Estrategias de lectura en inglés como lengua extranjera: un estudio descriptivo

Reading Strategies in EFL: A Descriptive Study

Estratégias de leitura em EFL: um estudo descritivo

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Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio descriptivo fue determinar si los estudiantes utilizan estrategias de lectura o no. Este estudio descriptivo incluyó la recolección de datos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Los participantes fueron 50 estudiantes, 26 hombres y 24 mujeres; estudiantes de noveno grado cuyas edades oscilaban entre los 12 y los 14 años. Los instrumentos aplicados fueron un par de encuestas para recopilar datos de los participantes sobre estrategias de lectura en EFL, comprensión de textos y problemas que tenían al leer. En segundo lugar, también se realizó una encuesta de lectura cuyos resultados indicaron los conocimientos y estrategias de comprensión lectora de los estudiantes para mejorar su comprensión. Los resultados mostraron que la mayoría de los estudiantes estaban totalmente de acuerdo en la comprensión de sus pasajes, leyendo palabras simples con una media de 1,90 que significa totalmente de acuerdo. Además, los estudiantes traducen palabra por palabra con una media de 1,84, lo que significa que estaban traduciendo al leer. Sobre la base de los hallazgos, se concluye que los alumnos deben aplicar estrategias de lectura para mejorar su capacidad de lectura. Se recomienda que los profesores consideren las mejores estrategias de enseñanza para apoyar a los alumnos durante su desarrollo del aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Lectura; Estrategias Lectoras; Comprensión Lectora; EFL.

Abstract

This descriptive study objective was to determine if students use reading strategies or not. This descriptive study included the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. Participants were 50 students, 26 males, and 24 females; ninth-graders whose ages ranged from 12-14. The instruments applied were a pair of surveys to gather data of participants about reading strategies in EFL, comprehension of texts and issues they had when reading. Secondly, there was also a reading survey whose results indicated students´ reading comprehension knowledge and strategies to improve their understanding. Results showed that most students totally agreed in the understanding of their passages, reading simple words with a mean of 1.90 that means totally agree. Also, learners translate word by word with a mean of 1.84, which means that they translate when reading. Based on the findings, it is concluded that learners need to apply reading strategies

to improve their reading ability. It is recommended that teachers consider the best teaching strategies to support learners' during their learning development.

Keywords: Reading; Reading Strategies; Reading Comprehension; EFL.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo descritivo foi verificar se os alunos usam estratégias de leitura ou não. Este estudo descritivo contou com a coleta de dados quantitativos e qualitativos. Os participantes foram 50 alunos, 26 homens e 24 mulheres; alunos do nono ano cujas idades variavam entre 12 e 14 anos. Os instrumentos aplicados foram algumas pesquisas para coletar dados dos participantes sobre estratégias de leitura em EFL, compreensão de texto e problemas que tiveram durante a leitura. Em segundo lugar, também foi realizada uma pesquisa de leitura, cujos resultados indicaram os conhecimentos de compreensão de leitura dos alunos e as estratégias para melhorar sua compreensão. Os resultados mostraram que a maioria dos alunos estava em total concordância na compreensão de seus trechos, lendo palavras isoladas com média de 1,90, o que significa totalmente de acordo. Além disso, os alunos traduzem palavra por palavra com média de 1,84, o que significa que traduziram durante a leitura. Com base nos achados, conclui-se que os alunos devem aplicar estratégias de leitura para melhorar sua capacidade de leitura. Recomenda-se que os professores considerem as melhores estratégias de ensino para apoiar os alunos durante o desenvolvimento de sua aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Leitura; Lendo estratégias; Compreensão de leitura; EFL.

Introduction

Reading Strategies in EFL: A descriptive study

Having proper English development as a second language aimed in the interaction with people outside our borders, even though there are many differences in customs, traditions, individual characteristics, and education. This language's teaching and learning occur in a classroom where students are engaged in acquiring and using English authentically (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). By practicing English in authentic contexts, learners can acquire their communicative competence.

