, which led to a particular outcome of the lessons.

3.4.1.4 Students' Journal. This type of journal is used by English Foreign Language students to write academic problems and progress to sort out their learning progress (Fulwiler, 1991). This instrument is a unique means for collecting data that is extensively under the control of students (Genesse & Upshur, 2013). For this study, this instrument (

Appendix **F: Students' Journal Sample**

Octubre 15 / 15

De la lección de hoy:

1. ¿Qué fue lo más fácil?
2. ¿Qué fue lo más difícil?
3. ¿Qué aprendiste de nuevo hoy?

Michelle Padden

1. identificar las palabras conocidas, para así saber que decía la primera conversación

2. El último punto de animar la conversación, ya que no identifiqué las palabras conocidas antes de responder y no tenía muy claro de que se trataba la conversación.

3. Aprendí nuevas palabras, y que es mejor siempre identificar las palabras conocidas, ya que si no lo hago no entiendo y me puede ir muy mal.

Appendix G: ICELT Lesson Plan Form) was to record the participants' personal responses, reflections, feelings and judgments regarding their experiences during the pedagogical implementation and the effects of this implementation in their reading comprehension. Therefore, this journal was written after each lesson by each one of the students. Each student had the opportunity to read his/her classmates' experiences and share his/her experiences related to the project once the research was in progress.

3.4.2 Validation and piloting. Each instrument was shared with colleagues and the research project director, then some adjustments were made. During the piloting, we explained to the students what the research was about, when and how it would take place. Afterward, we piloted the instruments in a sample group from each institution at the same level of the participants. In this process, we realized that the survey did not collect the information needed. Therefore, we reformulated the instrument in order to achieve the information relevant for the research. We also changed the teacher's journal format, since we realized that we needed a more practical and easier format to collect meaningful information around the teacher' impression about the effects of scaffolding in the students while reading process/phase. Finally, the piloting process was useful and enriching because we had the opportunity to refine, improve and change certain aspects of the pedagogical intervention taking into account the students' preferences and perceptions.

3.5 Conclusion

Previous research provided the foundation for a complete research design of this study. This design was characterized by the principle of a contextualized, small-scale study that is based on the participants' backgrounds and needs as well as the purpose of this research. This type of study was systematic, which allowed a step-by-step design, taking into consideration the

participants' and the school's permission to take part willingly in the study, the role of the researcher, the planning and piloting of the data collection instruments, and the stages to implement and collect the data. Hence, the previous studies on this topic and this research design set the grounds for a sound implementation design as is described in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

Regarding the implementation of reading strategies to improve reading comprehension, this small-scale study describes the steps and processes which were conducted to solve the problem, collect the data collection and the validate the information. This chapter offers an explanation of the lesson plans implemented, materials, timeline and reading strategies applied during the implementation.

This chapter also deliberates about unquestionable components of the implementation such as the vision of language, the vision of learning and the vision of curriculum, which are fundamental for the current instructional design.

A deep look at the pedagogical design focused on the process of reading comprehension of Key English Test (KET) parts in order to assist the identification of main and specific ideas through the “pre-reading”, “while reading” and “post-reading” stages. In each session, the students had the opportunity to be familiar with each one of the sections of the exam. The use of the scaffolding approach was chosen to provide the students with an active participation in their own learning (Gibbons, 2002).

4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum

4.2.1 Vision of language. The current study is focused on expanding students’ knowledge in vocabulary and patterns of the language in the type of texts chosen to implement reading strategies, bearing in mind that the learners are from an EFL context, and their language command in reading comprehension is low, while facing English language examination such as KET or Prueba saber. Additionally, we analyzed the importance of reading in the learning of

EFL and how this process involves background knowledge and moves further towards linguistic knowledge (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

In this manner, we established suitable activities to support students reading process, having in mind their own perception about reading as a channel for learning English as a foreign language in which growing in language is a crucial part of the progress of the reading skill (Williams, 1986). Williams also suggested in his principles about classroom procedures to know the purpose, task-based, and communicative nature of the texts; in this case KET, in order to make students aware of language acquisition with this material and reach successful reading comprehension in the final test.

4.2.2 Vision of learning. Keeping in mind what Williams (1986) suggested, we looked for students to become involved in their learning acquisition through activities designed to elicit and enhance their reading outcomes in Prueba SABER, while they took an active role, which was the most important element to develop this research. In this study, learners are trained with reading strategies that allow them to progressively be more autonomous and deal with the difficulties of reading in English as foreign language during the lesson activities. However, to reach this objective, it was important to overcome the lack of vocabulary that lead students to misunderstand texts. Thus, lack of vocabulary was tackled through the Self-Explanation Reading Training (SERT) approach (McNamara, 2004), which makes reference to self-explain the meaning of text while reading to infer and predict the meaning of words. Additionally, we also had in mind other authors such as Beers (2003), who explains that inferring is basically to make the learners join what they can find in the text with the ideas they have in their minds to produce a meaning; Tierney and Readance (2000) state that predicting is associated with those activities

that pre-teach or stimulate the students' interest and prior knowledge to understand unknown vocabulary and concepts.

Once that awareness training and concept introduction were carried out in the initial stage of the lessons, the application of the next stages seemed to be easier for the students because they moved towards that new learning in the while reading and post-reading stages, where other strategies (visualizing, confirming predictions, making connections and highlight) are integrated to supervise and condense the application of the newly acquired knowledge that was ultimately applied in the test stage.

4.2.3 Vision of curriculum. Cotterall (2000) argues that the designs of language programs should have the fostering of autonomy as a goal. Thus, this research project is intended to promote reading comprehension and encourage the students to be autonomous to work with the suggested activities for each lesson. Consequently, the lesson plans (

Appendix **F: Students' Journal Sample**

Octubre 15 / 15

De la lección de hoy:

1. ¿Qué fue lo más fácil?
2. ¿Qué fue lo más difícil?
3. ¿Qué aprendiste de nuevo hoy?

Michelle Padden

1. identificar las palabras conocidas, para así saber que decía la primera conversación

2. El último punto de animar la conversación, ya que no identifiqué las palabras conocidas antes de responder y no tenía muy claro de que se trataba la conversación.

3. Aprendí nuevas palabras, y que es mejor siempre identificar las palabras conocidas, ya que si no lo hago no entiendo y me puede ir muy mal.

Appendix G: ICEL T Lesson Plan Form) were designed to offer students a gradual increment in the responsibility to face their own learning. Besides, the lesson plans were written in Spanish to provide guidance to the students in the implementation and self-evaluation, in case they were required to work on their own.

Furthermore, as many other schools in Colombia, the curriculum at Francisco José de Caldas I.T.I and Carlos Pizarro Leongomez I.E.D are established by the Colombian National Standards set by the parameters of the M.E.N (2006). Additionally, the English syllabus in both schools are grammatical, which implies that topics, aims, and outcomes are based on the structures of the language. However, none of the two schools has a curriculum that includes the development of the reading proficiency, which leaves aside this skill because the schools do not follow a specific approach for teaching English. Therefore, the current study is seen as a possibility to guide the creation of an English approach that enriches the school curriculum to assist the target population's needs on this specific skill, contributing to enable achievement of the school learning goals and the students' improvement in Pruebas Saber 11.

4.3 Instructional design

The pedagogical intervention took place over 20 hours, which were divided into ten lessons of approximately one hundred minutes each. These lessons (Appendix H: Instructional Design) were planned based on each part of the reading section of KET exam, promoting seven different reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, mind mapping, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlight and visualizing) through scaffolding approach and collecting data through tests, surveys, students' journals and teachers' journals to evidence the influence of the implementation on the students reading comprehension.

4.3.1 Lesson planning. The lessons of this research were almost two hours in length. Two lessons were planned to familiarize the students with the structure of the KET. In these lessons, the students had the opportunity to answer this type of exam. This exam was the same for the initial and final session in order to compare students' reading comprehension before and after implementation. Additionally, seven lessons were planned according to one of the seven parts of KET for reading and divided into four phases: pre-reading, while reading, post-reading, and test. Finally, one lesson before the last exam was carried out to summarize and wrap up the reading strategies learned during the implementation (See Appendix H: Instructional Design.

4.3.1.1 KET and its parts. Seven lessons were planned to familiarize students with one part and use specific reading strategies to work on it. The parts of KET are listed and described below; they were taken from the book Key by University of Cambridge, (2011) examination (Appendix C: Diagnosis and Progress Test).

- Part 1: There are two columns: one with five meanings and the other with eight notices. Readers must match five notices with their corresponding meaning.
- Part 2: There is a short story divided into five statements. Each statement has a missing word such as verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Readers must choose one word from three similar options.
- Part 3a: There are five different statements. Each statement is related to a short conversation and has three different options to complete each dialogue. Readers must choose one statement that answers what the first person says.
- Part 3b: There is a long conversation by two people. This conversation is divided in two: on the left, seven sentences with what a person says, and on the right, eight sentences with what the other person says. The sentences on the left are organized in order to guide the

reader in the conversation. The sentences in the right are in scrambled, since the reader must choose the appropriate sentences from this column and locate them in the correct order to make only one conversation between two people.

