

Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension

**READING IS THINKING: Improving Reading Comprehension Using the
think-aloud Method.**

Héctor Fabio Vásquez Cardona

Andrés Felipe Suárez Maya

**UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA DE PEREIRA
FACULTAD DE BELLAS ARTES Y HUMANIDADES
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**Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el título
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Asesora:

Profesora Dolly Ramos

**UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA DE PEREIRA
FACULTAD DE BELLAS ARTES Y HUMANIDADES
LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA LENGUA INGLESA
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RESUMEN

Esta investigación tuvo como fin reportar el impacto generado por la estrategia de pensar en voz alta en la comprensión de lectura de 5 estudiantes de inglés pre-intermedio de una universidad pública de la ciudad de Pereira. Así mismo, se reportarán las percepciones de los estudiantes con respecto a la estrategia de pensar en voz alta. Los métodos usados para llevar a cabo la recolección de datos para esta investigación fueron: diarios, observaciones y entrevistas.

Los resultados obtenidos al final de esta investigación fueron positivos en términos de comprensión de lectura en inglés, ya que después de implementar la estrategia de pensar en voz alta los estudiantes lograron una mejor comprensión de los textos leídos en clase. De igual manera, los estudiantes que hicieron parte de este proceso alcanzaron cambios favorables en aspectos del idioma Inglés tales como: el vocabulario, pronunciación, escucha y escritura.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to report the impact generated by the think-aloud method in the English reading comprehension of 5 pre-intermediate students who belong to a public urban university in Pereira. Likewise, the perceptions of these students in regards to the think aloud strategy are reported. The methods used to collect all the data in this investigation were: journals, observations and interviews.

The results obtained at the end of this study were positive in terms of English reading comprehension, since after implementing the think-aloud method; these

pre-intermediate students achieved a better comprehension of the texts used in the English classes. In the same way, the students who took part of this process reach positive changes in English such as: vocabulary, pronunciation, listening and writing.

Dedication

To the Vasquez Cardona and Suarez Maya families

To GOD

The principal being that let us be in this step of our lives.

To our adviser Dolly,

Who most of the time was prompting us to continue with this hard process. Her dedication guided our paths as professional teachers and researchers. During her advising sessions we understood that finishing quickly is not what is important, but learning and the quality of the product are the rewards.

To our families

Ellas han sido la base fundamental de nuestro desarrollo como personas y profesionales siendo ellos los acreedores principales de los resultados de este trabajo y la culminación de nuestra carrera profesional.

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(Andres Felipe Suarez Maya).

I would like to thank to my family especially to my mother and grandmother for all the patience they had during this process and their support. Also to Andres Felipe for his commitment and effort, without he, this project would have been more complicated. To his mother Doris Maya for being so kind and gentle all the time.

Finally, we also would like to thank to all our classmates and wonderful people we met during these five years.

(Hector Fabio Vasquez Cardona)

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Introduction

In this research project the reader will find aspects related to the think-aloud method in regards to reading comprehension. We will document here the impact that the think-aloud reading method had among the participants in this study. The content of this investigation is conformed by 4 chapters which will be explained as follow:

In chapter one, the statement of the problem and rationale of this research are included, in order to explain the reading difficulties that pre-intermediate students are facing currently en Pereira's urban public university. Therefore, it mentions how the think-aloud method is considered as a possible solution to solve such reading problem in these students. At the end of this chapter, it establishes the research questions of this research project.

In chapter two, the reader will find the theoretical framework of our investigation that will support our thoughts about reading comprehension and reading strategies issues. Afterwards, the literature review in which studies related to reading comprehension and think-aloud method from other researchers is stated as well. For that reason, this chapter is very important because it will give us academic support in this investigation and would explain how it was developed.

In chapter three, the reader will find the type of study of this investigation is, as well as the methods used to collect the data from the think- aloud sessions developed in the classroom. It is also mentioned another issues like participants and context in which this investigation took place. This chapter will portrait where this investigation took place, In addition to, the reader will be given an idea of how these reading sessions were carried out with the pre-intermediate students and how the data collected was analyzed.

Finally, chapter four will portray all the findings resulted from this research process as well as the theory that supports all the data obtained throughout this study. This chapter also shows other aspects that should be taken into account for advance research.

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE

Reading is a complex process that requires the active participation of the reader for the construction of literacy knowledge. That is why, it is important to teach students good reading strategies in order to help them in the development of the literacy knowledge. Furthermore, because reading goes beyond decoding. The proficient readers must be able to recognize the purpose of reading is to make sense of what is written.

Lloyd (2004) reports that teachers and students must work together to break away from the traditional reading teaching methods and adds that teachers are still controlling the meaning of the text through questions designed in order to calculate meaning.

Araujo (2002) cites Vigotsky (1978) to explain the importance of social constructivism in terms of reading. Social constructivism explains how language mediates in the learning process and the importance of student's engagement in the reading development derived from the interaction with adults and peers to construct knowledge. So, in this way when students and teachers make comments about the reading, it will help their peers constructing meaning about the text.

Based on our own personal experience during our literacy knowledge process, we can report the lack of reading strategies we received in our native language, making this an issue when students are learning a second language.

The Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) (2008) based on an Encuesta de Consumo Cultural reports that the reading level in Colombia is low. According to this information, only the 57.07% of children between 5 and 11 years old read books during the last 12 months, making this population the one that visits libraries more frequently among people older than 12 years, only 24.16% visited these cultural spaces during the last year, while the 76.69% did not and these population go to the library just because they are send by their teacher.

According to this survey, the amount of books reading in Colombia is very low. Fundalectura also reports that while some developed countries like the United States, England, and Spain read between 10 and 15 books every year, Colombian people just read between 2 and 3.

Block (1986) draws from Clarke (1979); CziKo (1980); and McNamara (1970) to explain that the reading ability in a second language is largely a function of proficiency in that language. Block (1986) also draws from Benedetto (1984); Coady (1979); Cummins (1980); Goodman (1973); and Hudson (1982) to explain that these researchers assert that higher level strategies developed in a first language can be transferred to a second language and can operate alongside lower processing strategies.

Colombian people do not read as much as other countries, leading to problems when they try to understand complex academic readings in English. Subsequently, if people are not good readers in their mother tongue, they are not going to become good readers in a second language. That is why it is necessary to start implementing reading strategies from the beginning of the learning process and avoid the problems some students may have when they are exposed to complex readings in English.

Research Questions

- ✓ What is the impact of reading strategies instruction provided to pre-intermediate English pre-service teachers at a public urban university?
- ✓ What are the pre-intermediate English pre-service teacher's perceptions to reading strategies instruction?
- ✓ What does it take to design and implement lessons that incorporate reading strategies to a group of English students in a TFL program?

CHAPTER 2

RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In this section, we will mention relevant definitions to our study such as literacy, reading and reading strategies among others.

What is literacy?

Literacy is typically described as the ability of any person to write and read any text, but nowadays this perception has a further relevant meaning in people's daily situations. It involves language and culture and can be expressed through many forms of communication means in this century. Likewise, people who use literacy have more benefits than those who are out of the trend of current means communication such as internet, TV and newspaper (UNESCO, 2003). In other words, we can say that literacy could help many people to have different perspectives about the world in terms of today's society. Also it is good to mention how more people around the world are learning English as a second or as foreign language.

As it is already known, this research project deals with the implementation of reading strategies to achieve reading comprehension, followed by, it is important to start defining what reading is.

Reading:

Reading is a complex process that requires the active participation of the reader with the purpose of making meaning out of text. Teaching reading comprehension strategies to English foreign language (EFL) learners is important because it gives EFL learners tools to reach comprehension of text in their least known language.

The process of reading in a foreign language

The process of reading in a foreign language is explained by Grabe (1993) as a good tool for second language readers. He also argues that when readers receive good instruction in reading in their first language and they understand

what they do to comprehend better the text, they are able to transfer this knowledge into the second language.

Block (1986) draws from Clarke (1979), Czikso (1980), Macnamara (1970) to explain that many researchers also conclude that when talking about second language readers they fall into two groups, the first group is explained as when readers have a good proficiency in the second language they are able to understand better the text in that target language, and the second group as the readers who have good reading strategies in their first language and thus they can transfer them to the second language.

Think-aloud:

To explain what think-aloud is we can cite Oster (2001) where she defines it as a reading method where students can verbalize their thought as they read, and thus bring into the open strategies they are using to understand the text. Within the think-aloud method we can mention some reading comprehension strategies like predicting and visualizing.

We understand prediction and visualizing as when students express with their comments, what is going on in the story or possible facts that could happen next. Oster (2001) draws from Wade (1990) to describe how good readers work interactively with the text and manage their reading strategies adeptly, in this way Wade (1990) used the think-aloud instruction to target the strategies weaker readers or comprehenders need.

Prior knowledge

Prior knowledge may be defined as a combination of the learner's preexisting attitudes, experiences and knowledge and also it is a reading strategy which is modeled when using the think aloud. As a result, when readers use it, they can build new knowledge by associating prior knowledge with new information. Thus, readers can have more tools to report their understanding of a text. Additionally, Harvey and Goudvis (2000) support that, when children understand how to connect the text they read to their lives, they begin to make connections to the larger world. They also state that making

connections to personal experiences facilitates understanding. This is very crucial because learners begin to make connections about what they already know in order to construct meaning. Therefore, we can argue that when students make connections of the texts their reading comprehension increases.