To make students raise students' proficiency, schools must foster listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. These skills help students be autonomous learners because they become aware of identifying their own needs and goals and develop their communicative competence in the teaching and learning process (Hossain, 2015). Teachers should train and develop these four skills in an integrated way (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Using varied skills activities in the language classroom gives learners opportunities to create and exchange real information while gaining confidence (Sadiku, 2015).

Students have to show the ability to use these skills (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Reading is one skill that should be enhanced in L2. When acquiring another language the task for reading gets particular attention (Rios & Valcarcel, 2005, as cited in Barreiro, 2019). Reading and language proficiency are associated (Chamba, 2019). Getting words' meaning, examining the authors' opinions, and gaining knowledge of new words are significant reading skills that support reading comprehension (Ruiz, 2015). However, English language learners struggle when using reading skills (Barr, 2006).

According to the Ecuadorian learning standards, A1 learners can understand and identify simple data, known names, words, and basic vocabulary (Council of Europe, 2018). However, students cannot deal with this kind of information because they do not have the necessary knowledge. Moreover, even though small-sized classes facilitate students' participation and engagement in tasks, in Ecuador, classes tend to be big, with a minimum of 25 or 30 students each (Ruiz & Ruiz, 2014).

Concerning reading strategies, students should be able to identify the main ideas and find main information in primary texts (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). This is a big issue for learners because it is complicated to recognize specific information about a reading or even simple sentences; it can frustrate them when reading and completing a task. Many ESL students have limited word knowledge, impacting their reading and education in general (Oliver & Young, 2016). In class, traditional resources such as the board and the textbook are used; technological resources are sometimes employed, which can create a monotonous environment for learners. The problem is that students do not feel motivated to learn (Khikmah, 2019). Added to this, students do not like to read; when they do, it is to fulfill a task required by the teacher.
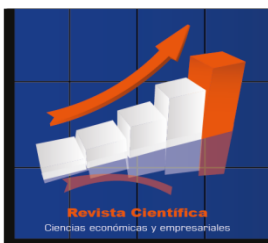
Learners are trained to identify their reading goals to use the best strategies toward overall comprehension (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Reading proficiency promotes one's self-accomplishment and the growth of personal and social adjustment (Kurniasih, 2011). Reading offers a productive approach to improving the language, vocabulary, and word recognition (Sadiku, 2015). Word recognition increases students' abilities to understand texts (Ordoñez, 2020).

This descriptive study aims to determine if students read in English and use reading strategies to develop reading. Furthermore, the investigation desires to know learners' perspectives towards reading and summarizing a reading in English.

The recognition of words accurately and automatically is a process that is complex and multifaceted that every teacher should know how to handle teaching their students effectively (Rayner, et al., 2001). Moreira, K. (2020) and Ordoñez (2020) examined word recognition effectiveness in two public schools from Guayaquil and Babahoyo. These investigations demonstrated that classifying parts of speech improved word recognition and reduced students' reading comprehension difficulties. To improve in word recognition, every word in a sentence must be organized in parts of speech.

Extensive research has been conducted to improve reading. These studies show that classifying parts of speech increases reading comprehension (Contreras, 2019; Moreira, A., 2020; Ruiz, 2019). One of these studies has been developed at a Babahoyo university with EFL learners (Contreras, 2019). This study showed that learning parts of the speech and the proper use of the vocabulary could enhance reading comprehension skills. A weak vocabulary and a lack of background knowledge are other difficulties that learners face when reading.

A previous descriptive study in reading comprehension was done by Subayil (2017), it was conducted to 54 students of the eighth year. It was done to find out the value of students' reading comprehension by using scanning. It determined that the reading comprehension of students was good after analyzing the results. Other descriptive study about reading comprehension ability by using authentic reading materials from the internet was carried out by Kurnia (2011) who showed that 80,21% of the students were fine in reading comprehension and 19,61% failed on it. Furthermore, Barr (2006) carried out a descriptive study of reading strategies for secondary

schools in Minnesota; the results suggested that most students have reading comprehension problems followed by vocabulary, reading fluency, and decoding phonemic awareness.