- Part 4: There are a short information text and seven corresponding questions. These questions only ask to confirm, deny or verify this information is mentioned in the text.
- Part 5: There is a short information text with eight blanks. Each blank has three different similar options which are words related to actions, conjunctions, adjectives, pronouns or adverbs. Readers must complete the text choosing an option for each blank.

Part 6: There are two columns, one with five meanings and the other with five initial letters and a different number of lines. Each line represents a missing letter to form a word. Readers must complete the words by writing the missing letters according to the meaning stated.

The strategies used to help students to answer each part of the KET are mentioned on the Instructional Design (Appendix H: Instructional Design)

4.3.1.2 Pre-reading. This stage was planned to engage and prepare students to read.

Hence, different reading strategies and approaches were used:

- *Predicting* is related to activities that are designed to arouse students' interest, activate their prior knowledge, or pre-teach vocabulary or concepts that may be difficult (Tierney & Readence, 2000). It happens when readers use information from graphics, text, and experiences to anticipate what they want to read.
- *Mind mapping* is a strategy to identify what students know about the topic of the reading. This strategy allows students to sketch a central idea about their topic and then create tree-like branches of additional information around that idea.

- *Making inferences* is a strategy to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess (Beers, 2003). This particular strategy helps students connect the vocabulary known and guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- *Activating previous knowledge* is a strategy to make connections between what students already know and what they are reading. This strategy helps students comprehend information easier based on the knowledge and the vocabulary that they have.

4.3.1.3 While reading. This stage was planned to help students deal with unfamiliar vocabulary, monitor their understanding, and stay focused on the reading. For this purpose, different reading strategies were used:

- *Making connections* is a strategy that can assist in making meaning from a text. In this way, the students made connections between text and themselves or text and the world. This strategy could be used in this stage or in post-reading.
- *Highlighting* is a strategy that is used to help students organize what they have read by selecting what is important and specific information of the text. This strategy teaches students to highlight/underline only the keywords, phrases, vocabulary, and ideas that are central to understanding the reading.

4.3.1.4 Post-reading. This stage was planned to summarize, reflect and make meaning of what the students have just read. For this stage, we implemented different reading strategies used and described in the previous stages. Nevertheless, we also used the strategy that is described below.

Visualizing is a strategy to create a visual representation of what the students understand.

4.3.1.5 Test. At the end of seven lessons, a test of the corresponding part of KET was implemented in order to foster and evaluate the use of the reading strategies suggested for each lesson.

4.3.2 Implementation. The implementation of this study took ten weeks, with twenty hours of face-to-face sessions in which students received input and practiced some reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, mind mapping, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlighting and visualizing) using the different parts of the KET. These sessions of 2 class hours (50 minutes each one) were implemented from September to December 2015 with students from ninth grade who study in two different institutions from Bogotá: Institución Educativa Distrital Carlos Pizarro Leongómez and Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco José de Caldas (See Appendix H: **Instructional Design**).

The specific objectives of this current pedagogical intervention were:

- To provide the students with opportunities to learn, practice and choose reading strategies to read in English as a Foreign Language.
- To familiarize students with the KET in the reading skill and each one of the parts.
- To propose specific reading strategies to deal with an international test such as KET.

In order to start the pedagogical intervention, it was necessary to design an action plan which was organized through In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) lesson plan format (Appendix H: Instructional Design). It included lesson goals, stages, description of the activities, chronological timeline, and materials used. This format was used in Spanish in order to guide students in the implementation and self-evaluation.

At the beginning of each lesson, we set performance-based objectives (Pierce & Lorber, 1977) which are observable behaviors, conditions, and minimum acceptable standards for each

lesson. This allowed students to direct their efforts to achieve them and self-evaluate their performance at the end of each lesson.

Then, the students had the opportunity to become familiarized with each part of the KET in reading. This had the purpose of helping students deal with the exam and know what they were asked to do in each part. For this purpose, the teachers promoted analysis about the components of each part of the exam and its intention. This analysis was directed by teachers through questions that guided students to recognize the features of the test by themselves. In each lesson, the teacher reviewed the parts of the KET learned in previous classes to recall in students' memory.

Next, the students were prepared to read using the different pre-reading strategies mentioned previously. These strategies were chosen to provide students with different tools which facilitate their comprehension and help them overcome lack of vocabulary. Posteriorly, students used other strategies to answer the part of the KET. These strategies were selected according to what the part of the exam asked. In this sense, the students used different strategies which helped them complete each task of the KET. Finally, students applied other post-reading strategies to show or reinforce what they understood about the text and relate them to their lives.

All the strategies, as well as their purpose, were explained by the teachers. Teachers also guided the students in the implementation of each strategy and fostered collaborative work to do so. The collaboration was proposed to foster autonomy, since students take responsibility for their learning becoming more independent (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991).

4.4 Conclusion

The intervention and implementation allowed students to become familiarized with KET and use different reading strategies mentioned previously, which helped them to comprehend

each part of this exam. For this purpose, each lesson was designed considering the structure of the exam and focused on the precise reading strategies that students can follow in order to achieve best outcomes while facing each stage of the lessons. This structure took the participants to adopt an active participation in the process during the suggested activities that enhanced their autonomy. Throughout the implementation, data was collected using the instruments and procedures described in the Instructional Design. Then, we analyzed data based on grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), making use of a matrix. The result of this analysis exposed the influence and efficacy of using scaffolding approach and strategies to improve reading comprehension while developing reading skills. The next chapter offers, in detail, the process and procedures of data management, data analysis, and its interpretation.

Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that were implemented during data analysis stage, in which the main objective was to study how a scaffolding approach within the application of different reading strategies influenced reading comprehension in Key English Tests (KET) of ninth graders with an A1 English level (CEFR). Based on the data management and coding procedures (open coding, axial and selective coding), two categories and four subcategories were consequently identified to respond the research question.

5.2 Data management procedures

We observed the context and the phenomena within the study in order to establish concepts and understand participants' responses regarding the effects of the implementation in the students' reading comprehension. Then, we started the process of analysis, based on qualitative analysis as the action of analyzing and interpreting data in order to obtain information from the experience to acquire knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In order to understand data, we reviewed it permanently so as to build a theory that would show in realistically what this data represented. For this purpose, we compared data from both institutions to determine bases and connections for the emerging findings, which responded the research question. Indeed, these findings were the result of main categories which were identified and analyzed in both contexts.

The categories were organized into high and low levels. Higher level concepts are categories that tell us what a group of lower-level concepts is pointing to (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, the identification of lower-level categories supports what we found, which

were key elements from data regarding the effects that implementing scaffolding with different reading strategies had on students' reading comprehension.

Moreover, extensive analysis was effectuated to identify information related to the changes and challenges which participants experienced during the study and which influenced their reading comprehension. As a result, two categories were identified: the first related to the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension showing the challenges of the participants in reading comprehension during the implementation, and the second, to the changes evidenced on students in EFL reading comprehension after the implementation in their reading strategies skills evaluated by KET.

5.2.1 Validation. In order to verify data validity and reliability, data was triangulated during the validation procedure and collected from different instruments described above in chapter three. The information that participants supplied after each lesson on the journal they wrote, was crucial for this procedure.

Subsequently, data was organized in a matrix, which helped us assure better understanding. We verified if the information given in all the instruments and its interpretation were consistent with the conclusions drawn by a more detailed analysis. In this stage of the validation, gathering of different aspects on the researched situation was developed by the use of triangulation, which Burns (2000) presents as a way of debating that the result is valid if it is produced by using different methods of investigation.

According to Creswell (2012), triangulation “is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (p. 259). Consequently, we have analyzed data in order to find consistencies among it. During this research, triangulation was held with the integration of the

instruments used to collect data. We looked for traces that connected the information gathered with data to identify similar or repetitive patterns that emerged during this analysis. The focal point during this stage of the research was to consider the research question for the purpose of recognizing if the obtained data through the use of triangulation could relate to it.

5.2.2 Data analysis methodology. The process of data analysis was guided by grounded theory, which permitted to reduce, conceptualize and categorize data in which open and selective coding takes place (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As Bruner (1996) suggested, the goal of action research is greater understanding and improved practice. Therefore, we focused on collecting data and analyzing it to find the benefits that implementation brought to students' reading comprehension. To make this possible, we planned and implemented lessons as well as the appropriate instruments based on the piloting procedures to collect accurate data that enhanced the possibility to give an account of data that eventually could answer the research questions.

