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APPLICATION OF INTERACTIVE SKILL-FOCUSED LESSONS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN L2 IN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNMSM (UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS)

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MAESTRÍA EN EDUCACIÓN
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APPROVAL

The thesis entitled *"APPLICATION OF INTERACTIVE SKILL-FOCUSED LESSONS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN L2 IN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNMSM (UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS)"* presented by *ANA ROSA RÍOS REVOREDO* in accordance with the requirements of being awarded the degree of Master in Education with a mention in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language, was approved by the thesis director Dr. Majid Safadaran Mosazadeh, and defended on……. 2016 before a Jury with the following members:

_____ _____

President Informant

_____

Secretary

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the labour area of our country there is a need of improving the academic level of workers. It is mainly a requirement for those who work in educational institutions, such as universities or schools where they hold a position of responsibility. Since they have to show their research ability to solve problems in their institutions and come up with effective solutions to those problems.

As it was mentioned above, the number of participants in Master's degree and Doctorate courses has increased in recent years. To complete the levels of their studies and support their thesis is a requirement that students of San Marcos University prove their ability in managing a foreign language, at least at a basic level, in a Proficiency Exam[1]. The purpose is to extend students' researching area beyond the limits of their own language. Currently, the interest of learning a foreign language, mainly English, has been reinforced by the Peruvian government in its new University Law, article 45, which states the knowledge of a foreign language, principally English, as a requirement to obtain the bachelor's degree.

That is why, the University of San Marcos provides doctoral and master students with a course to prepare them to pass the Proficiency Exam. Due to the special needs of these students it is necessary to apply the foreign language teaching in a different form from that used in most

[1] Proficiency Exam: It is the name of the exam all postgraduate students are required at UNMSM before proceeding with the defense of their thesis (*See Appendix J)*

of the language centres by exposing them to reading activities from the beginning of the classes. Something else to take into consideration is that these students do not have time to practice the language outside the classroom because of their responsibilities at work and other duties what makes it difficult to carry on with the course as we would like.

Even though during the course all the skills are taught, reading comprehension and writing are emphasised taking into consideration the students should use them for researching. Therefore, this research is developed as a response to the need to make a change in the L2 (English) reading teaching, which has been managed through a traditional method of decoding written texts (translation) and academic activities directed towards an evaluative process. The aforesaid traditional approach, although it emphasizes in the process of reading comprehension, is not capable of going beyond the classroom and does not accomplish the requirements of academic level of universities.

The purpose of this research has been to apply some activities, most of them based on Beatrice Mikulecky's work, which promote and improve the reading comprehension in L2 (English) to satisfy the needs and interests of a group of students from the Postgraduate School of San Marcos University, whose achievement is, as previously mentioned, to approve the English Proficiency Exam, in order to show their capacity to develop research activities in an L2, mainly focused in reading comprehension. The result of this investigation will serve to analyse the scope of this program and introduce improvements such as activities to promote reading outside the classroom, use of educational technologies (internet, computers, etc.) and a more active and creative participation of the students in the design of the program activities.

It is well known that there have been studies about reading comprehension since the 1970s. Before that, reading comprehension had been neglected in the researching area, since it was not considered the main focus in the language teaching. In the 70s and 80s the studies in psycholinguistic and cognitive psychology (Anderson, 1985; Brown 1978; Goodman, 1970 among others) provide new contributions to understand reading comprehension as an important psycholinguistic process in the language learning development. However, in our country the reading comprehension research has not been made long enough, even less in the L2. Due to this, my interest arises in the study of the

topic. Thus, I will try to get a new approach to the causes of reading comprehension problem in L2 (English) in the academic level, trying to find the most suitable strategies to improve the level of Postgraduate School students in order to comply with the requirements of this school. This involves the study and constant application of various strategies to enhance reading comprehension in L2 in an academic level and meet the real needs of the students, which is not an easy task, since they are changing constantly due to their type of career, and even more when it is in a context where there is little reading in L1 (this is more for students like mathematicians, chemists, etc.) or this is focused on technical reading.

This research consists of four parts. The first part presents the theoretical basis of reading comprehension and the attitudes towards it. The second chapter is based on the theoretical framework that supports this investigation. The third chapter contains the methodology used and the fourth and final chapter shows the results found, it also presents the discussion and relevant conclusions from the outcomes obtained in the study.