Readers' understanding determines that the texts are learned, and remembered (Alyousef, 2016, as cited in Moreira, K., 2020). Furthermore, gaps related to comprehension of texts, lack of vocabulary, summaries and other struggles that learners face led up to the present study to contribute by knowing if learners read in English and use reading strategies to understand a text. This descriptive study pretends to identify students' skills about reading comprehension, know their background, and be aware of future studies' prior information.

The researcher has noticed that in the school where this descriptive study was carried out, the students struggle with the problems named before and others related to reading, which results in poor reading comprehension; moreover, students have a limited vocabulary knowledge or not identify words because of their low level of English. It is shown how it is complicated for them to understand the texts to complete tasks, make summaries, and perform diverse activities. They also mentioned feeling confused when they have to read and do not recognize the words' meaning. Besides, although they should have an A1 level, most of them do not possess it.

This survey was applied in a private school in Manta city. The institution works to achieve educational excellence within the local and national context. The learners who participate in the survey are in ninth grade with an A1.1 level. They have some knowledge about the English language. Teachers use the Ecuadorian curricula, which have the guidelines to carry out the English teaching and learning process.

Literature Review

This section provides a straightforward understanding of the main concepts for the present descriptive study. Furthermore, this section reviews the literature and studies related to reading comprehension, parts of speech, and reading skills such as skimming and scanning, summarizing, encoding and decoding.

Reading Comprehension

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Reading comprehension can be described as an interactive process among the features of the text, the reader, and the reading context (Barreiro, 2019). Reading does not only include finding and decoding information, but also offers educational possibilities to develop higher-thinking skills (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002, as cited in Cabanilla, 2019). In the reading comprehension process, developing a good understanding of the reading process is demanding, as reading is frequently silent, static, and individual performance that involves cognitive and social processes that are not always evident (Pearson, 2013).

Comprehension is the primary purpose of reading (Eze, 2020; Grabe, 1995). Understanding to take out the meaning from a text is the goal of this skill. Providing specific reading goals helps students avoid memorizing everything they read and lets them know whether they are learning to find main ideas, locate details, recognize vocabulary, or meet some other precise goals (Guthrie, 2004). Reading is a learning tool for formal education; it allows students to read and understand texts to be independent learners (Miñoza & Montero, 2019).

Reading comprehension skills enable readers to comprehend a text by processing the evidence and connecting them with prior knowledge (Moreira, A., 2020). Learners establish a connection to what they already know to apply it in their situations. Catts (2017) specified that the reader brings a group of cognitive linguistic abilities, motivations, interests, and previous reading task learning. Comprehending a text is not a simple information processing ability (Chinwonno & Vongkrachang, 2015). It requires the aptitude to identify the textbook's main ideas, a consciousness of discourse structure, and planned processing (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

Reading comprehension is pivotal when acquiring foreign language knowledge (Moreira, K., 2020). Reading comprehension is the result when a learner is able to understand a text, a paragraph, or a lecture. This understanding becomes the interaction between the written words and how they provoke knowledge outside the text (Rayner et al., 2001). According to Valencia et al. (2014), reading comprehension involves the interaction between the reader, the text, and reading activities. Meaningful reading activities positively affect students' vocabulary, spelling, and writing activities (Harmer, 2007).

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech (POS), also called word classes, are the term for the principal classes of grammatically notable words in a language (Schachter & Shopen, 2007). These parts are often perceived as the origin of the syntactic examination of a language. Parts of speech are the words of a language distributed into diverse types of formal equivalents (Ruiz, 2019). They cannot be held separately from the more challenging parts of grammar (Crystal, 2003). The importance of parts of speech or word classes for language processing is the enormous quantity of information they offer about a word. The four major parts of speech are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (Almache, 2019).