To analyze data, we used comparisons and personal experience as strategies to make sense of data collected. During the preliminary stages, we used our personal experiences as learners and teachers to comprehend participants' answers. Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated this strategy is used to get a clear vision about what the participants are describing. This technique was very useful to analyze participants point of view in the data collected through journals and surveys. Indeed, it helped us understand the participants' insights of reading in their learning progress, challenges and difficulties to overcome.

In the matrix, we were able to identify common patterns in the data easily. Each one of us read and analyzed data separately in order to interpret it from two different perceptions. To guide this process, we compared each incident as Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested, focused on the similarities and differences identified during data collection stage. Therefore, we analyzed data,

changes, and constant events that took place before, during and after the pedagogical implementation, which lead to emerging patterns in the process. Subsequently, we read and analyzed data from both schools and looked for the connections among these patterns supported by our experience as teachers and learners. Being teachers during the implementation, but also having learned English as foreign language allowed us to recognize the learning process, implications, and challenges while reading in English. This guided us to comprehend that data wove the patterns and established a storyline that described the main phenomenon for this research.

Then, we referred to literature that showed similar phenomenon found in this study. Theoretical comparison forced us to examine our assumptions, biases, and perspectives such as Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested. Thus, we found that theories supported, clarified and increased understanding of the findings. In this point, theory was a crucial factor in data analysis to get a clear and objective understanding of the phenomenon found in this study.

Consequently, the main category that was identified, considering the similarities found through the three instruments analysis and the effects of implementing scaffolding, was named *Now, I can read easier*. Hence, two categories emerged to support and describe the changes evidenced in reading comprehension during the implementation. These two categories are related to the development of reading skills and expanding vocabulary knowledge. In the category regarding the development of reading skills, we identified two essential changes during that implementation which generated the subcategories: understanding the gist of a text and identifying specific information in a text. These two subcategories explain the two reading skills which were developed by the students during the implementation. Moreover, the category related to expanding vocabulary demonstrated the challenges encountered in EFL reading

comprehension and contains two subcategories: one was regarding the reduction of students' dependency on dictionary while reading and the other in relation to the lack of vocabulary that affected the students reading improvement.

5.3 Categories

5.3.1 Overall category mapping. Data analysis of this research was carried out through three phases of coding: open, axial and selective coding. We started to work on open coding after all data was collected from the three instruments and organized in a matrix. We compared data collected before, during and after the implementation. Then, we both compared the analysis made by each other, finding many similarities which were categorized in different codes. These codes were differentiated by colors in the matrix (*Figure 1. Color Coding Procedures* ; red to stand out the students' use of dictionary showing participants' responses and results of the test, blue to refer when students managed to identify the meaning of a word, brown the difficulties with vocabulary students still had and grey when they understood the gist. The most predominant group of data was the students' improvement in reading, the importance of vocabulary in students' comprehension of text while they are reading texts in KET and the students reading skills developed during the implementation.

Test	Students' Journal	Teachers' Journal
50% of the students improved their score in the test	I have learned to identify the words and read easier. In this way, I could finish understanding the unknown words and the sentences faster.	In this last session, the students present the same test before the implementation. But this time, the students began to solve the exam with security. They did not complain because of the lack of the dictionary. They did not say "it was difficult". Neither, they realized they have already had this text at the beginning of the study. Most of the students finished the test during the expected time.
46% of the students have difficulty with the exam in the second part because of the lack of vocabulary.	The most difficult part of the class was the quiz since I had no idea what the meaning of some words was. I used the strategies taught previously and they helped me. However, it was not enough because I did not understand so much.	Although most of the students understood the story and showed it through a comic strip, they had a lot of difficulties to complete the test since they did not know the meaning of some of the options. It was also evidenced in the test when they had low scores although teachers realized they had understood the story when they drew a complete comic strip about it.
73% of students improved their score in the fifth part of the exam. It means that they have increased understanding of the gist of the text.	Today, I learned to decode or understand some notices without knowing all the meanings of every word.	While the students had to read, they seemed to understand the meaning of the text, some of them continue underlying the words they knew. And circle the words that they did not know as a strategy to try to understand the meaning of the whole text.

Figure 1. Color Coding Procedures

During the axial coding, we looked for the relations among the codes previously identified. Thus, categories started emerging and explaining the relation between them. Categories are entities comprised of grouped code (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010); in this sense, we analyzed the codes finding patterns and relations which form two categories: *this is my reading path* and *I don't know that word but I understand the idea*, and two subcategories which revealed meaningful details of each category, for a total of four subcategories. The core category, *Now, I read easier*, gathered all the information obtained in the subcategories with the final purpose of answering the research question.

In figure 2, all these categories are supported by three reading strategies (making inference, predicting and activating knowledge) implemented in the pre-reading stage, since we found they were essential for the students during the KET to overcome the lack of vocabulary and understand what they read.

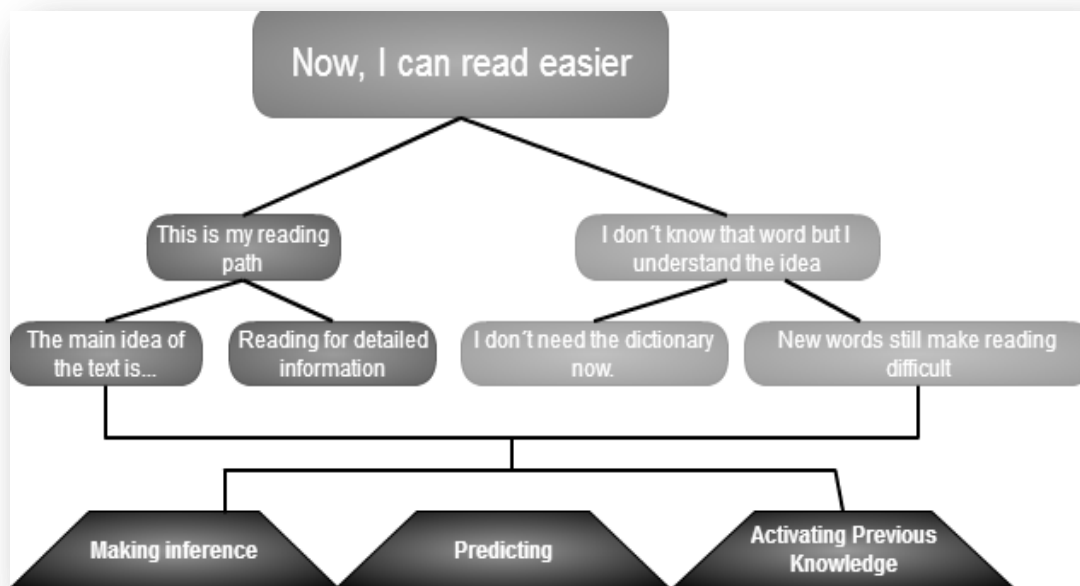


Figure 2 Data Analysis Diagram

5.3.2 Discussion of categories. The first category was *this is my reading path* and it has two subcategories. The first subcategory, called *the main idea of the text is*, related to students' reading skills to understand the gist of a text. The second one, called *reading for detailed information*, is related to students' reading skill to locate specific information as a part of a text. These subcategories explained how the improvement in students' autonomy, as a result of the scaffolding approach, benefited the students to make decisions about effective reading strategies which developed gradually two of the reading skills tested in KET exam such as understanding the main idea and locating detailed information.

The second category identified was *I don't know that word but I understand the idea*. This category was divided into two subcategories. The first, *I don't need the dictionary now*, is related to the reduction of students' dependency on dictionary while reading in English. The second subcategory, *new words still make reading difficult*, demonstrated how the lack of

vocabulary was an important challenge that interfered with students reading comprehension in KET, despite the reading strategies that they learned in order to deal with new vocabulary.

5.3.2.1 Category 1: This is my reading path. The participants reported benefits from learning different reading strategies which were useful to comprehend text while they were being tested by Key English Test (KET). Graham & Bellert (2004) asserted providing students with explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help them overcome difficulties in understanding texts. Moreover, learners were able to learn and use new reading strategies, which helped them comprehend texts more effectively. They stated they have learned different reading strategies to understand and make sense of sentences.

Now, it is easier translate or understand the sentences, thanks to the vocabulary and the strategies to search key words and make sense of a sentence.

(Excerpt 1 Students Journal Entry 7)

It was evident that learners were able to learn different reading strategies which they implemented to comprehend a text more easily and successfully.

The variety of reading strategies taught allowed the students to have different options to read while they were facing KET. Pressley (2002) stated that good learners use a variety of comprehension strategies simultaneously and they know how to deliberately apply specific strategies to aid their comprehension, particularly with regard to challenging texts/information. Learners were able to choose and use the reading strategies which were more effective to successfully comprehend a text. They evidenced that they started to use some strategies more frequently and reduce the use of some others.