CHAPTER I:
INVESTIGATION OUTLINE

1.1. Formulation of the problem

Nowadays, English language is an essential tool to get a direct and fast access to a wide range of information such as science, technology and culture that is generated daily. It is an essential requirement for any professional who wants to stay ahead in their work or study field. As a result, the demand of professionals with a good command of English in specific knowledge fields have increased lately. This is the case of the Postgraduate School students of San Marcos University, who access the English course in order to fulfill the qualification requirements to obtain the master or doctoral degree and very few with the intention of learning a second language.

According to some studies, such as that developed by Montes, Botero and Pechthalt [2] based on different authors (Cummins (1992), Collier & Thomas (2007), Kong (2006) and others) there is a strong correlation between the L1 and the L2 where reading strategies from L1 are transferred to L2. It also implies that a poor command of strategies in reading comprehension in the L2 (English) is a consequence of similar problems in the L1. This means that these students come to the classroom of L2 with reading problems originated in their L1. Moreover, according to some studies developed by UNESCO (1982):

[2] Montes, F.; Botero, M and T. Pechthalt (2009): "Reading Comprehension from a First to a Second Language", Colombia: *GiSt* Journal núm 3.

> "There are people that is literate from an acceptable point of view. However, due to an inadequate education, they cannot play the role demanded by the society, such as studies or professional duties, these people are functionally illiterate[3], they are not able to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development."

This problem is not only a characteristic of developing countries but also for the developed ones because of an inadequate training in reading comprehension, which leads university students to an inadequate or lack use of tools to achieve an optimal level in their reading skills at the end of their career becoming, most of the time, in passive readers.

Furthermore, a frequently mistake committed by foreign language teachers, who teach L2 students the strategies in reading comprehension in an inadequate way, is to let them remain in that situation; because of the great emphasis placed in translation as a form of assessment in reading comprehension in a foreign language. This has caused that

> "Learners often feel that they must understand every word or their reading is not successful. This is not true. It is important to explain to students that there are many different ways of reading. How we read is determined by our purpose in reading."[4]

As a result, most of the time there is a great fear and rejection of reading English texts by second language students. This reduces the students' interest in expanding their knowledge through reading in L2, limiting the possible sources of information in researching, getting only information in their L1 or from a previous translation that can contain mistakes due to translator´s lack of knowledge in the area or outdated information at the moment of consulting. In addition, the student loses many possibilities to access to a world of enjoyment due to a wrong idea of reading. Understanding of texts is conceived as product rather than a means or learning process in learning a foreign language. This makes teaching reading a unidirectional process, as it is stated by Smith,

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[3] Giere, Ursula (1987): *Functional Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: An Analytical Bibliography*, Hamburg: UNESCO INSTITUTE for education, p. 28.

[4] Nunan, D. (1995): *Atlas1. Teachers's Extended Edition. Learning-Centered Communication*, USA: Heinle & Heinle Global Innovation. P. 14.

Goodman and Meredith[5] (1970) "reading comprehension depends from all the keys at its service". These cues are not only represented by linguistic elements, but also extra-linguistic ones (text type and form, images, context) and cognitive strategies such as logic inference, prediction and previous knowledge.

There are different styles of reading, such as scanning, skimming, for detailed comprehension, extensive and intensive. The style used depends on the reading purpose and the type of text. Besides the style, there are also strategies that make easier the process, like prediction, recognition of vocabulary in context, for example cognates, recognition of cause-effect relationship. This has been proved by several researches done till now. Due to this, the following questions arise:

1.1.1. General problem

Does the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improve L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students?

1.1.2. Specific problems

- Does the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improve the literal level[6] of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students?
- Does the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improve the inferential level[7] of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students?

[5] Goodman, K., R. Meredith and B. Smith (1970): *Language and Thinking in the Elementary School.* Nueva York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. P. 18.
[6] Definition of *literal level* in CHAPTER II
[7] Definition of *inferential level* in CHAPTER II

1.2. Formulation of the hypothesis

1.2.1 General hypothesis

The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

1.2.2. Specific hypotheses

- The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the literal level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.
- The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

1.3. Delimitation of the objectives

1.3.1 General objective

To demonstrate that the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To demonstrate that the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the literal level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.
- To demonstrate that the application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

1.4. Justification of the investigation

Reading plays an important role in the human life and its professional activity, since it is a prime means of knowledge and communication. Reading in a foreign language has also social, educational and practical importance, as it is a source to know the reality and values of other countries. Moreover, the reading of scientific

technical publications in a foreign language allows a better use of time to obtain information in a research which is one of the principal purposes of this investigation.