Nouns name people, places, and things; verbs are separated into main verbs and auxiliary verbs; adjectives and adverbs are seen as modifiers since they modify other words in a sentence (Haslam, 2019; Schachter & Shopen, 2007). Constructive and essential content words like nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are not totally learned yet (Haspelmath, 2001). Parts of speech is one of the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge that allow readers to interpret the meaning of words written in sentences that form a text (Moreira, A., 2020).

These parts of speech clarify how a word is used in a sentence. It is essential to know that a word can sometimes be in more than one piece of speech. Some studies aid the use of parts of speech as a contribution to acquire English and to understand lexical processes (Almache, 2019). Sukanya and Nutprapha (2017, as cited in Moreira, A., 2020) stated that parts of speech help learners understand and use the second language better, they can be able to listen, speak, read, or write English efficiently. The analysis of parts of speech provides English students an awareness of how native English speakers use word resources (Lin, 2014; Sukanya., & Nutprapha, 2017).

Word recognition distinguishes the written word, the spoken language, and comprehension to be familiar with the reading's meaning (Contreras, 2019). Word recognition involves two sub-processes: the first one connected to visual re-codifications of orthographic forms of words, and the second one linked with semantic resources through vocabulary in the mind or cognitive lexicon (Jeon, 2012, as cited in Ordoñez, 2020). Word recognition starts with an understanding that letters represent the sounds in words and progresses to the capacity to recognize complex word parts.

Word recognition is part of converting the order of letters into sounds to recognize a word (Oliveira, et al., 2016). In the beginning, this process can be pretty slow. As words are met more regularly, word recognition becomes faster and more automatic (Weekley, 2017). Word recognition includes phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition (Scarborough, 2001). The ability to decode words effectively and efficiently is needed for reading comprehension (Boardman et al., 2008; Scammacca et al., 2013; Wharton-McDonald & Swiger; 2009). Reading comprehension begins with recognition of words for that reason, it is essential to understand the words used to make sentences and start reading comprehension tasks.

The ability to quickly identify words is an essential precursor to reading comprehension (Courbron, 2012). Studies affirm that explicit and fluid word recognition has a positive impact on learners' reading ability, and this is due to the speed in which they get the accurate meaning of the words (Cuadro, et al., 2017, as cited in Contreras, 2019). Findings of other studies developed with Japanese EFL learners examine the three components word recognition (decoding, sight word reading, and lexical meaning access) and English language skill indicated that they were meaningful predictors of reading comprehension (Yamashita, 2013, as cited in Ordonez, 2020).

Acquiring vocabulary through word recognition skills enhances students' reading performance (Contreras, 2019). When students increase their reading competence, they can identify more words spontaneously, it helps them to understand texts without difficulty. Laufer (1989, as cited in Grabe, 1995) stated that minimal comprehension needs the reader to know 95% of the textbook's words. The development of single word recognition could be severe for proficient reading, as its rise can progressively allow learners to organize more advanced, higher language skills (Roembke, et al., 2019). When students recognize words, they listen, write, speak, and understand the English language better because of their excellent word power-knowledge.

Reading Skills

Skimming and scanning

Skimming is a process of quickly moving the eyes through the reading to discover the key ideas (Brown, 2001, as cited in Luguaña, 2019); it means reading a text rapidly to understand its essence. Otherwise, scanning is used to recover an exact section of information relevant to the

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task or the reader (Abdelrahman & Bsharah, 2014, as cited in Perlaza, 2020); it looks for specific data. Scanning is stopping reading until the information is found to respond to a particular question while skimming is the process of understanding the text's main idea (Jose & Dharma Raja, 2011, as cited in Chamba 2019). Skimming and scanning are powerful strategies to increase learners' speediness in reading and comprehension (Touriz, 2020).