Classroom interaction

Interaction between teacher and students are an essential part of teaching learning process. Richards (1994) points out that a considerable amount of time is used in the interaction process while learning a second language. Also, he mentions that a great deal of time in teaching is devoted both to interaction between the teacher and the learners, and to interaction among the learners themselves. Moreover, we can say that the think-aloud promotes interactive behavior among students when reading. In addition, we noted that the think-aloud was well received by students in terms of reading comprehension because it was a reading activity novelty for them, in which they can get involved, had fun and learned through it in a comfortable and environmental way. Oster (2001) supports that students became comfortable with the think-aloud method as they practice it, they valued peer sharing and class discussion based on their think-aloud comments. Besides that, they do not feel fear to speak and participate in the classroom when think-aloud occurs. As a result of these assumptions of interaction, it reflects how students acquire knowledge by means of interaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading

Reading is a complex process that requires the active participation of the reader with the purpose of making meaning out of text. Teaching reading comprehension strategies to English foreign language (EFL) learners is important because it gives EFL learners tools to reach comprehension of text in their least known language.

Oster (2001) explains that appropriate instruction addresses the student's needs. Besides, the idea here is that through our instruction we want that students become better readers and also that they enjoy while reading. She also argues that encouraging students to make questions and comments while they read provide the teacher and the student important information about student comprehension abilities. That is why based on this process teachers are able to assess students comprehension going beyond from the common reading comprehension questions.

Block (1986) also mentions the importance to teach reading strategies to EFL students in L1 facilitating to transfer into L2. She also considers that teachers do not know much about the process involved in reading comprehension. It is important to teach reading strategies to EFL students to increase the awareness of the strategies in L1 to facilitate to transfer into L2.

Some studies have suggested that good bilingual readers are able to monitor their comprehension of text in both languages and also, good readers are more aware of the reading strategies that they use than poor readers (Block, 1986).

Moreover, Block (1986) suggests that higher- level activities developed in the L1, can be transferred to the L2 reading. It is necessary to help EFL learners to be aware of their reading strategies, first in their mother tongue to enable them to transfer this consciousness of thought when reading in target language.

Araujo (2002) draws from Hruby (2001) to explain that the student's role in the construction of the literacy knowledge should be active, adding that good

teaching will provide opportunities to encourage active engagement with reading. That is why; we want to start mentioning the contributions made by Vigotsky (1978) in his theory of learning as a sociocultural process. He postulates that social interaction with another competent person is the means by which students actively co-construct the teaching and learning process within a zone of proximal development (ZPD). Let us now see a further explanation of the social interaction theory.

Social interaction:

To start with, we can mention what Vigotsky often-quoted for the definition of zone of proximal development (ZPD). It is present as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. In other words the importance of the ZPD is to model and also to work around text together with students in different activities to help them in the construction of literacy knowledge.

Additionally, Gort (2008) draws from Gort (2006); Manyak (2001); and Perez (2004) to highlight the importance of social interaction for learning, helping to transfer skills across different languages, variations in patterns of learning for L1 and L2 learners, and the embeddedness of language and literacy in children's immediate and broader contexts.

Another relevant contribution made about this topic was made by Araujo (2002) when she draws from Vigotsky (1978) to explain the importance of social constructivism. She argues that when we talk about social constructivism we can say that is when the teacher and the student have an active participation in the construction of meaning.

Think-aloud method:

Oster (2001) argues that the think-aloud method, is when a student or a reader can verbalize their thoughts while they read, thus bring into the open the strategies they are using to comprehend a text. This strategy allows students to

focus on important information, to make predictions, to ask questions, to evoke background knowledge with the text and to express their personal reactions. Likewise we are talking about modelling reading strategies to help students to be aware of strategies they use in their native language (L1) to facilitate transfer into the target language (L2). This process helps the teacher and the students to get information about how they construct meaning from the text through students' responses. In this way, reading strategies contribute to the process of reading comprehension, which in turn is the result of the interaction between the reader and the text. Readers build the meaning of the text from their previous knowledge as the concrete information that the text brings to the reader during this process is combined with previous knowledge to obtain comprehension.

Block (1986) draws from Olson, Duffy, & Mack, (1984); & Scardamalia & Bereiter (1984) to support that the Think-aloud is the best method used to study cognitive strategies in the Reading comprehension process.

When referring to reading comprehension strategies, some authors also refer to metacognition. Oster (2001) draws from Baker & Brown (1984) to support that metacognition is to be able to think about one's own thinking and also it is a crucial component of learning, because it enables learners to assess their level of comprehension and adjust their strategies for greater success.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The participants were 5 students who were enrolled in a pre-intermediate level of English of an English Teaching Education Program (ETEP). ETEP is a program offered by a public urban university in the city of Pereira, Colombia. ETEP is a 10-semester program and focuses on training professional English teachers for the region. The goal of ETEP is to train efficient teachers for primary and high school education.

The course in which we developed the think-aloud method was made up by 20 students, we selected five students (three men and two women) for data collection and their average of age are between 17 and 49 years old. Four of the participants are from Pereira and one comes from La unión Valle (a middle town near Pereira).

ETEP has a total of 800 students and 10 full-time professors. We selected five students from the English pre-intermediate course. Our participants selection was based on the assumption that if students can successfully read in their native language (in this case Spanish) they may be also successful reading in their second language Block (1986). In addition to the previous criteria for selection, we decided to conduct this study within a pre-intermediate English course because this population is in the process of learning English and we consider that it is during this development that students may be exposed to reading strategies.

The public university has a complete library and provides ETEP with electronic resources like the Pro-quest program which helps the ETEP students in their research projects with a wide biography and different articles which offers students access to academic texts. Also the ETEP has computer labs to facilitate the English learning process. Those elements can give the students different materials and ways to practice English.

RESEARCHERS' ROLES

The two of us played the role of researchers in this project. In discussions with the advisor, the two made decisions on coordinating the data collection sessions. Hector guided the reading instruction, while Felipe observed and documented the instruction, the student's responses, and the flow of the session. Also, Felipe conducted the interviews. The sessions were design for both, to have in mind the correct use of the reading instruction.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Our methods to collect the data for this study include interviews, researchers' journals and observations.

Interviews

We made two interviews to each one of the five students (see appendix 7 and 8), one at the beginning of the reading instruction, and the other at the end both in Spanish. As a result, we wanted to interview the students in that language because we thought that they feel more comfortable as well as more autonomous when answering the questions.

The purpose of these interviews is to gather information about the student's responses in relation to the think-aloud reading method, and also to see the impact of this reading strategy according to the participants' views. The questions were created with time in order to portray it to our advisor for future details. We chose this method because we were willing to discuss with the students about their perceptions in regards to the think aloud activities performed by these students. Another main reason to use this method was because it facilitated to gather all the amount of information necessary to analyze students' feelings and perceptions during think- alouds. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed for analysis.

Journals

The journals were helpful in order to collect individual reflections from the researchers about their own realizations and learning about strategic reading. The purpose of the teacher journal was to document what takes to design and implement the think-aloud reading method to pre-intermediate English students. Also the journal explained the steps we had to follow in order to design the lesson and acquire the think-aloud reading method.

Since we were new to reading method knowledge ourselves, we wanted to document the experience of licenciatura students learning and also to see if they were aware about the use of reading strategies with the think-aloud method. The researcher started each journal writing about the topic of the session, then how it was developed, next student's perceptions and finally emphasizing the importance of implementing reading strategies in order to become better readers.

The format we used for advising session is composed by the date, and the number of the entry. This format had important issues like researcher's feelings, comments and opinions on each session.

Observations

The observations were conducted during the total of sessions covering the whole think-aloud modeling process and the students' responses to it. The observations were focused on documenting how the teacher conducted the think-aloud method, the students' responses to the reading strategies, and on the comments of the teacher and students during the think-aloud activity. Based on these comments we were able to see the impact of the instruction on the students' reading comprehension.

The observations were documented through field notes. These field notes provided us detailed information about the implementation and the student's responses during the activity. Documenting the students' verbalization of their thoughts, as well as their behaviors.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The practical session using think-aloud lasted six weeks, in which we conducted six reading activities (narratives & expository texts) employing the strategy in pre-intermediate students. These reading activities were accomplished in this way: two sessions in Spanish (one narrative & one expository), four sessions in English (two narratives & two expository). We choose narrative and expository texts having in mind students' reading proficiency because we believe that narrative and expository texts fit the proficiency level of these students.

In the first session, we modeled the think-aloud method implementing the story called "Que noche tan espantosa" (see *appendix 1*) showing students how to use this method while reading. We firstly organized the classroom in a semi-circle and after that we started explaining: What does think-aloud means? What are the strategies within the think-aloud method? What do we have to take into account from the titles, images, relevant information that could be important, facts and possible facts about the story and the characters, predictions (what could happen next), questions (about words, phrases, what characters do or tell), and personal reactions (how do we feel about the story or with the character). (See also appendix 9 for lessons plan).