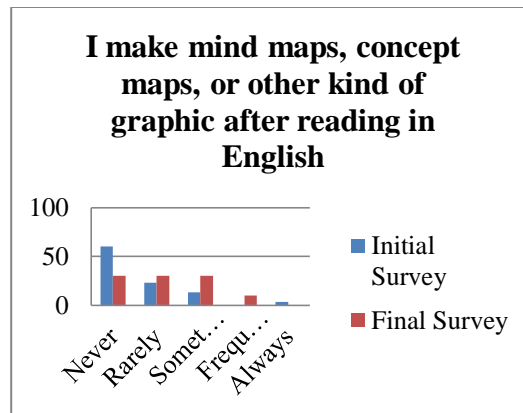


Figure 3 Answers to the Question 8 in Students Survey

It has been demonstrated that students started using mind maps more frequently as a reading strategy after the implementation. This occurred due to students learning how to use mind maps and finding them useful while reading in English. Kaufman (2008) suggested that the effectiveness of this strategy is due to the nonlinear format that allows a complete view of the notes and the possibility to place information about what they understood in appropriate branches, making the connection between ideas easily.

In light of the above, learners found different reading strategies which were beneficial for their reading comprehension. Brown and Briggs (1989) affirmed that good readers are strategic and make decisions choosing reading strategies appropriately based on their purposes for reading. In this study, each student was able to choose reading strategies which helped him/her comprehend each part of the text. Clearly, the students began to use different reading strategies without being asked to do so.

...For this activity, they only had to guess the answers since they did not have the text...they began to read underlining the familiar words and weaved vocabulary in order to understand the statements and answer what they thought corrected answers.

(Excerpt 2 Teachers Journal Entry 6)

Grabe and Stoller (2001) asserted that strategic readers employ reading strategies automatically to improve their reading comprehension. Here, the students underlined known words with the purpose of understanding the meaning of sentences.

First subcategory: The main idea of the text is...

In the analysis of the data, learners reported the strategies learned allowed them to improve their understanding of the gist of a text. Carrell (1985) affirmed reading strategies help improve students' understanding on reading tests. The following figure shows how the students' comprehension increases in one of the parts of the Key English Test (KET) that tested the understanding of the main idea. This improvement was due to the effectiveness of the reading strategies which the students chose and used to get the gist of the text.

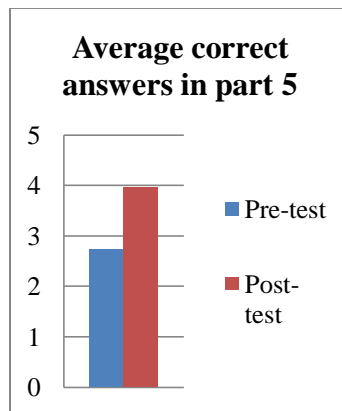


Figure 4 Correct answers in part 5 of KET

This improvement was the result of reading strategy training. Carrell (1998) argued that for effective reading strategy training, learners require two metacognitive factors: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Thus, the students are aware of their reading process as well as know and use reading strategies which facilitated this process. In this point, Figure 5 illustrates how students increased their awareness of their reading process, leading them to choose reading strategies that would increase understanding of the main idea of the text.

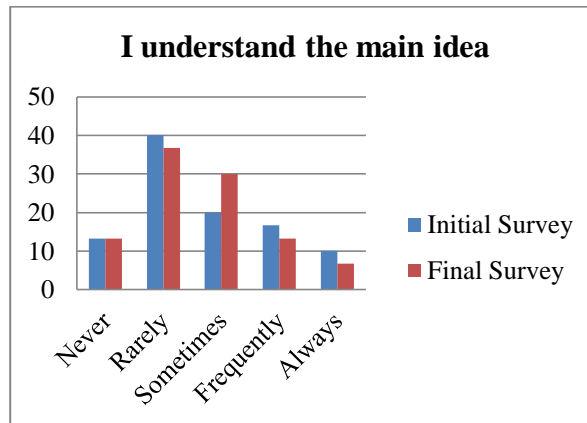


Figure 5 Answers to the Question 6 in Students Survey

Additionally, we recognized students' improvement in comprehending the gist of a text during different moments of the implementation due to the post-reading stage. This stage provided opportunities for students and teachers to evaluate the understanding of the text (Appleman & Graves, 2012). For this purpose, we implemented reading strategies which were determining to improve some students' reading skills, since they allowed students to illustrate and make comprehension visible during the implementation. This illustration is very important in assessing comprehension and development of the reading skills (Brown, 2000). In the following excerpt, the students made visible that they had understood the text accurately through a comic strip.

Many of the students analyzed and linked the familiar words and found the complete meaning of the story. It was evident when they draw a comic strip of the story.

(Excerpt 3 Teachers Journal Entry 3)

According to Duffy (2009), readers require a number of comprehension strategies to get the main idea. Therefore, it is evident that reading strategies chosen by the students to get the gist

of the text in the third session were efficient, since they demonstrated their accurate understanding through a comic strip. Zwiars (2010) stands that the ability to understand the main idea is the most vital type of thinking readers can do to comprehend a text.

Second subcategory: Reading for detailed information

Another reading skill developed by the students with the reading strategies taught was the location of specific information in a text. Hedge (2003) stated that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals for adapting reading style according to the reading purpose. The following figure evidences how the students used reading strategies which improved their skill in finding detailed information within a text.

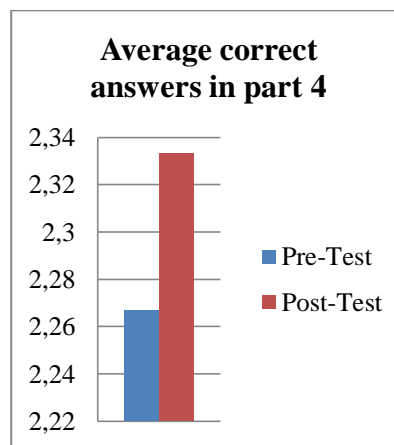


Figure 6 Correct answers in part 4 of KET

In part 4 of the KET, the students were asked to find some information in order to say if it was true, false or does not say. The students first read the information required and predicted the possible answers. Then, they *scanned* (Williams, 1996), reading for particular points of information and locating the information asked within the text such as the following excerpt shows.

Today, I learned to guess the answers before reading. Then, we read and answered the questions correctly. At the end, I realized that many answers were right before reading.

(Excerpt 4 Students Journal Entry 3)

Here, the student could determine if the information requested was in the text through scanning and checking if his predictions were correct. Thus, they used a strategy that was not taught demonstrating that they became strategic readers capable of adapting processes and strategies in response to task requirements (Dalton & Proctor, 2007).

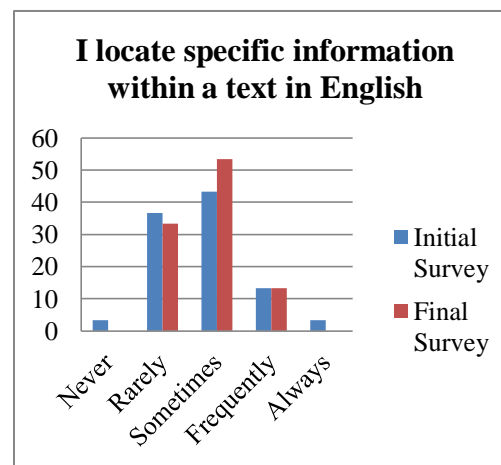


Figure 7 Answers to the Question 4 in Students Survey

5.3.2.2 Category 2: I don't know the word but I understand the idea. Reading comprehension involves understanding the vocabulary, seeing relationships among words and concepts, organizing ideas, recognizing the author's purpose, evaluating the context, and making judgments (Hancock, 1998). One of the elementary reading skills that the students need in order to face a text is vocabulary knowledge. The following excerpt shows how the lack of vocabulary was the main difficulty at the beginning of the implementation.

Today, the most difficult was that we did not know some word meanings within the exam. For this reason, I did not understand either answered the exam

(Excerpt 5 Students Journal Entry 2)

However, the reading strategies taught provided students with opportunities to deal with lack of vocabulary, making use of the previous knowledge of the topic of the text and familiar vocabulary to infer the meaning of complete ideas. Grabe (1991) declared that the fact that learners do not have knowledge to handle unknown words is critical in one's reading skill. In the next excerpt, the students evidenced that they started using reading strategies to deal with new vocabulary.

Now, I differentiate the words better. There are many words that I know and they help me guess the meaning of the unknown words. For example, I link the word that I have already known with words located next to understand the text meaning. For this reason, I underline the familiar words and link with the others.

(Excerpt 6 Students Journal Entry 7)

In this opportunity, the student inferred the meaning of unknown words by linking the familiar words that were around. This strategy was taught at the beginning of the implementation, but students got used to applying it to understand the meaning of the different texts due to its effectiveness.