Summarizing

Summarizing hooks the main idea of a reading and the critical details that support the text. Summarizing allows learners to understand the text more deeply, and at the same time, it works as an indicator of understanding (Pečjaka & Pircb, 2018, as cited in Barreiro, 2019). It forces the learner to remember specific details about what he/she read in his/her words and perspective. When reading a passage, summarizing helps find essential ideas, deleting irrelevant information, and reconstructing original texts (Ozdemir, 2018). Likewise, summarizing aids, students learn to determine and consolidate important details to comprehend the reading (Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018).

Decoding and encoding

Both promote an individual's ability to read. Decoding is the process of reading words in a text. Secondary students are frequently able to decode one-syllable words; however, multi-syllable words become progressively more complicated (Archer et al., 2003). Encoding is the process of using letters or sound knowledge to write. Encoding instruction is not limited to only teaching spelling patterns and memorization aptitudes. It also includes teaching to build new words according to their phoneme and grapheme correspondences (Weiser & Mathes, 2019). Most students have deficient decoding and encoding skills; it does not help them read and understand unknown words in the whole text (Oakhill et al., 2015).

Another issue is that learners do not have the necessary knowledge to decode unknown words and encode them to build messages (Greenbaum, 2015). Encoding and decoding support students' ability to read, but both have different processes. There is a lot of reading, from the letter and word recognition, encoding and decoding words, to understand the meaning of the phrase, sentence, and paragraph level.

Learners need to recognize the gist, main idea, specific details, and even make inferences about what they are reading Shanahan, (2018). The role of reading skills to improve reading comprehension is to construct meaning, synthesize information, making connections to prior knowledge. Teaching strategies for engagement, such as interactive read aloud, increases comprehension because students interact with the texts.

Prior knowledge when reading

Prior knowledge about reading plays an important role in helping students to build up an accurate model to improve this skill according to their circumstances. Readers who have more background knowledge make connections between their previous experience and the new information of a text easily (Almutairi, 2018). They can compare the meaning of the new words with their background knowledge (Nation & Angell, 2006), it allows learners to understand the texts by identifying the words they previously learned. For successful reading comprehension, readers should have adequate reading prior knowledge and connect isolated words into messages.

Singhal (1998, as cited in McKee, 2012) specified that previous learning facilitates or impedes the understanding of a text. Making a connection between the reader's background knowledge and new learning is essential for facilitating the reading comprehension process (Ferstl & Kintsch, 1999; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). For this, teachers should be conscious of themes that are more familiar to their learners, as well as topics that the students have less early information about (Smith, 2012).

Purpose for reading

The purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what you already know with new concepts developed during the learning process. The authentic purpose in reading is to develop communication to something which remains or increases the reader's theoretical world (Sangia, 2014). Setting a purpose for reading helps keep students focused and involved while reading, and provides them an objective so that comprehension can be strengthened. Reading with purpose motivates and helps students take their time reading so they will not skip over key elements in the

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text (Ministerio de education, 2016). When students set a purpose for reading, they gain a deeper understanding of a text, increase reading comprehension and expand the vocabulary.

Methodology

Design

A descriptive study aims to systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon that can occur everywhere (McCombes, 2015). The author also expressed that the study tries to fulfill questions such as what, where, when, and how, but not any answer related to why. It is primarily because it is crucial to have a proper understanding of what a research problem is about before investigating why it exists in the first place. The descriptive study´s design can be applied to various research methods to investigate one or more variables to reach the required goals. Besides, descriptive statistics utilize data collection and analysis techniques that produce reports concerning central tendency, variation, and correlation.

The quantitative data can be defined as any data that is counted or expressed numerically. The researcher usually tries to answer questions involving quantity, frequency, value, or size (Davidson, 2019). The author also expressed that quantitative data can be discrete and continuous. The first one has a limited number of possible values (e.g., whole numbers from 1-100), and the second has unlimited possibilities, including fractions and decimals (e.g., weights or distances like 1/4 kg or 0.5 miles). Finally, data can be organized into different measurement ranges as ordinal or nominal, among others.