Currently, due to globalization and the need to keep up to date in the latest economic, technological and cultural knowledge, as well as scientific discoveries, English has become essential for those that work in the research field, most books, magazines, newspapers and movies are in this language. Going online, most of the world's stored information and web pages are in English and also English is the most commonly used language in the sciences. Looking into the Web of Science, an important multidisciplinary database produced by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) of Philadelphia, USA, we observe that 96% of documents published in 2000 in the Science Citation Index Expanded were written in English[8], for this reason, the knowledge of a second language, especially English, has become an essential requisite to conduct a research for those who wish to get a master's or doctoral degree. Therefore, leading universities of our country require students to demonstrate competence in the knowledge of a second language as a prerequisite to support their thesis. In view of this, San Marcos University develops a training program in second language in the postgraduate area, focuses mainly on research, this is the reason the emphasis is on the skills of reading and writing.

The course lasts 8 modules of 32 hours each one, and although it is aimed at a basic level, the goal is that students acquire the skills mentioned above in a pre-intermediate level. Daily practice showed me that, although most students pass the course, the results are not the expected ones at the end of this. I could have observed that students present several problems in reading comprehension at the beginning of the course, this is probably because they had not developed reading skills properly in their L1 and transmit this lack in the development of L2. Considering this, the aim of this research is to help students to acquire or improve their reading comprehension skills in L2 through an "Interactive skill-focused lesson" that provides students with classroom activities,

[8] http://thomsonreuters.com/en/products-services/scholarly-scientific-research/scholarly-search-and-discovery/web-of-science.html

since most of them, due to work, do not spend much time studying the L2.

This "Interactive skill-focused lesson" is based on the approach developed by Beatrice Mickuleky (1997)[9] and is supported by Jensen (2005)[10] who recommended planning lessons with the following elements in order to foster skill learning:

1. Motivation to use the skill.
2. Role modelling (a visible, tactile or audible model).
3. Direct instruction or simply an opportunity to acquire the skill.
4. Time for trial and error, practice, and debriefing.
5. Time to use and strengthen skills in multiple contexts.

Furthermore, the research will contribute to curriculum content, programmed for each group, can be learnt better, especially those related to reading ability.

Keeping in mind the above, this teaching model will pay attention to the characteristics of the applicant group, the number of hours for program development, as well as the motives and prior knowledge that the group brings to the classroom for understanding texts, in order to develop reading strategies and increase the lexicon reading with the purpose of helping students not only to pass the Proficiency Exam but also in the development of their thesis researches.

[9] Mickuleky, B. (1997): Basic Reading Power. USA: Addison Wesley Longman. p. 157. "…A strategic approach will enable students to view reading in English as a problem solving activity rather than a translation exercise. This way, students can learn good reading habits and skills, and they can avoid problems that commonly result from poor reading habits…"

[10] Jensen, E. (2005): Teaching with the Brain in Mind. 2nd Ed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). P. 116.

1.5. Limitations of the investigation

1.5.1. Spatial limitation

The access to the sample to be used was another difficulty encountered, since it was necessary a permission (*See Appendix D*) from the University to proceed with the research.

1.5.2. Time limitation

The time was a limiting factor for the development of this research, due to the work activities of the researcher. In view of this, there were assigned two hours to advance through a schedule set in MS Project. The time of data collection was limited to the first three academic modules since it is not usual, in the institution, teachers continue with the same group more than two modules.

1.5.3. Resources limitation

The bibliographic material about the subject of research was an important limitation. The theses or national studies that will serve as background for this research were most from studies on reading comprehension in Spanish language. This limitation delayed the development of the research. It was repaired by a persistent internet search.

1.6. Antecedents of the investigation

Even though, there is not a similar previous research, I considered the following information important to know to which extend the research on reading comprehension has been developed, both national and international, and to gather information about techniques or material to promote reading comprehension in the classroom.

1.6.1. National antecedents

a) Gamarra Diaz, Yeny de los Angeles (2003) with a thesis entitled "Estrategia Didáctica para la lectura y comprensión de un cuento, en los educandos del Colegio Alfonso Villanueva Pinillos, ubicado en el distrito de Pucará,

provincial de Jaén", carried out at the Pedro Ruiz Gallo University of Lambayeque, Peru. This study aims to provide teachers with a set of strategies that will let them do a reading and understanding of appropriate and relevant texts to function efficiently in learning narrative texts, specifically in a storybook.

b) Albino Ruiz Julia (2012) with the thesis: "Uso de materiales educativos y su relación con el aprendizaje del idioma inglés en estudiantes de secundaria de la institución educativa Nº 5187 del distrito de Puente Piedra, Lima", defended in Universidad César Vallejo de Lima, in this study it is considered the use of graphic, printed and audio materials to motivate students to read, the results concluded that there is a direct relationship between the use of educational materials and learning of English in the students.