The next excerpt demonstrates that the students acquired reading strategies to overcome the deficiency of vocabulary knowledge and used them every time they needed.

In this class, the students had to organize a long conversation and chose three statements which were not part of the dialogue. For this purpose, they students started to underline the familiar words without being asked. They weaved the words and translated the conversation without asking for help.

(Excerpt 7 Teachers Journal Entry 5)

Anderson (1999) suggested that teachers can improve students' vocabulary by training them in guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context. Therefore, some reading strategies implemented helped the students to expand the vocabulary knowledge and improve their reading comprehension. Additionally, it is evident that the students learned some words by making use of reading strategies which facilitated the understanding of new words.

Today, I learned the importance of not using dictionary. In my case, I learned many words in English and their meaning. I acquired many words since I think about their meaning and force myself to find the word meaning.

(Excerpt 8 Students Journal Entry 1)

Martin-Chang and Gould (2008) identified a strong correlation both between vocabulary and reading comprehension. The following figure demonstrates the students have improved their vocabulary and it helped them decoding and reading understanding.

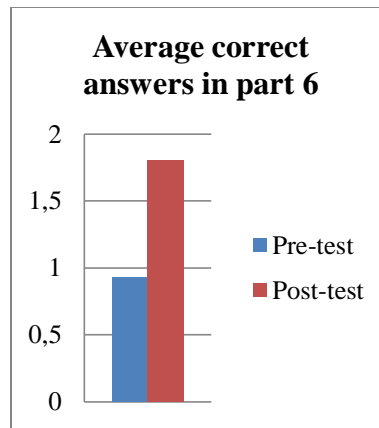


Figure 8 Correct answers in part 6 of KET

In part 6 of the KET, the students needed to understand some sentences to write the corresponding term described. Consequently, these results showed that the students understood better in the test when it was applied after the implementation. Therefore, the reading strategies implemented to deal with the lack of vocabulary were effective and allowed them to decode and understand better.

First Subcategory: Teacher! I don't need the dictionary now.

The students' dependency on dictionary decreased significantly. Anderson (1999) reported that students refer to a bilingual dictionary for every word that they don't understand while reading in a second language. In our case, the two groups of participants have the same habit when they read in English as a foreign language. The next excerpt shows that the students could not conceive an English reading without a dictionary at the beginning of the study.

During this class, the students had to underline the words which they were familiar with. Then, they had to connect familiar words from one column with words from the second column. At the end, the students had to connect all the familiar words and guess the meaning of the unknowns' words. In this point, the students started to ask for dictionary or teacher's support to know the meaning. I refused to give the meaning and guided students in groups to think and guess the meaning. Many students felt frustrated and mentioned "no puedo" ...

(Excerpt 9 Teachers Journal Entry 2)

The transition from dependency on the dictionary to using reading strategies to infer the meaning of new words was supported by the teachers. Nevertheless, this support was transitional, since the students started doing it themselves, when they found reading strategies which helped to deal with unknown words and they felt empowered to use them successfully. Duke & Pearson (2002) indicate the learners become more competent and confident of their comprehension, the less support they require from the teacher.

The next excerpt shows that students improved their confidence in their comprehension and the reduction of dictionary dependency and teachers' support.

In this last session, they students present the same test before the implementation. But this time, the students began to solve the entire exam with security. They did not complain because of the lack of the dictionary. They did not say was difficult". Neither, they realized they have already had this text at the beginning of the study.

(Excerpt No.10 Teachers Journal Entry 10)

Likewise, the following figure reveals that students became more competent to make an inference of meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and consequently improve their reading comprehension of the different texts.

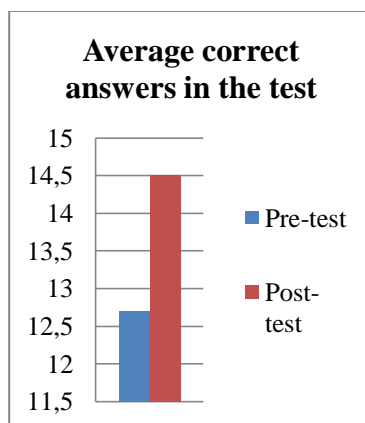


Figure 9 Correct answers in KET

These results demonstrate that students reading comprehension improved significantly due to the reading strategies learned and used to reduce the effects of narrow vocabulary knowledge.

Second Subcategory: New words still make reading difficult.

Vocabulary knowledge is essential for reading comprehension. Perfetti, Yang & Schmalhofer (2008) affirm text comprehension depends on understanding words and integrating their meaning into a mental model of the text. The students showed deficient vocabulary that interfered with their understanding of texts. One example is the following excerpt that illustrates how the students became stuck in their comprehension of the text due to ignorance of some words.

The most difficult was the unknown words since I did not know their meaning and I had to draw them. For this reason, I did not complete the task

(Excerpt No.11 Students Journal Entry 3)

Reading strategies were helpful to overcome the lack of the lexis and extract the meaning of unfamiliar words according to the context. However, the students revealed that these strategies were not enough in specific parts of the KET. Spencer and Hay (1998) suggested that the major

difficulty confronting the beginning reader is the development of rapid, automatic word recognition skills. The students found identifying familiar words which helped to understand the texts very challenging. It was evident in the following excerpt in which a student accepted knowing the meaning of some words, even though he was not able to understand the text.

The most difficult was the quiz because I did have idea of some word meanings. What I learned previously, helped me but it was not enough. For this reason, I did not understand so much.

(Excerpt No.12 Students Journal Entry 4)

Alderson (1984) declared the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension in a foreign language, mentioning that students may experience difficulties in understanding the meaning of the text when sentences or even an entire paragraph contain a small number of unknown words. The following figure shows how the students' comprehension was affected because of the lack of knowledge of some words while they were being tested by KET.

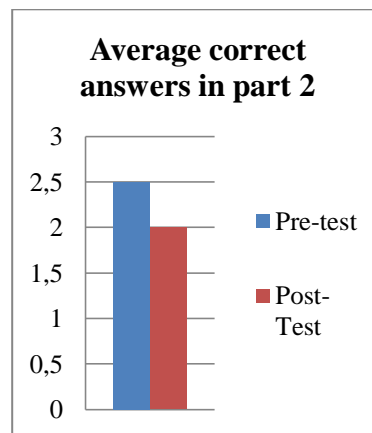


Figure 10 Correct answers in part 3 of KET

Although, the students had better results in the final test comparing with the one taken from the pre-test. They still present problems solving the second part of the KET exam (Appendix C: Diagnosis and Progress Test). We evidenced that their performance in this section

declined due to the lack of vocabulary that did not allow students to distinguish the meaning of the four options, causing difficulty to understand and answer the statements properly.

5.3.3 Core category: *Now I can read easier.* In the selective coding stage, the categories from the axial coding were integrated into a core category which provides responses to the question of the ongoing research. In this study, the core category demonstrated that implementing the scaffolding approach while using different reading strategies positively influenced the students' reading comprehension in international standard test (KET). The core category was selected based on the frequency of occurrence and its relationship to the other categories in the matrix (Creswell, 2013). This core category included all data that came from the analysis of the major categories and their corresponding indicators or subcategories.

5.4 Conclusion

The outcomes of this research have revealed that the use of the seven reading strategies to implement scaffolding assists the EFL students to track their learning process. Similarly, the implementation stage has developed some of the students reading skills including reading for gist, locating specific information within the text and inferring the meaning of unknown words.

This effect also benefited relevant changes in the students' reading comprehension in an international test like KET. Additionally, the findings allowed us to understand the significance of the evidence to provide a solution to the research question and objectives of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

6.1 Introduction

This study examined the effects of implementing scaffolding through different reading strategies in students' reading comprehension in a mock test of KET. For this purpose, we analyzed two groups of ninth grade at public schools who had difficulties to read in EFL, considering lack of vocabulary as well as locating information and summarizing ideas to generate a specific response from a text.

After describing the categories, illustrating data and presenting the findings obtained from data gathered, we are going to inform major conclusions that emerge at the end of this research study, limitations, pedagogical implications and final recommendations for further educational research.

The findings of this study demonstrated the influence of implementing reading comprehension in exams like KET, applying scaffolding through different reading strategies and allowing students to recognize which reading strategies are more successful and create a reading path to comprehend more effectively (See Chapter 5, First Subcategory). The use of seven reading strategies influenced their improvement of understanding main ideas, locating specific information and overcoming difficulties with unknown words.