Subsequently, we began to read this passage from the title of the story "Què noche tan espantosa", saying out aloud possible situations that could emerge during the reading (predicting), having in mind the title as a main reference. Apart from the title, we also made some stops while reading the story with the purpose of making more predictions that could occur in the story. After doing the predicting step, we told students that prediction is a useful comprehension strategy. Besides, we emphasize and told students the importance of using our own experiences and knowledge to interpret and understand any type of text. We also told students that when we make connections with something that we have already experienced, it becomes easier to comprehend what is being read.

We as teachers also made periodical pauses to point out the most relevant ideas and to check if the reading was making sense. We continued reading and making visualizations of specific situations of the text. For example, when the story started with a boy in a cemetery, we asked students to imagine what the setting was and students had to infer and create a mental image of the place of the story. Likewise, we wanted to portray students the importance of visualizing in a reading process because it makes the reader to be part of the story and become more engaged. Then, we continued doing more stops for checking if there was a clear understanding of the text, if not, we got more backwards and we read again and if there was any unknown word we used the context to give meaning to what we read before. After that, we explained the students that we as readers not necessarily need to know every single word in the text.

In the following sessions, in the last 15-20 minutes of each class, students were the only ones who develop the think-aloud in the reading activity with our supervision. The lay out of the classroom was in a semi-circle all the time and students had the chance to read a part of the story.

In the second session, we implemented an expository text using the text: “enseñar no es transferir conocimientos” by: Lic Hugo Sanchez Morales, (see *appendix 2*) based on the Paulo Freire’s point of view.

We selected this kind of reading because it is according to teaching, and is relevant for our participants.

This time the reading instruction was a little bit different from last time. Today there were more participants, people who did not show up last time, and also some observers from another subject who were interested on see the development of the class. The reading instruction started eliciting from the students some question like: what they think what metacognition was? This kind of questions help to engage the students in the topic and make them think in different possibilities about what they think the reading was going to be about.

This time we tried a different strategy for the reading instruction, asking the participants to help us reading the text in order to maintain them connected to

the reading. All the students were engage participating and making further comments and what we call verbalizing their thoughts. With readings like this, students were able to interact more with the text giving different opinions or points of view making the reading like a round-table.

In the third session, we started with our reading instruction in English, this time we used a book called: *Brown Eyes* by Paul Steward (see *appendix 3*). This narrative text was appropriated for the participant's level due to it has a very easy vocabulary. It is provided with many images, and keeps the readers enrolled or engage all the time. The author uses always mystery sentences to make the reader asking questions about what might happen next.

In this time the students were always willing to participate and trying to guess what the next step in the reading was. The students were making good use of the reading strategies in order to help them using the think-aloud method. They were making predictions and analyzing all the time the images provided by the text. Also at the end, all students were asking themselves about what the final could be. This reading does not have a clear ending that is why it helps students to make comments and let them express their personal reactions about the story and they can choose the ending they prefer or they think is better for them.

At the end of the session, students seemed to very interested in the reading showing like a disapproval to see how the author finished the story without giving a clear ending. This particulate reading facilitated the uses of the different strategies involved in the think-aloud method and involucrate the students giving personal reactions.

In the fourth session, the topic was about global warming (see *appendix 4*). We started modifying a power point presentation (PPP) we found on internet about global warming in order to add more text and help us implement the think-aloud reading method and also adding some pictures we thought student were going to be interested on.

The students were engaged during the whole session making important comments about easy things we all can make in order to prevent global warming. They all seemed to be worried about the climate change and they expressed some little things they were making in order to help.

This activity helped us to work with another strategy of the think-aloud method, which is activating their prior knowledge and negotiation of meaning. As students were exposed before of what global warming was, they had the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary transferring their background knowledge into their second language, making a better reading comprehension of the text.

Once again we supported our reading instruction with images, in this case to help students to understand how the global warming affects the earth and to have a better understanding on how it happens. Students had the possibility to express their opinion and make the verbalization of thoughts showing their reaction with some images where they portrait how some places were before and now.

In the fifth session, we chose a topic about Osama Bin Laden and his family business (*See appendix 5*). This topic explained or showed us many different things that students might be interested on, but the students were not very engage with the topic and the teacher had to make many questions in order to help students to have better understanding and make them feel comfortable with it.

We decided to make this session a little bit more complicated in order to expose the students to a more complex reading and show them that now they are able to understand better complex readings.

In the final session, we chose chapter two from the book "*How to Teach English*" by Jeremy Harmer: How to be a good learner (*See appendix 6*).

This chapter is subdivided into seven parts. So we made photocopies in order to make groups of two people and then deliver to each group a different piece of the chapter.

Students were asked to read the photocopy within twenty minutes and be prepared in order to answer some reading comprehension questions giving their personal opinion. After the first five minutes, the teacher made a stop in the reading with the intention of asking students what reading strategies they were using, if they were paying attention to the title or maybe making some predictions about what the text was going to be about.

At the end of the session, students made different comments about how they felt when applying the reading strategies by themselves. However, as the readings were in English and Spanish, sometimes we helped students only reading the text, and also telling them where to do the stop in order for students to make their predictions and visualizations. We also elicited information from students asking questions such as: "what do you think this story is going to be about?" the predictions made by these students were in Spanish and in English, depending of the session because we think that they have the proficiency level for doing such predictions in English. Then, we continued with the reading asking them to visualize the situation. As a result, they started to evoke and say out loud all the images that came from the reading. This visualizing process was done during the whole reading, at the end we realized if all the predictions made at the beginning were wrong or right.

We simply assisted them saying where to predict, visualize and make sure that they were using their prior knowledge. These reading sessions were observed for analysis. At the same time when doing these think-aloud sessions, we were collecting data.

This research project made us think about how can a similar research could be done or developed with different population. Also in this public university of Pereira, all students for different programs from ETEP like medicine, engineering, arts, philosophy, among others, have to receive certain hours of exposure of English and have to show English proficiency as a requirement for their graduation. It would be interesting to see how this different population receive or perceive this reading method.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our methods to collect the data for this study include interviews, observations and researchers' journals. When we gathered all the data we immediately printed all the amount of information out that we had collected. At the beginning and at the end of each pre-service teaching session journals were wrote in order to gave us the opportunity of not lose every single detail of the reading activity itself accomplished in a journal. On the other hand, the observations were made during the whole sessions. Finally, we collected information from the participant's point of view on reading and strategies used after each think-aloud session, for a total of two interviews per participant. We collected information from the participants to know how they felt at the end of the think-aloud session, what was the impact of this process on their reading, and to know details about their reading behavior during the session. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

We started to corroborate our information based on triangulation. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) support that one of the ways to analyze data is using the methodological triangulation which involves the convergence of data from multiple data collection sources. In this case we are talking about teacher's journal, interviews and observations.

At this point, we will describe the process that was carried out to collect and analyze our data from the journals, observations and interviews.

The purpose of the teacher's journal was to document what takes to design and implement the think-aloud reading strategy to pre-intermediate English students. Also the journal explained the steps we had to follow in order to design the lesson and acquire the think-aloud reading strategy. The teachers' journals were written immediately after each think-aloud session, because we did not want to miss any relevant information when analyzing the data. Furthermore, the journals also gave us the opportunity to reflect and modify the activities and the chance to see if students were having an impact in their reading comprehension. These journals were analyzed focused mainly on

highlighting the relevant issues of our investigation. To be clearer, we emphasized on different situations in which students were asked to make predictions and visualizations. Also, we determined if the questions that we as teachers made for checking understandings were clear or not and if we let the students made their predictions and visualizations accurately in regards to the characteristics of the text. For that reason, the analyses of the journals were made after every single session with the purpose of making performances stronger in the following instructional sessions using think-aloud method.

Moreover, we designed two interviews (appendix 7 and 8) to each one of the five students, one at the beginning of the reading instruction, and the other at the end. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information about the student's perceptions in relation to the think-aloud reading method, and also to see the impact of this reading strategy according to the participants' point of view. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed for further analysis. These students who were interviewed answered nine questions in the first interview and eleven questions at the end about their perceptions and also the views in regards to the reading activities using the think-aloud method.

Subsequently, from the interviewees' answers we transcribed and highlighted aspects that we considered relevant to our project such as students' opinions, responses and personal reactions towards the reading activities we designed. Also, we analyzed every answer of each interview with the purpose of finding commonalities that we could report in our findings chapter.

Finally, the observations were conducted during the total of six sessions covering the whole think-aloud modeling process and the students' responses toward it. The observations were focused on documenting how the teacher conducted the think-aloud method, the students' responses to the reading strategies, and on the comments of the teacher and students made during the think-aloud activity. Based on these comments we were able to see the impact of the instruction on the students' reading comprehension.

The observations were documented through field notes. These field notes provided us detailed information about the implementation and the student's

responses during the reading session. Documenting the students' verbalization of their thoughts, showing the strategies they are using while reading, like making comments or questions about the text, bringing their prior knowledge or making inferences.

The sessions were also audio-taped and transcribed to expand the information collected in the field notes taken during the observations. These transcriptions helped us to accurately portray the student's responses and the characterization of their thought process.

Allan 2003 supports that grounded theory (GT) is a powerful research method for collecting and analyzing research data. Also, he says that a fundamental part of the analysis method in GT is the derivation of codes, concepts and categories.