Research questions:

Do participants read in English?

Do they use reading strategies?

What are their perspectives towards reading?

What are their perspectives towards summarizing a reading in English?

Participants

The participants in this descriptive study are 50 students from eighth grade who study at a private school in Manta, Manabi- Ecuador. The range of age is between 11 and 13 years, and 66.7 % are

12 years old. Their learning styles and needs are varied. According to the standards, their English proficiency is A1. The language spoken at home in its majority is Spanish, and 2 % in English. Their ethnic group is mestizo; 90 % are catholic. All of them have internet access at home, and 75.5 % have their own smartphone, and their English knowledge according to their perspective is basic at 68.2 %.

The description of their English learning background is varied. Some of them like English, others cannot stand the idea of expressing in a second language. They mentioned that their English learning has become more demanding due to private education than the one that they learned in public schools.

Instruments

To answer the research questions, the following instruments were applied:

Demographic survey

A demographic survey (Appendix A) was used to describe the participants' general characteristics, which included their age, gender, course, language, ethnic group, background, English level, access, and technology knowledge.

Reading survey

To answer the research questions, the fifty participants fulfilled the reading survey (Appendix B). The survey was in English and Spanish to avoid any misunderstandings. This survey consisted of two parts. The first one measured the students reading knowledge and strategies, and the second part asked for students' attitudes and perspectives towards the reading skill with 18 questions. The survey about reading was taken in Google Forms format, and the students answered it online.

Data Analysis

The results of the survey are displayed in a table with the means. Specific software and an Excel datasheet were generated with the participants' answers to run descriptive statistics.

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning with the work, the researcher received the consent letter (Appendix C) from the institution to allow working with the students in the descriptive study. As students are minors, their parents were notified with a survey (Appendix D) to participate in this study to get their approval. The information of the participants was protected all the time. Their names and personal information do not appear anywhere. Instead of that, codes that represent the information were assigned.

Results

The data collected through the survey to answer the research questions are shown in this section. The research questions were: Do participants read in English? And do they use reading strategies? With the data presented in this study, the researcher found that participants were not used to reading, and most of them do it because it is mandatory for the subject.

According to the results, the majority of students can understand single phrases at a time, and the mean obtained was 1.90, which means that learners totally agreed with that item taken from the survey. It is noticeable that students translate all the words due to the lack of reading strategies, and the mean obtained was 1.84, which means that they totally agreed with the required item. Unfortunately, students do not recognize elements of a summary at all, and the mean obtained was 3.68, which means that just some students accomplished this item. Besides, students also demonstrated that the use of punctuation pauses made them understand texts better. The score obtained was 2.82, which means that learners agreed with the item asked. Finally, for a clear understanding of the results, all the items are presented in the table below:

Figure 1: Survey results about reading and comprehension and strategies.

Descriptive Statistics		
Questions	N	Mean
I read in English.	50	2.02
I can understand a long, complex text.	50	2.78
I understand single phrases at a time.	50	1.90
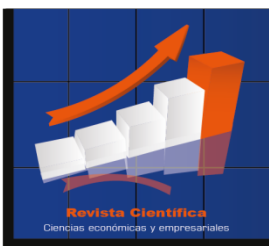
I understand a long text with the first reading.	50	2.56
I understand a long text by rereading it.	50	1.80
I can Skim.	50	3.12
I can Scan.	50	3.41
I know the elements of a summary.	50	3.68
When I read I translate all the words.	50	1.84
I identify the type of texts I read.	50	3.04
I know the organization of the text.	50	3.09
I use my prior knowledge when I read.	50	2.20
I can classify words of a reading	50	2.16
When I read, I observe punctuation pauses.	50	2.04
Punctuation helps me understand the text.	50	2.82

With the last two questions of the survey that are not in the previous table, the researcher created a specific table with each of these questions. The objective is to explain students' perspectives, percentages, and means about these two questions because the researcher considered it necessary to do it in a more detailed form and know how learners can adapt to the reading skills and strategies to their real knowledge and learning.