6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results

This study confirms what other studies have found regarding the use of reading strategies to develop a better level of comprehension in EFL students (Quiroga, 2010) which demonstrated how the use of reading strategies enhance students reading comprehension, consciousness of their own learning and importance of prior knowledge as a crucial component when serving as a baseline for comprehension of new knowledge. Other findings in reading comprehension, as the

ones made by Jeon & Yamashita's (2014) in L2, demonstrated that when reading comprehension improves, grammar and vocabulary are two correlates affected positively. Lervåg and Aukrust (2010) also stated that vocabulary knowledge should be a substantial factor in L2 learners reading comprehension progress, which was confirmed by Guo's study (2011), who has seen how vocabulary awareness is a determining factor in L2 reading comprehension. These results support what our study has found about the use of reading strategies by students to acquire vocabulary and counteract the effects of the lack of it. Both studies suggest the relevance of students training to obtain this specific knowledge.

Regarding the use of tests to check the students' comprehension after working on reading comprehension, Dabarera, Renandya Willy, & Lawrence (2014) evidenced that the awareness that students developed is linked to the use of *metacognitive scaffolding*, which helps the students to progress in obtaining mastery. In our study, we used the Scaffolding approach as the support to provide the students with a gradual reduction from the teachers' assistance to their independent achievement as a means to progress in their reading ability. In both cases, the population studied was EFL students and two international test International Competitions Assessments for Schools (ICAS) and KET used before and after the implementation. The result in both cases showed improvement. However, the most remarkable difference between the two studies was the use of different strategies to train them. Our research was conducted through the use of reading strategies while the authors whose study mentioned above used metacognitive strategies to improve the participants' reading comprehension.

Using scaffolding to develop students' autonomy while they read has shown to be beneficial (Scharlach, 2008; Attarzadeh, 2011). This approach was also considered to enhance reading comprehension with the implementation of reading strategies during the three reading

stages in L2 students (Appleman & Graves, 2012). Furthermore, Fisher and Frey (2015) have also implemented this approach and students have been taken from the literal to the structural to the inferential level of reading through close reading strategies.

The compilation of these studies demonstrated how reading strategies and scaffolding approach are efficient to enhance reading comprehension while developing awareness in students' vocabulary acquisition. Something interesting is that our study used a different type of strategies compared to those mentioned in the reading studies above. This fact allowed the students have the opportunity to learn different reading strategies, compare them and use which they like most making reading more efficiently. Additionally, the use of the scaffolding approach contributed to the students' growth from stage to stage. Also, our attempt to solve our ninth grade difficulties in EFL reading was successful, because the selected reading strategies (making inferences, predicting, mind mapping, activating previous knowledge, making connections, highlight, and visualizing) provided them with elements to be less dependant on teachers and external aids (dictionaries, translators), leading them to become more autonomous learners. We also found that students reduced the time they spent reading each part of the KET used to prepare the implementation lessons. The significance of these and other remarkable results will be mentioned in detail in the next section.

6.3 Significance of the results

The current study can be a guide of the creation of an English approach that enhances the school curriculum to assist the target population's needs on this specific skill, contributing to enable achievement of the school learning goals and the students' improvement in Pruebas Saber 11. For this, the study suggests that training in reading strategies according to students' needs should be incorporated into language teaching to develop and reinforce students' reading skills.

This fact benefits the reading comprehension of different kind of texts in reading exams such as KET. Henter (2012) argued that even learners who have good reading skills can improve them if they are trained in the use of effective strategies and are taught to monitor their activity while reading. In fact, providing students with a variety of reading strategies through scaffolding approach allows learners to identify and make decisions regarding the effectiveness and use of these strategies for specific purposes.

Additionally, teachers can teach reading strategies to develop some students' reading micro skills. Munby (1968) distinguishes many reading micro skills, including deducing meaning, use of unfamiliar lexical items, distinguishing the main idea and locating specifically required information. The development if these micro skills permit students to overcome the difficulties when they are reading in English as Foreign Language.

To make this possible, the students need to know and use reading strategies consciously. Brown (1978) affirms that if students are conscious of the reading process, they can monitor their comprehension and apply appropriate strategies as needed for comprehending a text. In this way, each student has the opportunity to evaluate different strategies in relation to effectiveness and choose the most useful to comprehend and accomplish different tasks demanded by the texts.

This project may guide teachers as well as learners to become aware of the importance of training different reading strategies through the scaffolding approach in EFL teaching. Indeed, this study could be adapted and implemented in different contexts according to students' language level and their needs. Both teachers and students can benefit from this study. In the case of teachers, they will see how students can handle a better and faster comprehension of different texts. In students' case, this project supports the acquisition of valuable knowledge for them to face a national test as Prueba Saber 11, while they become autonomous learners (See

Chapter 5, First Subcategory). This autonomy improvement has made them become more skilled and assertive of their comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002), which can be noticed as a very important result considering that the classes were more student-centered and they were participants in building their knowledge. Thus, their autonomy goes beyond the vocabulary learning because they started to use the strategies learnt in other subjects as science and teachers noticed it.

6.4 Pedagogical challenges and recommendations

Scaffolded reading experiences provide the conceptual and cognitive support that helps students read and interpret texts that are within their developmental reach, but would be difficult if attempted without support (Appleman & Graves, 2012). Although this study illustrated how two groups of ninth graders started using reading strategies which allowed building their reading path towards a more efficient reading comprehension, it was found that reading must be supported with the vocabulary knowledge learning due to the importance of lexis and its influence on reading comprehension. Therefore, we recommend that students continue practicing effective reading strategies which support the inferring of new word meanings. Additionally, the complexity of texts and vocabulary are fundamental to the success of reading strategies to overcome lack of vocabulary. Following what Krashen and Terrell (1983) suggested about the exposition of the second language, we consider that the texts implemented should be designed or selected according to vocabulary that the students have already learned. This allows students to infer and learn vocabulary gradually while reading based on their previous vocabulary knowledge and context of the text. Otherwise, the benefits of the implementation of scaffolding using different reading strategies are reduced notoriously such as we evidenced in this study.

6.5 Research limitations on the present study

Throughout this study we faced two main obstacles that interfered with the appropriate development of the research process. These limitations had to do with time constraints and the number of participants in both schools. Firstly, as the implementation of this research took place at the end of the school year, there were a number of activities that interfered with the workshops development and some classes had to be postponed to adjust to the school's calendar and preceding activities. In the case of Carlos Pizarro Leongómez's students, they had to take the final test in an unscheduled class because they did not have any English class due to last minute changes in the school calendar. Consequently, the students were uncomfortable and seemed to take the test in a hurry because they had to comply with other academic duties. The results of the final test were not as good as we expected. We also consider that implementing the strategies for more time would have offered better results in the outcome of the test.

The second limitation was the number of participants. Although it was very valuable to see how the students responded to the strategies taught to them according to their learning styles, it was very difficult to analyze the data from the two schools, considering that each group had a number of members above forty students and the time was limited. If we had had fewer students, we would have had fewer data and we would have paid attention and analyzed the effectiveness of each strategy more deeply.

6.6 Further research

Having noticed the increment in students' comprehension of unknown vocabulary, it is suggested that further research can be directed to examine to what extent the reading strategies taught during the implementation of this research enhance the reading skills of the students in other learning processes such as in cross-curricular projects. This suggestion is made considering

that the different reading strategies implemented to support this research can be used to increase the students' reading ability in other subjects as social studies and science, even in L1, since they have learned how to obtain the main idea of a text and are also able to acquire details from it. Likewise, the instruction on reading strategies in early ages of learners must be developed (Fisher & Frey N, 2015) in order to offer learners a concrete foundation that supports them in the scaffolding process of improving reading comprehension.

We also propose to review the influence of the new vocabulary knowledge acquired by the students in allowing the development of other skills such as speaking or writing, which we consider are skills influenced by obtaining new vocabulary. The input of vocabulary over the development of these skills can be seen as a future topic of research in reading instruction (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). Vocabulary also offers elements that support students' competence providing a wider perspective to their communication process (Solano, 2014).

As a final proposal, we would like to mention that some of the reading strategies implemented during the research were more accepted and used by our students according to the reading skill required in the exam and the students' preferences (See Chapter 5, First Subcategory). Consequently, further studies can be conducted in inferring, guessing, predicting and highlighting and their connection with students' increasing learning confidence. We consider that the use of these strategies by students suggest their apprehension and identification of a rapid way to obtain the information necessary to advance when reading. Therefore, future studies can clarify the reasons why students tended to repeat these strategies.

6.7 Conclusion

The results of the study showed that continuous practice of reading strategies can trigger the constant progress in students' critical thinking while they develop awareness in reading

comprehension that can be implemented in other school subjects even in L1. Training students on reading strategies while using scaffolding evidenced a positive impact in supporting an increase in the degree of difficulty in the texts provided to the participants to achieve better performance in tests such as KET. Thus, keeping students with a constant review of the strategies learned by them to keep their mental processes active was challenging for teachers and also for students.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the positive influence of offering students an adequate training in reading strategies that lead them to empower their learning processes while fostering a less dependent role of the teachers' assistance supported by activities that helped them to scaffold in a lasting acquisition of reading skill in L2 with influence in L1. Furthermore, this study presents positive results in the application of seven KET parts as a tool which permitted gradual growing in reading comprehension, since the texts in the different parts of the test increment the level of effort from one to another while students start to recognize the structure of the Prueba Saber 11 test in English.