1.6.2. International antecedents

a) Wigfield Allanand, Guthrie John (1997), researchers at the University of Maryland (USA), developed the questionnaire on motivation for reading (Motivations for Reading Questionnaire - MRQ) as a means to gather information about the different levels of reading motivation in schools. The questionnaire was developed for primary school students and has been used to compare the effectiveness of different reading programs. The theoretical framework, on which this survey is based, argues that reading motivation is a multifaceted phenomenon (Guthrie, 2000)[11] in which different factors are involved to produce, hold or extinguish it, like individual beliefs in ability and effectiveness (self-efficacy), the reasons that individuals have to perform reading tasks (which are of two types, learning-oriented and performance-oriented) and social aspects of reading motivation (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). From these theoretical areas, eleven scales are derived which would be

[11] Guthrie and Wigfield (2004): MRQ Revised Original. Cuestionario enviado por John Guthrie. MRQ Ítems and Construct Scales.

the principal components of reading motivation as it is stated for the authors.

b) Fernandez Toledo, Piedad. (1999) with the doctoral thesis "Conocimiento Previo, Esquemas de Género y Comprensión Lectora en Inglés Como Lengua Extranjera" where conducts a research with philology students at the University of Murcia. In this research, the author's main objective is to test the effect of three elements of prior knowledge, which are the content knowledge, practical experience in the proper scope of the text, and the language proficiency in L2. The conclusion that the author reaches is that thematic knowledge does not increase reading comprehension, on the contrary seems to affect negatively since individuals seem to understand the text wrongly. The experience in a specific discipline is somewhat favourable, but only in the lower levels. Regarding to the linguistic level, it is required in the student at least a minimum level to develop more vocabulary and grammar of the target language so that their reading skills will be transferable from L1 to L2.

c) Mendoza O. Hector. (2003) with the thesis *"*La Promoción de la Lectura en Inglés y su valoración por parte de los alumnos de noveno grado de la U.E. "Jacinto Regino Pachano" located in Tocuyo La Costa, EDO. Falcon. This research aimed to promote reading in L2 (English) in college students from the mentioned school with the method Research-Action-Participant that included a series of semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The author concludes that a number of students felt interested and motivated towards reading texts written in L2 and that this group of students understood the information presented in the texts , but another group just simply answered the requirements of the teacher.

d) Gonzales Torres, Isabel. (2011). In her Master Thesis "La importancia de enseñar estrategias didácticas en la segunda lengua. Propuestas metodológicas para los docentes de segundas lenguas en la enseñanza de estrategias lingüísticas." The author looks for " ... the intrinsic relationship between

making a greater and more sophisticated use of language strategies and get a good academic performance in the L2" and ″ ... teaching reading strategies or techniques is very useful and beneficial for the acquisition of second language (L2), despite critics' believes." The author concludes that students "with better results" obtained less benefit from the program than those students with "average performance" and "worse" because the strategies chosen were limited. It also states, that students with "better results" are able to combine linguistic strategies more effectively than their peers "worst-performing", at the same time, they demonstrated greater control and understanding of the strategies used (metacognition) but it cannot be determined the origin of this behaviour and mentions Macaro and Grenfell researchers (2007)[12], who recognize that "in the linguistic research it has been extensively analysed the relationship between the use of strategies and the results obtained in a level of correlation rather than seek the causality between these." (pp. 23-24)

[12] Grenfell, M. and Macaro, E. (2007): Language learner strategies: claims and critiques. In A.D Cohen and E. Macaro (Eds.) *Language Learner strategies: 30 years of research and practice*.

CHAPTER II:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Definition of Education

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary[13]:

- Education is the action or process of teaching someone especially in a school, college, or university.
- Education is the knowledge, skill, and understanding that you get from attending a school, college, or university.

Education is a human right, as it is stated in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[14]:

- Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance

[13] Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2015). On internet on February 14th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.merriam-webster.com.
[14] United Nations website (2015). On internet on February 14th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/.

and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

- Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

In June 2000, UNICEF presented a paper[15] at the meeting of The International Working Group on Education in Florence, Italy. The document stated that Quality education includes:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

This definition allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context.

2.2. Education in Peru

According to the Peruvian Law of Education Nº 28044[16], Article 2 Concept of Education, "La educación es un proceso de aprendizaje y enseñanza que se desarrolla a lo largo de toda la vida y que contribuye a

[15] UNICEF website (2015). On internet on February 14th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.unicef.org/education/files/QualityEducation.PDF.