Having in mind Allan (2003) after having all the information organized, we decided to code the samples taken from each one of the methods (journals, interviews 1&2 and observations) which we used to collect our data. The purpose of putting these codes to the data was with the aim of locating the information in the transcriptions more easily. The codes were organized as following: when the data came from the journals we assigned the letter "J", from the interviews 1 & 2 "I1" "I2"; when the data came from observations we assigned the letter "o" followed by the page with the letter "P" In addition, we put the number of the think aloud session together with the letters assigned for the methods mentioned previously plus the number of the lines, where the information was taken from. An example of one of these codes is: "O 2 P.7 L 14-25" (*Observation 2, Page 7, from Line 14-25*).

When the data was transcribed we started using the methodological triangulation. We started convergence our data from our different collection methods and we found similar characteristics which are going to show as following:

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In the following section we will present our expected and unexpected findings.

1. Student's awareness of the need of reading strategies:

When students start facing some demanding readings they realize the need of doing something in order to increase or have a better comprehension of the readings they are exposed to. We felt as researchers the need of helping students to be aware of this lack of reading strategies and help them to go beyond decoding.

During our reading instruction we could record different comments made by the students based on the reading method (think-aloud) and its strategies. For example we can start by mentioning these comments recorded during the observations. While the teacher was conducting or implementing the reading sessions, he was asking periodically questions in order to elicit from the students these comments.

For example during the final interview we addressed the students with this specific question: “-¿Que opinas acerca del uso o la implementación de las estrategias de comprensión de lectura?” what do you think about the implementation of the strategies in the reading comprehension?

(I2 L 1-3 Student 2)

No pues mi opinión es que es muy bueno aprender sobre eso porque cada vez que nos pongan un taller o un ejercicio de eso donde tengamos que leer ya sabremos como hacer para comprenderlo mejor, que nos vaya mejor.

(I2 L 1-5 Student 3)

Ehh. Me ha parecido bastante interesante de manera tal que he adquirido nuevas técnicas y habilidades para comprender los textos referidos. (2) También me parece interesante ya que crea una conciencia sobre lo importante que es eso, que son estas técnicas para la comprensión de

cualquier texto fundamentalmente en el idioma que estamos estudiando en este caso el Ingles.

We can see how students became aware of the use of these Reading strategies. At the end of the final interview all the students showed a great interest in the implementation of the reading strategies. Some of the comments they made were related on how they are reading now after the reading strategies implementation. They consider that when they implement reading strategies they can have a better understanding on the reading; they can go further in the reading.

Wade (1990) draws from Paris et all (1983) to explain that several researches have shown that many readers do not realize if a passage was comprehensible or not, they do not know that they should check their comprehension. When students understand and become aware that they have a lack of reading strategies, they succeed to make the necessary repairs, so when students are helped to develop this awareness they can start analyzing the problem and thus to look for another strategy that helps them to understand or comprehend the text better.

2. Student's verbalization of thoughts:

We refer in this case to some comments made by the students during the reading sessions. Oster (2001) defines this verbalization of thoughts as the comments students make as they read allowing the teacher to know what strategies they are using to understand a text like for example using prior knowledge, predicting or questioning the text. Oster (2001) adds that these comments reveal readers' strengths and weakness to allow the teacher to asses their needs or to plan more effective instruction.

During our reading sessions we noticed some important comments students made about verbalization of thoughts. This is a very important part of our study because we focused our attention in these comments in order to find out how students reading comprehension was.

During the observations we could see some relevant comments especially when the teacher elicited some questions that help the students to verbalize their thoughts and give their personal reaction based on the reading. We selected some comments like for example when they were asked to predict or to say what they think is going on or will happen next in the reading, some of the answers were:

(O 1 P. 3 L 33-34)

Student 5: I think the boy is having some hallucinations.

Student 2: it is a dream inside a dream.

(O 1 P. 4 L 1-4)

Teacher: what do you think it could happen?

Student 3: may be he is agonizing

Student 5: he is already dead

Student 2: he got desperate and starts running.

(O 1 P. 3 L 8-14)

Teacher: If it is a dream why is he having it?

Student 3: it could be the fact of losing his grades.

Student 5: it may be a guilty conscience.

Student 2: he is worried.

Student 3: he said too many lies.

Student 5: may be he was a great liar.

Student 2: he was lying and committed a mistake.

Based on these comments we can see what students are thinking about the reading and what is going on in their mind while they are reading, also we can know what they think it will happen next in the reading giving their personal

reactions. In this case we can cite Oster (2001) when she draws from Fawcett (1993) to explain that using the students as think-aloud models for one another procedures more authentic thinking.

We can relate this comment to our study to show how during the reading sessions we can use student's comments to facilitate a better understanding of the text, based on one comment students can analyze their reading comprehension showing agreement or disagreement about someone else's comments.

Oster (2001) also points out that students should be willing to adjust their understanding as their read further and discover more or maybe to make these adjustments based on others student's comments.

3. Linking meaning to prior knowledge and predictions:

We perceived how through the use of the think-aloud in a whole group interaction, reading strategies like making comments or questions about the text, bringing their prior knowledge and predictions took place. Our perception was confirmed by some students in their interviews and observations, one of the student's comment was:

(I2, Student 1 L 4-8). "...uno generalmente lee las cosas pero no las entiende bien y más cuando es un texto pues más complicado generalmente uno en la universidad le dan textos que son muy complicados y uno pues no los entiende a veces entonces es muy importante usar este tipo de técnicas porque pues le ayudan a usted como a facilitar un poco el texto y entenderlo mejor."

It means that the reading strategies in the classroom were essential for reading comprehension because it engaged them to develop reading tasks more easily and to be more involved in the class topic.

In regards to prior knowledge Macceca (2007) writes that linking new information to the students' prior knowledge activates students' interest and curiosity and gives instruction a sense of purpose.

Additionally, Kelley & Clausen-Grace (2007) cite Guillet and Temple (1994) to support that predictions help readers make connections between their prior knowledge and the new information being learned.

Here are some other samples that confirmed our perceptions:

(I2 Student 1 L15-20) "...pues que yo no sabía que habían tantas oportunidades pues para uno empezar a entender un texto el uno mirar el título y comenzar a analizar desde ahí, o cierto pues mirar las imágenes todo ese cuento pues uno cuando está leyendo o practicando uno no se fija en eso si no que se concentra solo en leer la historia y pues uno generalmente no la entiende y le toca releerla mientras que uno haciendo eso pues uno ya la entiende más rápido.

In this sample, we found that using and building prior knowledge during reading task is crucial to help students actively link new knowledge to existing knowledge. Besides, we can say that reading strategies are very important in order to encourage engagement with the text and also to provoke literature discussions in the classroom.

Lloyd (2004) draws from Keen and Zimmerman (1997) and Harvey (2000) to support diverse comprehension strategies like visualizing, predicting and prior knowledge as a springboard for teachers in order to engage students in literature discussions. This is important for students in order to develop and activate reading strategies.

Below, there is an excerpt from a reading activity that shows the reading strategies promoted by the think aloud method.

(O 2 P.7 L 16-25)

Teacher asking student 2: what can you predict from the reading?

Student 2: umm... curiosity can be a driving force to motivate us.

Teacher: ok...could be, very close...what else?

Student 5: umm...what can I tell you!!! I think that curiosity is inevitable in education.

Teacher: ok...very good...and Laura, what can tell us about the reading?

Student 4: I think that curiosity can be a driving force to motivate us. For example: when you said very good, excellent or something like that.

Teacher: yeahp...excellent ...very good...

It has been noticed in this sample that several students made their contributions with the purpose of making meaning from what they were reading, using a reading strategy like predicting. Two samples taken from a researcher's journal and an observation also reflect the importance when reading strategies occurs.

(J 4 L 7-12)

The students were making good use of the reading strategies in order to help them using the think-aloud method. They were making predictions and analyzing all the time the images provided by the text. In the reading Brown Eyes I could notice how students make use of prior knowledge when they were asked about if something similar to what happened to the character of the story they had experience, to find out what really occurred in the story.

(O 3 P.9 L 31-41)

Teacher: ok... let's start making some predictions about this picture ("the title and the image of brown eyes") what do you think this story is going to be about? Try to guess...say something...

Teacher: Student 2 what do you think this story is going to be about?

Student 2: umm...mysterious story.

Teacher: do they look happy? Do they look sad? Do they look angry?

Student 3: I guess that it is a sad history.

Student 1: could be a mysterious story.

Student 2: a love triangle.

Teacher: could be, very good Rita.

Student 1: they look angry.

Through the implementation of the think aloud method, the reading comprehension process in the classroom became more meaningful, because the majority of the students participated actively for constructing meaning from the reading passages. In addition, throughout this group, assignments, and students also created an ease learning setting. Besides, when students share information, they engage on a negotiating process of understanding in which through this negotiation they can achieve a better understanding from the text.

Wade (1990) supports that “in constructing of meaning the reader integrates new knowledge derived from the text with his or her background knowledge in ways that make sense”. (p.1)

Another sample that reflects the students’ interaction is shown then:

(O 2 P.7 L 30-40)

Teacher: ok guys...according to what our classmate have read what we can say about it? For example: student 3, what comment can you share with us?

Student 3: ok...umm...that every day we must learn new things.

Teacher: ok...what else?

Student 2: Oh... is to go deeper of our knowledge.