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Appendix A: Consent Letter for the Principal

Bogotá, D.C., 9 de junio de 2015

Señor / a

Rector / a

Colegio

Ciudad

Saludándolo/a cordialmente. La presente tiene como fin solicitar su autorización para realizar el proyecto de investigación denominado "Comprensión Lectora Autónoma en Inglés" que realizaré dentro del estudio de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés en ambientes de aprendizaje autónomo que inicié este semestre en la Universidad de La Sabana.

Para tal efecto he seleccionado un grupo de octavo grado, que será el mismo que participará el año siguiente, en noveno grado. Aclaro que la participación de los estudiantes es totalmente voluntaria, previo consentimiento de sus tutores legales, padres o acudientes.

El proyecto se desarrollará dentro de las horas de clase, sin impedimento ni perturbación para las mismas. Tampoco la participación o el desempeño de los estudiantes en el proyecto en sí, afectará las valoraciones. Las evidencias del trabajo de los estudiantes se manejarán con un código o seudónimo para garantizar entera confidencialidad.

Es importante recalcar que no habrá gastos por parte de los estudiantes y que todas las actividades se enmarcarán dentro del Plan de estudios con ánimo de aprovechamiento académico. Tanto usted como el coordinador académicos están invitados a acompañar el proyecto y presenciar las clases cuando lo consideren necesario. Igualmente, a solicitar reportes periódicos de resultados y situaciones.

Agradezco su gentil colaboración y respaldo.

Atentamente,

Docentes Colegio _____

Appendix B: Consent Letter for Participants and their Parents

**CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO
PARA PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA SABANA
MAESTRIA EN INGLES CON ENFASIS EN APRENDIZAJES AUTONOMOS**

Yo _____, acudiente/padre del estudiante _____ del curso _____ del IED _____ Jornada de la _____, con documento _____, acepto de manera voluntaria que se le incluya al estudiante _____, con documento _____ de _____ de edad _____, como sujeto de estudio para el proyecto de investigación denominado: "Comprensión Lectora Autónoma", luego de haber conocido la información sobre el proyecto y beneficios directos e indirectos de mi participación y la del estudiante en el estudio, y en el entendido de que:

Su participación como estudiante no repercutirá en sus actividades ni evaluaciones programadas en el curso, o en mi condición de acudiente/padre, no repercutirá en mis relaciones con la institución.

No habrá ninguna sanción para el estudiante en caso de no aceptar la invitación.

Puedo retirar al estudiante del proyecto si lo considero conveniente a sus intereses, informando mis razones para tal decisión en una Carta de Revocación respectiva.

No haré ningún gasto, ni recibiré remuneración alguna por la participación en el estudio.

Los materiales y la información obtenidos pueden ser utilizados en forma impresa o virtual/digital para el mencionado estudio, sin restricción.

Se guardará estricta confidencialidad sobre los datos obtenidos producto de nuestra participación, con un número de clave o seudónimo que ocultará la identidad del estudiante.

Si en los resultados de la participación del estudiante se hiciera evidente algún problema relacionado con su proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje, se nos brindará orientación al respecto.

Puedo solicitar, en el transcurso del estudio información actualizada sobre el mismo, al investigador responsable, en lo que compete al progreso del estudiante y su participación en el proceso.

Lugar y Fecha: _____

Nombre y firma del acudiente/padre: _____

Nombre y firma del estudiante: _____

Nombre y firma de quien proporcionó la información para fines de consentimiento en representación del colegio:

Nombre de docente

Institución

Docente de Inglés

Test 1 Paper 1 Reading and Writing


PART 4

QUESTIONS 21-27

Read the article about Bill Bryson, a writer.

Are sentences 21-27 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B)?
 If there is not enough information to answer 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B), choose 'Doesn't say' (C).

For questions 21-27, mark A, B or C on your answer sheet.



Bill Bryson

I was born in the United States but I have written several travel books about England. I lived there with my wife and four children for 20 years, but for the last three years we have lived in the United States. Our children are now learning about life in the United States. I'm sure they will be happier because they have lived in two countries. I like Britain and I want to return, but my daughter, Felicity, is going to start college here soon, so it won't be for another four years.

I have just been to England for six weeks to work on a radio programme about the English language and also to talk about the book I've just written. Most writers don't like doing this; they don't like travelling around the country, selling their book. I don't mind it. I like visiting new places and meeting lots of people. It's very different from the life I have in the United States when I'm writing. In England, people drove me around in big cars and I stayed in expensive hotels. It was good because I didn't have to pay any bills. Everyone was kind to me and it was fun.

Example:

0 Bill has written about a country he has visited.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say Answer:

A	B	C
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 Bill returned to the United States after living in England for a long time.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

22 Bill thinks it will be good for his children to live in more than one country.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

23 Bill's daughter didn't want to go to college in England.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

24 Bill has just visited England to finish writing his new book.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

25 Bill is happy with the things he has to do to sell his books.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

26 Bill has travelled to many different places in the United States.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

27 It cost Bill a lot of money to travel around England for six weeks.
 A Right B Wrong C Doesn't say

Figure 13 Fourth Part of KET taken from Cambridge Key English Test 4. Cambridge University Press

Test 1 Paper 1 Reading and Writing

PART 5

QUESTIONS 28-35

Read the article about crocodiles.
 Choose the best word (A, B or C) for each space.
 For questions 28-35, mark A, B or C on your answer sheet.

CROCODILES


We can find crocodiles in tropical parts of (28) world, for example Africa, South America and Northern Australia.

They spend most of the time (29) slow-moving water but they (29) move fast through the water and on land.

You often see crocodiles together in large groups. They (30) everything they catch, (31) fish, birds and small animals. And sometimes they make a meal of large animals or even people.

There are (32) than ten types of crocodile. They all have very sharp teeth. They often lose (33) teeth, but soon get new ones.

Crocodiles are usually about 3.5 metres long, but some are much (34) Crocodiles live (35) a long time. The oldest one kept in a zoo was 66 years old!



Example:

0 A the B an C a Answer

0	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

28 A in B on C at

29 A are B can C have

30 A eats B eat C ate

31 A by B like C to

32 A more B most C many

33 A this B that C there

34 A bigger B big C biggest

35 A for B since C during

Figure 14 Fifth Part of KET taken from Cambridge Key English Test 4. Cambridge University Press

Test 1 Paper 1 Reading and Writing

PART 6

QUESTIONS 36-40

Read the descriptions of some things you can read.
 What is the word for each one?
 The first letter is already there. There is one space for each other letter in the word.
 For questions 36-40, write the words on your answer sheet.

Example:

0 When your friends go on holiday, they send you this. p _____

Answer: 0 postcard

36 If you don't understand a word, you can look in this. d _____

37 You can buy this every week and read about many interesting subjects in it. m _____

38 If you write about your daily life in this, you may not want anyone to read it. d _____

39 You write this for your mother when you answer the phone for her. m _____

40 People buy this every morning to read about what has happened in the world. n _____

PART 7

QUESTIONS 41-50

Complete the letter.
 Write ONE word for each space.
 For questions 41-50, write the words on your answer sheet.

Example: 0 DE

Paris

Dear Maria,

It's good to (40) _____ back home in my country but I still think (41) _____ all the friends I made in our English class, especially you. I cried (42) _____ I left England because my visit (43) _____ too short. I would (44) _____ to return to England but (45) _____ time I will stay in a different city.

I have started English classes again here. I learnt a (46) _____ of things in England but I know I (47) _____ to study even harder.

(48) _____ about you? (49) _____ you still looking for a job? I hope you find (50) _____ soon.

Love,

Sophie

Figure 15 Sixth and seventh Part of KET taken from Cambridge Key English Test 4. Cambridge

Appendix D: Initial and Final Survey

**Instituto Técnico Francisco José de Caldas
IED Carlos Pizarro Leongomez
Cuestionario Informativo**

Edad: _____

Curso: _____

Código: _____

Escoge la respuesta que más se aproxima a tu realidad personal. Marca de 1 a 5, en donde 5 es siempre, 4 frecuentemente, 3 generalmente, 2 rara vez y 1 es nunca, aparecen cinco óvalos

Marque el óvalo de su respuesta

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Lees en inglés	○	○	○	○	○
2. Cuando comienzas a leer piensas en lo que sabes sobre el tema	○	○	○	○	○
3. Predices de que se trata un texto en inglés basado en una imagen o en el título de la lectura	○	○	○	○	○
4. Identificas información específica de un texto en inglés	○	○	○	○	○
5. Predices el significado de una palabra desconocida a partir de todo el texto que lo contiene.	○	○	○	○	○
6. Extraes las idea principal de un texto	○	○	○	○	○
7. Extraes las ideas secundarias fácilmente	○	○	○	○	○
8. Realizas mapas mentales, conceptuales u otro tipo de grafico después de leer un texto en inglés.	○	○	○	○	○
9. Localizas información fácilmente en el texto para contestar preguntas específicas	○	○	○	○	○
10. Resumes después de leer	○	○	○	○	○
11. Tomas nota de lo que entiendes sobre una lectura	○	○	○	○	○
12. Resaltas información importante de un texto cuando lees.	○	○	○	○	○

Gracias por su colaboración.