To obtain the results about what are students´ perspectives towards reading with the question in the survey: If they see a passage in English and how they feel? A detailed table shows all these mentioned results.

Figure 2: Results about students´ perspectives when they see a passage in English.

Options to answer	Frequency	Valid Percent
I see a reading in English and I feel anxious not to understand	21	42.00%

I get bored because I have to translate the words	10	20.00%
I do not read.	6	12.00%
I do not feel anxious.	13	26.00%
Total	50	100.00%

To answer this question, 42% of students responded that they see a reading in English and feel anxious for not understanding the passage. Participants said that they do not feel anxiety for reading an English passage, and one of these students´ answer said textually "When I read a text in English I try to translate the words with my knowledge in vocabulary but some others by common sense I identify them and that helps me to have a more detailed knowledge of the subject."

And what are their perspectives towards summarizing a reading in English with the survey question: Can you summarize? The students answered and their responses are written in the table below:

Figure 3: Results about students´ perspectives if students can summarize.

Options to answer	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes, I get the main idea, and write specific details.	14	28.00%
Yes, but I need to improve.	6	12.00%
So so.	11	22.00%
No.	19	38.00%
Total	50	100.00%

The participants' answers demonstrated that a 28% of them can summarize by getting the main idea, and writing specific details. A 12% of them expressed that they can summarize, but they

need to improve; a 22% of the participants said they do not feel so sure to know how to summarize, and finally the last 38% of the students mentioned that they cannot summarize, one of students whose answer was in the last percentage said that he/she tries but the his/her work needs to be improved.

Discussion

The results of this descriptive study revealed students' experience related to reading comprehension which is described in each question.

The first question: Do participants read in English? shows that learners do not read. They read as an obligation which does not help to develop this skill. In the reading comprehension process, readers intend to obtain the author's information and comprehend its goal (Ardiana, 2015). If students do not read, they are not able to determine the author's information. Oliver and Young (2016) sustained that many ESL students have limited word knowledge, which impacts their reading. If they lack vocabulary students may waste time to decode the text but not understand the main idea of the text. Word recognition develops students' skills to understand texts to support reading comprehension (Ordoñez, 2020; Ruiz, 2015). Likewise, as words are repeated, to recognize them becomes faster and automatic (Weekley, 2017). This makes it difficult to understand long, complex texts, because of the lack of knowledge of new words. On the average, the students' reading comprehension abilities are no good. It means that the students' need to improve their abilities to comprehend a text, which guarantees the development not only of this skill but the English in general.

The second question: Do they use reading strategies? The results display that participants do not use reading strategies. Students should be able to identify the gist and find important information on primary texts (Ministerio de Educación, 2012) but it does not happen. Strategies like skimming and scanning were far from being used, the employment of these two strategies can help students find precise information in a text (Jose & Dharma Raja, 2011, as cited in Chamba, 2019). Touriz (2020) sustained that skimming and scanning are great strategies to increase learners' reading comprehension. Furthermore, prior knowledge plays a crucial role to classify words correctly to improve reading comprehension. According to Almutairi, (2018); Nation and

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Angell (2006), the reader connects their prior knowledge and the new information to understand the texts. However, their results were the best, and it can give a guide to work better from here to the future. Besides, a descriptive study in reading comprehension like this was done by Subayil (2017), it was conducted on 54 students of the eighth year. It was done to find out the value of students' reading comprehension by using scanning. It determined that the reading comprehension of students was good after analyzing the results.