Teacher: nice comment.

Student 4: yes, one should not be afraid to learn new things.

Student 1: the first one is telling us that all the people think different. The knowledge is not sure. In many cases, one as a teacher, some students could know than one.

Student 5: there are no absolute truths.

It has been notice in this sample that several students made their contributions with the purpose of making meaning from what they were reading, using a reading strategy like prior knowledge.

4. Student's personal reactions.

Oster (2001) explains the think-aloud reading strategy as an excellent way to encourage students to give personal reactions about the text. Here we will show how important is student's reactions to show how engaged they were while they were reading and how deep they dug in the story.

During the third session we conducted a special reading called "brown eyes" which allowed us to go further in the student's personal reaction. In this case the writer "Paul Stewart" is continually making the reader part of the text and at the end he does not give a proper ending to the story helping the students to show their personal reactions. Let us see some of the comments they made after the reading finished:

(O 3 P.11 L 22-45)

When the PPP finished everybody said ahh... ohh...

Teacher: no guys... look... this is another way we can reflect on our reading. It is important to have as well our personal reactions. Are you happy with the story...with the final?

Teacher asking student 1: what do you think?

Student 1: it is interesting to know what is going to happen at the end.

Teacher: what do you think that is going to happen? Let's suppose that you are the actor...

Student 5: ok...maybe the fingerprints. It is impossible to have the same fingerprints.

Student 2: probably, the police have to make an investigation.

Student 3: an investigation could be.

Student 4: yes, probably a deeper investigation.

Teacher: do you think that he is going to stay in jail for all his life?

Student 2: noo...because the police have to make an investigation.

Student 4: of course an investigation.

Student 3: he is going to jail but the police have to investigate.

Student 5: yes...

Student 1: could be an investigation.

When the reading finished everyone expressed their personal reactions giving their own opinion as they thought the story would have a better ending. These personal reactions show that the students are doing a good job creating envisionments. Oster (2001) explains that a reader who can envision correctly will be better able to understand a character's reaction, such as when students started imaging what would happened with the main character in this story when the police take him to the police station. Taking in to account these important parts of the story, students are able to visualize and predict what could happen next allowing them to show their personal reactions.

5. Student's awareness of the use of images for a better reading comprehension.

When students became aware on how they can use the information provided in some images within the text, this images facilitate the comprehension of the text. According to Pan (2009) the visuals in a text have positive effects on the reader's comprehension. She also refers as visuals to any graphic display like pictures, images, photos, maps among other.

During the think-aloud process we evidenced how important the use of images was for a better comprehension of the text. When students were facing some readings with images they could make better or more accurate predictions. Since the very beginning of our reading instruction we addressed the students about the importance of the use of images. When the students started analyzing and having in mind the relevance of the images they made comments about the

character's clothes, the place, and the day's time in order to match with the story.

Since the first session we started with a text full of images. This text was "Que Noche Tan Espantosa" by Andrés Zanetti. This kind of text helped us to start showing the students how images can be used to increase student's Reading comprehension and also to engage them.

Some of the predictions students made based on the images were:

(O 1 P. 3 L 3-7)

Teacher: what is the relation between the title and the image?

Student 5: It is a simply a nightmare about a buried ground.

Student 2: he is in the middle of a nightmare.

Student 3: it is a dark night and everything was scary.

Student 4: he is in a cemetery.

Later in another session we could notice some of these prediction based on the images:

(O 3 P.9 L 31- 41)

Teacher: ok... let's start making some predictions about this picture ("the title and the image of brown eyes") what do you think this story is going to be about?

Try to guess...say something...

Teacher asking Student 2: what do you think this story is going to be about?

Student 2: umm...mysterious story.

Teacher: Do they look happy? Do they look sad? Do they look angry?

Student 3: I guess that it is a sad history.

Student 1: could be a mysterious story.

Student 3: a love triangle.

Teacher: could be, very good Rita.

Student 1: they look angry.

The teacher started reading the story and students started visualizing with the first image what the story is going to be about.

(O 3 P.9 L 46- 50)

Teacher: ok. What can we predict from the first paragraph?

Student 3: they are travelers.

Student 1: according with the image they are arriving to the hotel.

Student 5: travelers.

Student 4: the couple is arriving to the hotel.

When the teacher passed to the next slide of the PPP he asked

(O 3 P.10 L 3-5)

Teacher: what comments can you make based on the image? Why are they in that hotel? What do you think?

Student 5: they are celebrating a birthday.

We can give a better explanation of this use of images citing Pan (2009) to explain how several researchers have suggested that the presence of images elicits improved comprehension due to four major functions serve in reading. “First, they substantially overlap the text or repeat the text’s content. Second, they improve the coherence of the text. Third, they provide the readers more concrete information. Finally, they not only illustrate the text but develop the readers’ interest in the material. The combined effect of these four functions of visuals facilitates the comprehension of text”.

6. Activating prior knowledge for a better understanding from the text:

This finding has to do with the knowledge that students and/or readers have about the world. This was a strategy that students used naturally and was very important because most of the time students make associations of the reading with similar situations which they have faced and this may generate a partial or total understanding of the text.

Harvey and Goudvis (2000) state that activating prior knowledge and making connections involve students’ schemata to link the relationship between new concepts and old knowledge.

In an interview a student reported an interesting perception about the use of prior knowledge.

(I2 Student 3 L 60-62)

...”Podría decirse dependiendo el contexto en que se encuentre esta palabra desconocida podría cambiar el sentido del significado de la lectura, de la comprensión de la lectura.

When the reader faced a foreign text, he should use his prior knowledge to construct meaning from the text. For this reason, the student pointed out above that he could make use of all the resources that he had (prior knowledge) to understand that text, contextualizing known words with unknown ones. In the

same think aloud activities, students made use of their prior knowledge regularly as is shown in the following excerpt.

(O 4 P.12 L 31-34)

Student 1: ahhhhhhh. I already had heard about that.

Student 3: ahhhhhh yes yes.

Student 5: yes, but with other things.

Student 1: our English teacher talked about that last week.

In this sample, when students were reading a passage from the reading text, it was noticed how they made a relationship between that passage and something similar that they had already heard before. It means that those students brought up their prior knowledge into the reading with the purpose of making the reading text more meaningful.

We as researchers also had our perceptions about how students used their prior knowledge. The following entry represents our perceptions:

(J 4 L 9-12)

"...In the reading "brown eyes" I could notice how students make use of prior knowledge when they were asked about if something similar to what happened to the character of the story they had experience, to find out what really occurred in the story"

(O 3 P.11 L 30-35)

T: what do you think that is going to happen? Let's suppose that you are the actor...

Student 5: ok...maybe the fingerprints. It is impossible to have the same fingerprints.

Student 2: probably, the police have to make an investigation.

Student 3: an investigation could be.

Student 4: yes, probably a deeper investigation.

In this sample it is shown how the use of their prior knowledge play a fundamental role in the development of the reading activity. When students used this strategy their motivation is highly increased because of the fact that these students feel the necessity of finding out what really happens in the story.

7. The use of visual aids engages learners in reading activities:

In our study we found that when a narrative or expository text has images, these illustrations might help students to visualize what is occurring inside the story. We can say that our finding is supported by Harvey and Goudvis (2000) when they state that “visualizing personalizes reading, keep us engaged, and often prevent us from abandoning a book”. (p.132). we also found when students start to have ideas about the story in their minds by using mental images, they can express themselves more easily at the time of drawing conclusions about what they are reading,

Our perception was confirmed by one student in her/his interviews and observations, one of the student’s comments was:

(I2 Student 5 L 28-32)

¿Tuvo usted una mejor comprensión lectora cuando utilizo estas estrategias?

Si. Más que todas las imágenes porque soy como más bien visual. Antes yo leía y leía y ya y entonces me tocaba volver a leer mientras que así entonces ya se, ya aprendí que si leo y no entiendo es mejor devolverme para no continuar así y que ya al final uno ya no entienda y también guiándome por los títulos y las imágenes.

Based on the data we can infer that visualizing allows students the ability to be more motivated and engaged in their reading task. Besides, we also can say that the representation of images in students’ minds led them to have not only a

better understanding of the text but also to be more involved with the reading task.

Below, there is other sample that confirms our perception:

(O 1 P.4 L 25-31)

Teacher: Now, let's imagine what connection has the image with the story.

Student 3: I think he did something wrong.

Student 5: the skull was projecting the accident.

Student 2: he was driving and suddenly hit somebody.

Student 4: he is afraid because he did something incorrect.

Student 1: he was driving and suddenly a skull appeared.

Bearing in mind the above, we can see how visual representations of text are involved in reading comprehension. In addition to, we can say that when teachers encourage students to use their imagination as a comprehension tool, students move from literal decoding towards a conscious mental process in which they provide their own perspectives and meanings to the text based on their background knowledge to make visualizations of the story. We can state that our finding is supported by Macceca (2007) when she reports that, using mental images to comprehend text promotes more involved and active processing in readers.

IMPLICATIONS

Our study has two types of implications such as: instructional which refers to pedagogical issues found in our study, and research implications which refers to some other issues that can be explored from our study.