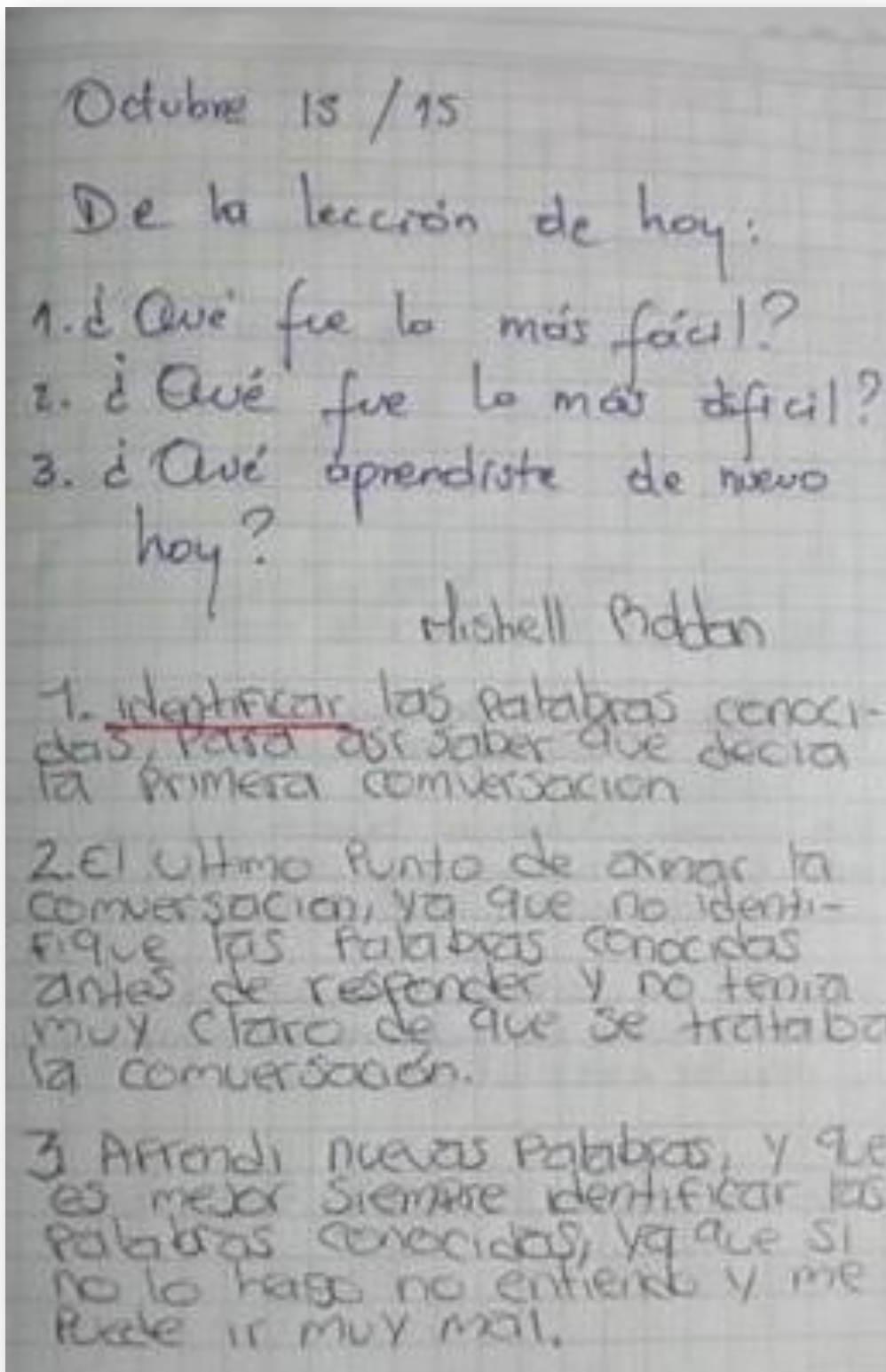
Atentamente, Nelly Patricia Ávila

Lucia Vélez Casas

Appendix E: Teacher's Journal Format

Journal Format	
Date: Session: Group:	
Before	
During	
After	
Later reflections	

Appendix F: Students' Journal Sample



Appendix G: ICELT Lesson Plan Form

Lesson Plan No. 2

Objetivo principal: Al final de la clase, los estudiantes serán capaz de identificar el significado de cinco avisos en Inglés usando el vocabulario que ellos ya conocen.

Objetivos específicos:

- Identificar que la parte 1 del examen KET, ellos deben relacionar cinco avisos con sus correspondientes significados.
- Inferir el significado de nuevo vocabulario entrelazando las palabras que ya conocen.
- Conectar palabras e ideas similares para encontrar el significado de los avisos.
- Visualizar el significado de los avisos y mostrarlo a través de un dibujo.

Fase	Objetivo	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and Interaction
Familiarización	Revisar el contenido de la parte 1 del examen KET en lectura.	Los estudiantes: 1. Identifica los componentes de la primera parte del examen. 2. Reconoce que debe hacer en esta parte del examen. El profesor: Escribe en el tablero los componentes de acuerdo a lo que los estudiantes mencionan.	10 m Todo el grupo.
Antes de leer	Adivinar el significado de vocabulario nuevo.	Los estudiantes: 1. Subrayan las palabras conocidas y representa gráficamente su significado. (Anexo 1) 2. Revisan con tus compañeros qué palabras conocen ellos pero tu no. 3. Pasan al tablero y coloca los dibujos en su correspondiente aviso. (Anexo 2) 4. De acuerdo al vocabulario que reconocen infiere el significado de los avisos.	Grupos 20 m Individual y parejas, todo el grupo.
Durante la lectura	Relacionar avisos con sus correspondientes significados.	Los estudiantes: 1. Subrayan vocabulario conocido de ambas columnas del examen y lo relaciona. De esta forma unen los avisos con frases referentes a su significado. (Anexo 3) 2. Comparan y discuten la respuesta con un compañero. 3. Comparten con la clase las respuestas y las razones por las cuales son estas.	20 m Individual Parejas Todo el curso
Después de la lectura	Visualizar qué entendió sobre los avisos.	Los estudiantes: 1. Contextualizan los avisos teniendo en cuenta el significado y el lugar donde se encuentra a través de un dibujo. 2. Comparten con los compañeros el contexto y significado del aviso.	20 m Grupos
Test	Colocar en práctica las estrategias aprendidas.	Los estudiantes: 1. Usan las estrategias aprendidas para resolver el test que es similar al de ejercicio. (Anexo 4) 2. Identifican sus fortalezas y debilidades en la implementación de la prueba.	30 m Individual

Appendix H: Instructional Design

Date	KET parts	Strategies / Activities	Data collection instrument
September 1st -4th	Initial Test	1. The initial survey 2. Familiarization with parts of KET 3. Implementation of the initial test.	1. Survey 2. Initial Test
September 8th - 11th	First part: Notices	Pre-reading: Making inferences While reading: Making connections Post- reading: Visualizing Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
September 15th - 18th	Second part: Incomplete story	Pre-reading: Predicting While reading: Confirming prediction Post- reading: Visualizing Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
September 22nd - 25th	Third A part: Five conversations	Pre-reading: Predicting While reading: Confirm predictions Post- reading: Visualizing Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
September 29th - October 2 nd	Third B part: Incomplete conversation	Pre-reading: Making inferences While reading: Making connections Post- reading: Visualizing Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
October 13th - 16th	Fourth part: Reading comprehension questions.	Pre-reading: Predicting While reading: Highlight Post- reading: Confirming predictions Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
October 20th -23rd	Fifth Part: Incomplete text	Pre-reading: Activating previous knowledge While reading: Making connections Post- reading: Highlight Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
October 27th - 30th	Sixth Part: Match words with meanings	Pre-reading: Mind mapping While reading: Making inferences Post- reading: Making connections Test	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal
November 3rd.- 6 th	Strategies compilation	Recalling and summarizing the strategies.	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal 3. Final Survey
November 10th -13th	Final test	Implementation of the final test.	1. Teachers' Journal 2. Students' Journal 3. Final test