The third question: What are their perspectives towards reading? Students' perspectives towards reading are not good, the results revealed that learners feel anxious when reading in English because they do not understand a text, only a few do not feel anxiety. Other learners get bored translating each word and some of them do not read. In accordance with Khikmah (2019), teachers do not create innovative classroom activities, for that reason students do not feel motivated to learn to read. Harmer (2007) stated that relevant reading activities affect students' vocabulary, spelling, and writing activities positively. Thus, reading allows students to read and understand texts to be independent learners (Miñoza & Montero, 2019)

The fourth question: What are their perspectives towards summarizing a reading in English? Learners' answers demonstrated the few skills to summarize and identify the main idea and specific details. This statement is consolidated by researchers who say that summarizing helps students identify important details to understand a text more deeply (Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018; Pečjaka & Pircb, 2018, as cited in Barreiro, 2019). Other students expressed that they must improve knowledge to summarize correctly. Some participants do not know how to summarize or they cannot summarize. Summarizing helps find the gist, deleting irrelevant information, and rebuilding original texts (Ozdemir, 2018).

Reading comprehension skills allows learners to comprehend a text by processing the evidence and connecting them with prior knowledge (Moreira, A., 2020). However, students used their prior knowledge to understand the words by words but not the complete text. Although this study does not give us positive results, other studies showed that you can get good results by working constantly using the correct strategies. Subayil (2017) got positive results in reading comprehension through scanning after analyzing the results of a descriptive study. A similar study was carried out by Kurnia (2011), it shows great results too. In addition, teachers and

researchers must be constant to use reading strategies, take advantage of prior knowledge and have a purpose for reading to enhance it.

Conclusion

This study aimed at the reading challenges that students face during their English classes. It is necessary to keep in mind that reading is a learning tool for formal education because it allows students to read and understand texts to be autonomous learners. This study showed that the main challenge for students is to have the correct strategies to read and comprehend passages effectively. Previous studies have demonstrated that strategies are part of students' academic learning. Besides this, there is a significant number of students who are not adapted to read, even in their first language.

Therefore, students presented some difficulties in developing reading skills. Also, it is a reality that reading skill is a strategy that must be developed through practice. The study also showed that students lack vocabulary even though they can find some words using a dictionary. Also, they do not use the skimming strategy to find the main idea in a text or scanning when looking for details. The use of skimming and scanning strategy is not well developed at all. Students cannot read faster, and some of them read very little. Still, it is necessary to mention that they use their prior knowledge of vocabulary and translate all the words in texts or books. Students can understand simple words or phrases because reading is supposed to be one of the most practiced classroom activities.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study's development was the lack of commitment students presented to fill out the survey. They took too much time to answer the surveys taking them even more than a week to complete them. Additionally, twenty-two of the students did not understand some questions of the survey, but fortunately, they became more communicative in the last days asking questions to fulfill the gaps correctly. Previously, there were some online sessions and WhatsApp meetings, but some participants missed the meetings, and their understanding was not so adequate.

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It is necessary to mention that the real significant limitation was that learners do not like or even do not want to read in their first language, so using their second language is sometimes a considerable effort. The current situation of COVID 19 has made students' behavior a little more relaxed. In some cases, they do not care about improving or even to enhance their reading and English language skills.

Recommendations

For future studies, it would be recommendable that this kind of descriptive research could have the possibility to be considered as part of the final work. It certainly makes the researcher know about students´ perspectives. Moreover, the researcher must be sure all participants have a clear understanding of the survey questions. Besides this, if students are minors, it is essential for the study that parents get all the study information, such as the time, topics, and sessions; it would do the study more accurately to complete the task.

Another recommendation to promote reading skills and to implement this descriptive study in different formal education levels. Finally, it could be immersed as a part of the curriculum through the academic year by using different strategies to find early solutions in the students´ learning development like surveys with specific grammar like word recognition, parts of speech, or use of English to know students´ difficulties in recognizing them to make adjustments in the lesson plan with the objective to better learning results.

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