Instructional implications

After conducting this study, we can say that the think-aloud method is one of the best techniques used to develop cognitive strategies through reading comprehension and it can also help to improve classroom atmosphere in regards with interaction, engagement, English language development and reading comprehension. Moreover, it is also essential to make a good selection of the texts students will face; at the beginning students need to have an interesting input in order to be engaged in this new reading method, and incorporate different reading strategies. Sometimes, this could be a problematic due to the fact that students interest are different, what is appealing for some of them it may not be for the others. Another relevant factor was student's level of English and the use of the mother tongue and the target language, for example during the interviews we decided to develop them in their mother tongue in this case the Spanish, this selection was because we did not want students to think that the purpose of the interview was to check their English level.

To conclude, we can refer to positives implications mentioning the good results this study had in terms of student's awareness of the reading method. They mentioned that will be easier for them to understand a text for now on if they continue implementing the acquired reading method and its strategies.

Research Implications

After carrying out this study, we can consider other aspects should be taken into account when implementing the think-aloud method such as critical thinking. We believe that this aspect should be included in a further research because when students are reporting their thoughts they could do it with a critical perspective. Also, the implementation of other types of reading different from short stories, such as magazines, newspaper articles and other texts may encourage students to read and also to be more critical. Wade (1990) also shows us the importance of the think-aloud procedure for assessing comprehension in order to evaluate students' comprehension strategies, likewise we can obtain valuable information about students' strengths and weakness in reading comprehension, as a result, students may take advantage of the think-aloud method and also to gain enrichment of the learning process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are important limitations that need to be addressed concerning the present study. One of them is related to the assumptions we made about the participants' language proficiency. When we started the study we assumed that all the participants had some knowledge of the English language due to they are students from pre-intermediate English level and according to the Common European Framework they are in an A1 level. It gave us the idea on how applying the think aloud reading method and the strategies within the method. Other limitations of this study include some problems associated with time management.

We as researchers consider that one hour time was not enough to develop the think aloud method and go further with its strategies. Also we consider that for student's acquisition of the think-aloud reading method it is relevant to expose them more than one hour. The short period of the sessions for this study may have limited the student's opportunities to obtain greater improvement in their English learning process. Also we consider that for student's acquisition of the think-aloud reading method it is relevant to expose them to more than one hour session.

CONCLUSIONS

After conducting this study, we conclude that during the reading process carried out with pre-intermediate students, the impact generated by the think-aloud method in these learners is basically reflected on four aspects.

First of all, the results obtained in this study portrayed that students increased their engagement in the activities because of the think-aloud method. Through the use of this method they could interact and construct meaning from the text at once when they develop the reading tasks.

Second, it is important to highlight that the role of the teacher as a guide was essential during the think-aloud sessions because he could assist and encourage students to use reading strategies such as predicting, visualizing, and prior knowledge in order to comprehend the reading texts during the sessions.

Third, another positive impact of the think-aloud method, is that students frequently say that they had enriched their vocabulary, pronunciation, writing and listening skills due to the results obtained in their interviews. In addition to, we can say that developing this study enriched our process as readers and gave us insight on L1 (Spanish) and L2 (English) reading instruction issues and also we had to learn how to model the use of reading comprehension strategies within the method. Besides, the think- aloud method also helped us to develop analytical skills and cognitive strategies that we had not used when we had read, even in our native language.

Finally, this research enabled us to feel more conscious and knowledgeable about reading, and motivated us to continue examining and studying issues in regards with think-aloud method among ourselves and our students. We know that this experience will enrich our reading instruction on our careers as English teachers.

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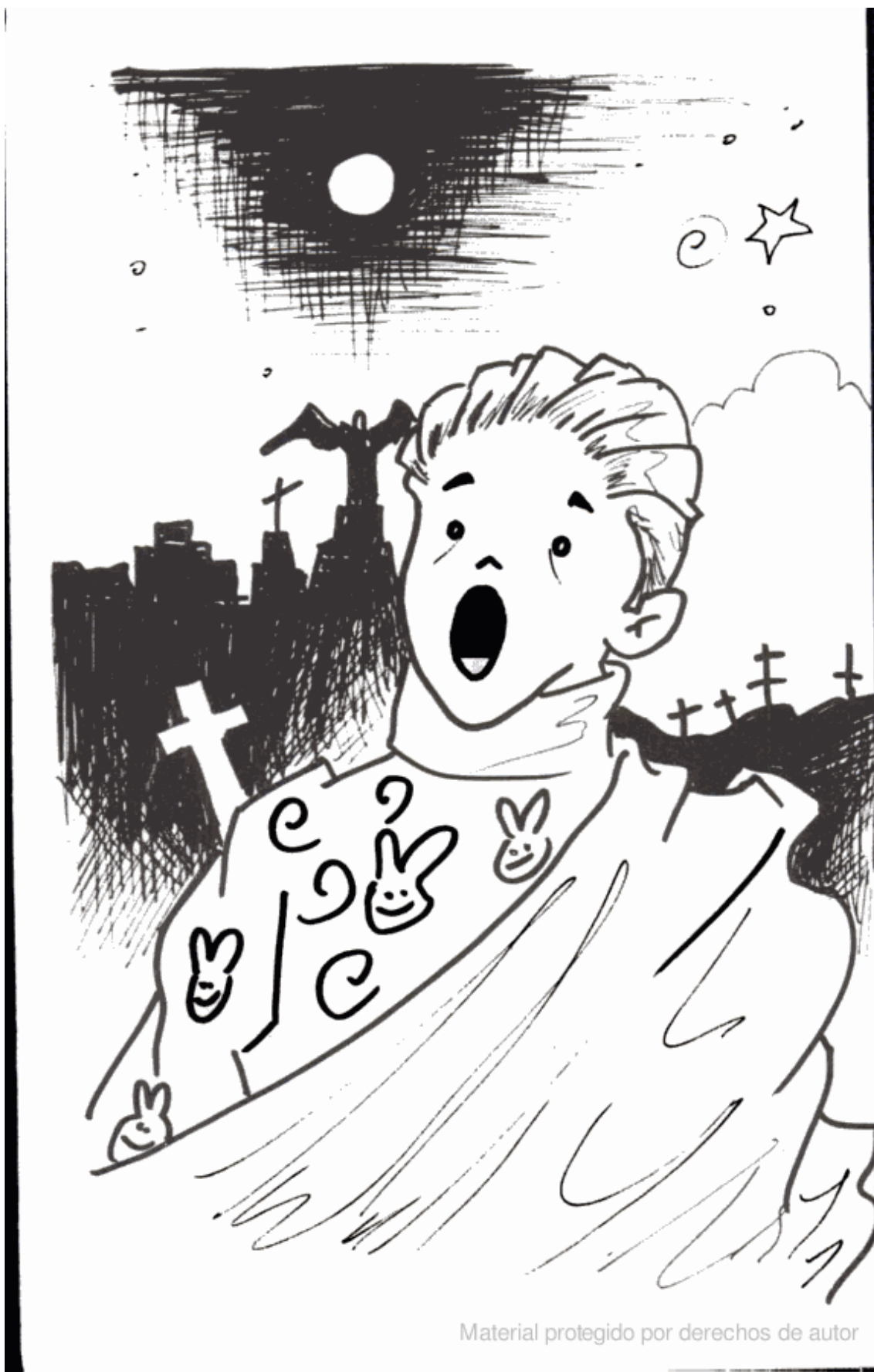
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APPENDIXES LIST

Appendix 1.

**¡QUÉ NOCHE
TAN
ESPANTOSA!**

BY: ANDRES ZANETTI



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Negra noche, luna que se ocultó tras densas nubes cargadas de pavorosos truenos. Y que decir de los destellos que a los bordes reflejaban demoníacas formas. ¡Qué noche! Y Luis se encontraba solo, toda su familia se había ido de vacaciones a la playa en busca de un mejor clima y por desgracia Luis había reprobado una materia en la

secundaria y tenía que tomar un curso de regularización.

Las doce de la noche y Luis no podía lograr dormirse, por más que se repetía “quiero dormir, quiero dormir” se pasaba revolteándose de un lado a otro de su cama y aunque el clima no era tan cálido él estaba empapado en sudor. Los ruidos en su casa no lo dejaban conciliar el sueño, pues tomando en cuenta que no había nadie, ¿quién hacía tanto ruido?

Cerró los ojos como otro último intento más y si no definitivamente hablaría a casa de sus abuelos o de alguno de sus tíos, ¡oh y él que pensaba que ya era todo un hombre! Cómo les diría que tenía miedo de estar solo; en fin, no importaba, abrió los ojos decidido a tomar el teléfono y para su sorpresa ya no estaba en la cama, ni en su cama, es más el sitio que ahora veía ni siquiera era su casa.

Sepulcros al frente, a su espalda, a su derecha y a su izquierda. Le vino a la mente aquella cancioncita que cantaba en preescolar: “tumbas por aquí, ja ja. Tumbas por allá. Tumbas y tumbas ñaca, ñaca, ñá”. Pero muy pronto se le acabó su humor negro, muy malo por cierto, al ver que aquello no era un juego, era en verdad un horrendo paisaje. Luis se quedó petrificado, sintiendo cómo poco a poco un escalofrío recorría todo su cuerpo; con los ojos dilatados y mudo de terror.

—¡Auxiliooo! Mamá dónde estás. Papá ayúdame!

Su grito fue acompañado por el crujir de la lápida de enfrente al caer y al momento vio cómo salía una espantosa y descarnada figura que se le quedó mirando a través de los huecos en donde alguna vez hubo ojos humanos. Al espectro lo rodeaba un

extraño halo de luz que con el brillo que emitía, permitió a Luis leer lo que estaba escrito en la lápida:

Aquí yace Luis.

Murió a los 15 años

Junio 12 del 2001

—¡No, no! —gritaba Luis, ese no soy yo.

Al momento en que gritaba, la figura de ultratumba volteó, parecía que le reprochaba algo a Luis, algo muy tonto que hubo hecho el chico, que ahora tenían que estar los dos ahí.

—No, ese no soy yo, aquí hay una equivocación —gritaba Luis como queriendo engañar al espectro.

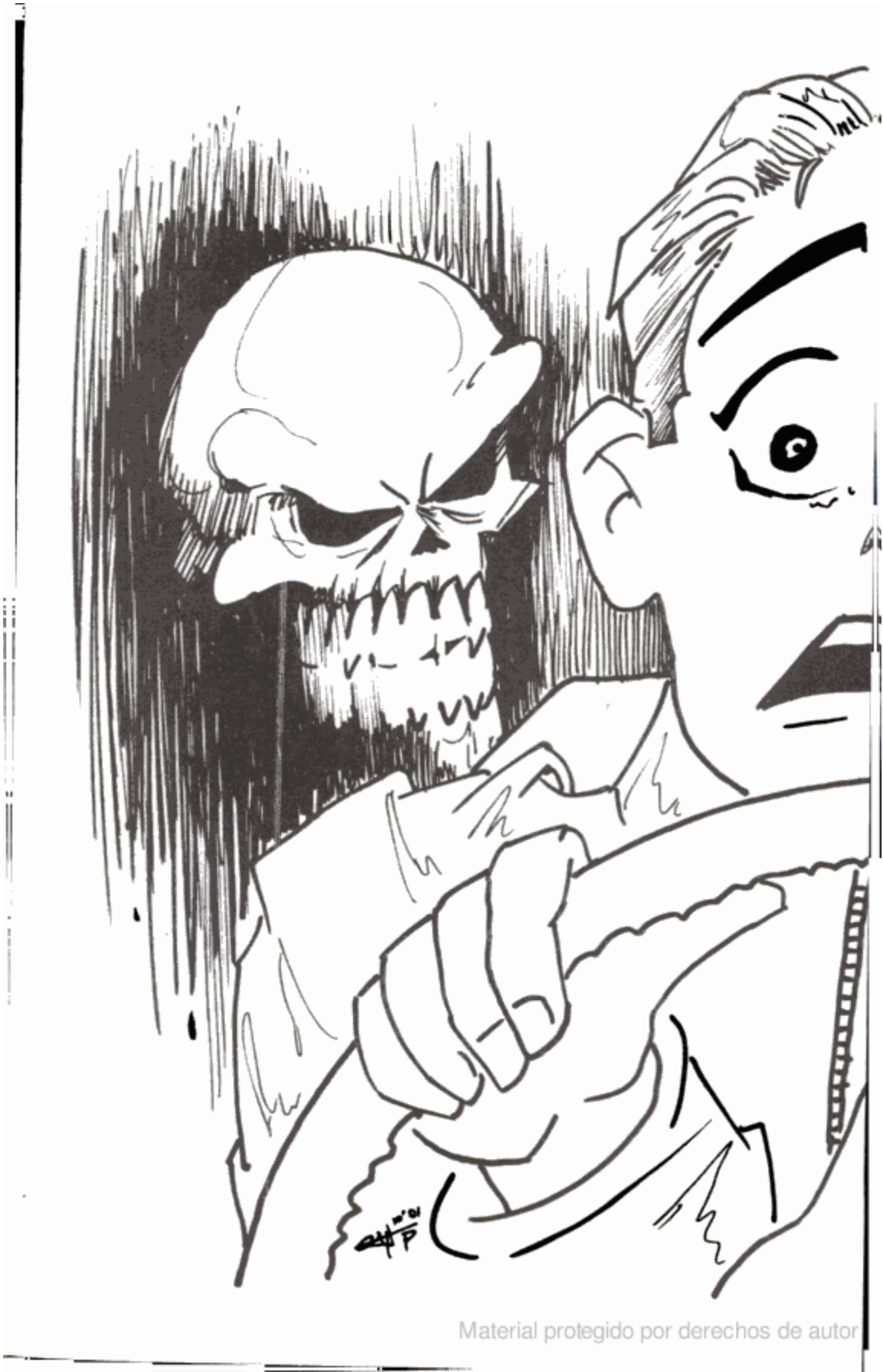
—Yo me llamo Roberto, de verdad.

Aquel cuerpo semidescarnado lo miró con tristeza, de las cavidades de los ojos comenzaron a brotar lágrimas y Luis, se dio cuenta que era imposible engañar a aquel muerto, pues además, al observar con detenimiento

se fijó que era él mismo. Aquel ser del panteón, tenía su misma estatura, el color de su cabello el cual se había caído más de la mitad, pero lo que se lo confirmó eran los tenis que traía el muerto, eran sus tenis favoritos, los que no le hubiera dado a nadie de este mundo, mucho menos a alguien de otro mundo; la camiseta y la cachucha eran las de él. No había nada que hacer.

Pero cómo había llegado hasta ahí y por qué.

Luego, como en una imagen de cine, de la luz del espectro se vio la vida de Luis desde el momento en que nació, hasta su alocada juventud y el espectro le mostró un día en que su papá le prestó el auto y él sin importarle nada más que la aventura y la velocidad, corrió y corrió en el auto para demostrarle a sus amigos quién era el más machín de la colonia y para qué decir



Material protegido por derechos de autor

más. Luis quedó en el intento absurdo de demostrar tonterías, de repente entre la oscuridad del panteón y los ojos enfurecidos de su propio cadáver escuchó un “rin, rin, rin”. Abrió los ojos y vio que era el despertador, era sin duda una hermosa mañana, la noche quedó atrás con los miedos y con las advertencias que quizá sepa aprovechar.

Luis pensó: hora de levantarse e ir a la escuela ¡Qué alegría!

APPENDIX 7- INTERVIEW 1

- 1 How old are you?
- 2 What is your name?
- 3 Where are you from?
- 4 ¿te gusta leer? ¿Por qué si o por qué no?
- 5 ¿qué clase de textos te gusta leer?
- 6 ok. ¿Crees que la lectura es importante? ¿por qué?
- 7 ¿puedes darme un ejemplo de algo que hayas leído y te haya gustado últimamente?
- 8 ¿no has leído?
- 9 ¿qué diferencia o similitudes percibes entre la lectura en español y en inglés?

APPENDIX 8- INTERVIEW 2

- 1- ¿Que opinas acerca del uso o la implementación de las estrategias de comprensión de lectura?
- 2- ¿Como se sintió con el ejercicio de lectura implementada por nosotros?
- 3- ¿Que fue lo que más le impacto en este ejercicio de comprensión de lectura?
- 4- ¿Como se sintió como lector? ¿Cree que aumento en algo su capacidad de entender un texto implementado algunas estrategias de lectura?
- 5- ¿Como le pareció el uso de las estrategias de lectura como por ejemplo haciendo pausas periódicas para entender mejor la lectura?
- 6- ¿Qué diferencia encuentras entre una lectura normal y una lectura con puntos clave?
- 7- ¿Qué ventajas cree usted que brinda el uso de estrategias de comprensión de lectura?

- 8- ¿Tuvo usted una mejor comprensión lectora cuando utilizo estas estrategias?
9. ¿Como hizo para entender los textos cuando usted se detenía en los punto(s) clave(s) de la lectura?
- 10- ¿Cree usted que no conocer el significado de una palabra dentro de un texto puede afectar el proceso de comprensión lectora? ¿Como?
- 11- ¿Cuando tu lees que tipo de estrategias usas?

Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension

(Que noche tan espantosa)

Lesson plan I. appendix 9.

DATE: Sep/01/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 4:00 to 5:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- At the end of the session, students will be able to develop the ability of using the think-aloud method to help them in their reading comprehension in their native language with a narrative text.
- Students will have a clear understanding of the component of the think-aloud method, like: get important information, what they can figure out from the text, predictions, questions, and personal reactions using their prior knowledge.

Anticipated Problems:

- Not all the participants show up.
- Problems with the room.
- Problems with the video beam.

Anticipated Solutions:

- Arrive half an hour before the participants to organize the equipment.

Materials:

- Video beam.
- Reading (Que noche tan espantosa)
- Power point presentation.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
Warm up 15 minutes	The teacher is going to start the session explaining the importance of reading strategies.	To engage the participants to the topic.	This first session will be conducted in Spanish in order to help the participants to become aware of the reading strategies they use in their native language.
Reading exercise.	Through this lesson, the teacher will model the think aloud strategy making predictions with the title and with the images. One tentative question could be what do you think the story is going to be about?	The participants will have a clear understanding of the process of using the think-aloud strategy, verbalizing thoughts as the teacher is modeling.	It is important to make periodically pauses to reflect how the text is being processed allowing the participants to make their own comments.
Finals comments: 15 minutes.	The teacher will review what was done during the session eliciting from the participants the new concepts acquired like the steps you can follow during the reading.	To allow the participants to use their metacognitive awareness to enable them to assess their level of comprehension based in the think-aloud strategy as the method and using some strategies like what they can figure out from the text, predictions, questions, and personal reactions	It is important in this point to allow the participants to think about their own thinking process.

**Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension
(Enseñar no es transferir conocimientos)
Lesson plan II.**

DATE: Sep/08/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 4:00 to 5:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- At the end of the session, students will be able to practice the think-aloud method to help them improving their reading comprehension in their native language in this case with an expository text.

- Students will be able to start implementing the think-aloud method and practice some strategies like: get important information, what they can figure out from the text, questions, and personal reactions using their prior knowledge and giving their personal comments.

Anticipated Problems:

- Not all the participants show up.
- Problems with the room.
- Problems with the video beam.

Anticipated Solutions:

- Arrive half an hour before the participants to organize the equipment.

Materials:

- Video beam.
- Reading (Enseñar no es transferir conocimientos)
- Power point presentation.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
Warm up 15 minutes	The teacher is going to start the session eliciting from the students the most important aspect they should have in mind when using the reading strategy think-aloud.	To engage the participants to the topic and make a general overview of what we did in the last session.	This session will be conducted also in Spanish in order to help the participants to become aware of the reading strategies they use in their native language but now using an expository text.
Reading exercise. ½ an hour.	Through this lesson, the teacher will model the think aloud strategy making periodical pauses to let the students express their comments about the reading.	The participants will have a clear understanding of the process of using the think-aloud strategy, verbalizing thoughts as the teacher is modeling.	It is important to make periodically pauses to reflect how the text is being processed allowing the participants to make their own comments. It is important in this point to allow the participants to think about their own thinking process.
Finals comments: 15 minutes.	The teacher will review what was done during the session eliciting from the participants the new concepts acquired like the steps you can follow during the reading. The teacher will recommend making a further reading to explore more about the topic.	To allow the participants to use their metacognitive awareness to enable them to assess their level of comprehension based in the think-aloud strategy as the method.	This is a relevant topic for the student's development of knowledge due to it is related to some topics they will face in future semesters.

**Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension
(Brown eyes)
Lesson plan III.**

DATE: Sep/15/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 4:00 to 5:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- At the end of the session, students will be able to practice the think-aloud method to help them in their reading comprehension now facing a narrative text in English.

- Students will have a clear understanding of the strategies that can be used in the think-aloud method, this reading is helpful for them to practice their think-aloud based on prediction, images and personal reaction at the end of the text.

Anticipated Problems:

- Not all the participants show up.
- Problems with the room.
- Problems with the video beam.

Anticipated Solutions:

- Arrive half an hour before the participants to organize the equipment.

Materials:

- Video beam.
- Reading (Brown eyes)
- Power point presentation.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
Warm up 15 minutes	The teacher is going to start the session asking for some predictions about the book cover.	To engage the participants to the topic letting them analyze the book cover.	This session will be conducted in English with a narrative text.
Reading exercise. ½ an hour.	This lesson will be focus on many different images making periodical pauses to let the students express their comments about the reading. The teacher will also model the think aloud strategy.	The participants will have a clear understanding of the process of using the think-aloud strategy, verbalizing thoughts as the teacher is modeling now in English.	It is important to make periodically pauses to reflect how the text is being processed allowing the participants to make their own comments and predictions.
Finals comments: 15 minutes.	The students will make final comments about the reading they just have been exposed.	Students will be able to express their comments and suggestions about what they can think the end of the reading should be. They also can be active participants expressing their personal reactions.	It is important in this point to allow the participants to think about their own thinking process. The reading is appropriated to student's level and is interesting how the author engage the reading during the all time.

**Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension
(Global warming)
Lesson plan IV.**

DATE: Sep/28/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 3:00 to 4:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- At the end of the session, students will be able to express their reaction about the text. This text is full of images about global warming and changes in the climate through the time.
- Students will be aware of some easy things that they can do to protect the planet giving personal reactions.
- Students will be able to practice reading using the strategies that can be used in the think-aloud method, this reading is helpful for them to practice their think-aloud based on prediction, images and personal reaction at the end of the text.

Anticipated Problems:

- Not all the participants show up.
- Problems with the room.
- Problems with the video beam.

Anticipated Solutions:

- Arrive half an hour before the participants to organize the equipment.

Materials:

- Video beam.
- Reading (Global warming)
- Power point presentation.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
Warm up 15 minutes	The teacher is going to start the reading instruction eliciting some information based on different images.	To engage the participants to the topic letting them to make predictions about what they think the text is going to be about.	This session will be conducted in English with a narrative text.
Reading exercise. ½ an hour.	This lesson will be focus on many different images making periodical pauses to let the students express their comments about the reading. The teacher will also model the think aloud strategy.	The participants will have a clear understanding of the process of using the think-aloud strategy, verbalizing thoughts as the teacher is modeling now in English.	It is important to make periodically pauses to reflect how the text is being processed allowing the participants to make their own comments and predictions.
Finals comments: 15 minutes.	The students will make final comments about the reading they just have been exposed.	Students will be able to express their comments and suggestions about what can we do to protect the planet.	It is important in this point to allow the participants to think about their own thinking process.

**Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension
(Osama Bin Laden)
Lesson plan V.**

DATE: Oct/05/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 3:00 to 4:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- Students will be aware of the process of using the think-aloud method. This reading will be focused on student's personal reactions, predictions, and conclusions.

Anticipated Problems:

- Not all the participants show up.
- Problems with the room.
- Problems with the video beam.

Anticipated Solutions:

- Arrive half an hour before the participants to organize the equipment.

Materials:

- Video beam.
- Reading (Osama Bin Laden)
- Power point presentation.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
Warm up 15 minutes	The teacher is going to start the reading instruction eliciting some information based on different images.	To engage the participants to the topic letting them to make predictions about what they think the text is going to be about.	This session will be conducted in English with a narrative text.
Reading exercise. ½ an hour.	This lesson will be focus on many different images making periodical pauses to let the students express their comments about the reading. The teacher will also model the think aloud strategy.	The participants will have a clear understanding of the process of using the think-aloud strategy, verbalizing thoughts as the teacher is modeling now in English.	It is important to make periodically pauses to reflect how the text is being processed allowing the participants to make their own comments and predictions.
Finals comments: 15 minutes.	The students will make final comments about the reading they just have been exposed.	Students will be able to express their comments about some new information and will be able to express their reaction about the reading.	It is important in this point to allow the participants to think about their own thinking process.

Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension
(How to Teach English)
Lesson plan VI.

DATE: Oct/14/2010
COURSE: Pre-intermediate English.
TEACHER: Hector Fabio Vasquez C.
OBSERVER: Andres Felipe Suarez M.
ROOM:
HOUR: 3:00 to 4:00 pm.
STUDENTS: 20

AIMS:

- Students will be able to implement the think-aloud method based on chapter 2 from **How to Teach English** by: Jeremy Harmer. This reading will be focused on student's personal reactions, predictions, and conclusions. This chapter is divided in seven different parts and the students will be grouped in seven different groups, each one with a different title or reading.

Materials:

- Reading (copies) chapter 2 **How to be a good learner** from **How to Teach English:**

Why is it difficult to describe a good learner?
How important is the student's motivation?
Who is responsible for learning?
What characteristics do good classroom learners share?
What's special about teaching adults?
What are the different levels?
How should we teach the different levels?

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE	AIM	COMMENTS
<p>Warm up 10 minutes</p>	<p>The teacher is going to start the reading exercise eliciting some information based on the titles.</p>	<p>To engage the participants to the topic letting them to make predictions about what they think the text is going to be about based on the different subtitles.</p>	<p>This session will be conducted in English with a narrative text taken from <i>How to Teach English by Jeremy Harmer.</i></p>
<p>presentation Reading exercise. 20 minutes.</p>	<p>The teacher will make groups of three people and then he will deliver some photocopies with each part of the chapter.</p>	<p>The participants will be able to practice the learnt reading strategies along this reading instruction.</p>	<p>When we talk about reading strategies in this case we refer to student's personal reactions, predictions, and conclusions.</p>
<p>Evaluation Finals comments: 30 minutes.</p>	<p>Each group will give a brief explanation within four minutes about what they just have read and answer a question related to the topic.</p> <p><i>Please see the questions detailed below.</i></p>	<p>The teacher and the observer will be able to see what reading strategies the participants are using now in order to determine the success of the reading instruction.</p>	<p>These final comments will let us know about the achievements the participants have made.</p> <p><i>All the class will be recorder in order to analyze all the students' responses.</i></p>

Why is it difficult to describe a good learner?

- What do you think it makes a good learner?

How important is the student's motivation?

- Which do you think is the most important motivation issue for students from the licenciatura program?

Who is responsible for learning?

- What do you think is the student's interest or the student's needs?

What characteristics do good classroom learners share?

- Which of the learners' qualities do you think is the best and why?

What's special about teaching adults?

- What do you think is the biggest problem and the best thing about teaching adults?

What are the different levels?

- What is a false beginner?

How should be teach the different levels?

- Why do you think it is important to make different kind of activities depending of the students' level?