[16] Congreso de la República del Perú (2003). Ministerio de Educación del Perú. Retrieved on February 20th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.minedu.gob.pe/p/ley_general_de_educacion_28044.pdf.

la formación integral de las personas, al pleno desarrollo de sus potencialidades, a la creación de cultura, y al desarrollo de la familia y de la comunidad nacional, latinoamericana y mundial. Se desarrolla en instituciones educativas y en diferentes ámbitos de la sociedad". "Education is a life-long process of learning and teaching, which contributes to the integral formation of people, to the full development of their potential, to the creation of culture, and to the development of the family and the national, Latin American and world community.

2.3. English Language Teaching in Peru

In the official document "Marco Curricular Nacional – Tercera versión"[17] issued in 2014, we can find the "Aprendizajes Fundamentales" or "Fundamental Learning", one of which is "Se comunica para el desarrollo personal y la convivencia social" or "The student communicates for personal development and social coexistence". In this section, it is stated that the students communicate effectively in English at a basic standard.

In Peru, the teaching of English is compulsory only in High School according to the "Diseño Curricular Nacional 2009"[18], which demands two hours per week of English Language Teaching.

At university level, English is not taught mandatorily. However, according to the "Ley Universitaria 30220"[19], the mastery of a foreign language, preferably English, is mandatory in order to graduate as a bachelor, master or doctor. Some private universities include the teaching of English in their curriculum. Even more, San Ignacio de Loyola University, for example, dictates some career subjects in English.

[17] Ministerio de Educación (2014). MINEDU. Retrieved on February 20th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.ugelcanas.edu.pe/tercera-version-del-marco-curricular-nacional-2014-para-el-dialogo

[18] Ministerio de Educación (2008). MINEDU. Retrieved on February 20th, 2015. Accessible at http://sistemas06.minedu.gob.pe/sinadmed_1/resolucionesexternas/consultanormas.aspx

[19] Congreso de la República del Perú (2014). UNMSM. Retrieved on February 20th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.unmsm.edu.pe/transparencia/archivos/NL20140709.PDF

There are also several prestigious academies in Peru, where English is taught at basic, intermediate and advanced levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment[20].

2.4 English Language Teaching

Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. The whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of the first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual, and emotional response are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language. Many variables are involved in the acquisition process. Language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick do-it-yourself kit. So much is at stake that courses in foreign languages are often inadequate training grounds, in and of themselves, for the successful learning of a second language. Few if any people achieve fluency in a foreign language solely within the confines of the classroom.

We should look at the teaching process as the facilitation of learning, in which you can teach a foreign language successfully if, among other things, you know something about that intricate web of variables that are spun together to affect how and why one learns or fails to learn a second language.

2.5. The four skills

In English Language Teaching, we consider four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills, and speaking and writing are considered the productive ones. In an English class, we can have different moments in which the development of each skill is carried out independently with their own strategies and techniques. However, it is also possible to have activities which integrate two, three or even the four skills.

[20] Council of Europe (2007). Council of Europe. Retrieved on February 20th, 2015. Accessible at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp

2.6. The Reading Skill

2.6.1. Reading

For Alliende, F. and Condemarín, M.[21] (1986) read a text is a much more complex process than we usually think. Part of this complexity is that it is an intentional activity with purpose. Therefore, it is intended that in preparing to read, the student feel mentally engaged in a demanding task (read thinking). This activity is challenging, because it demands sustained concentration (keep focused mental energy to follow the thread of the meaning of the text and connect it to what they already know) and have a very clear idea of what the goal is (the goal is to understand, make sense, capture the main ideas, infer implicit relations; in short, form a mental model of the text).

In general, the objective of reading is always to understand the text (the explicit and implicit), and this should be communicated directly and indirectly, explained and modelled many times on the student. In short, understand or achieve adequate reading comprehension of a text means learning to generate meanings from before reading, while reading and after reading. That is the goal.

In addition to the above, one of the most difficult tasks for researchers has been to define the basic skills involved in reading comprehension[22]. Isolating the reading skills is still a hard work for reading authorities. The former classification was made by W. S. Gray in 1919 in his book *Eighteenth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education where he listed *eight skills of comprehension*. Later, Robinson (1966) expanded on Gray's earlier model where comprehension includes:

[21] Alliende, F. y Condemarin, M. (1986): La lectura: teoría, evaluación y desarrollo, Santiago de Chile: Andrés Bello.

[22] Pettit, N. and Cockriel, I. (1974): "A factor study of the literal reading comprehension test and the inferential reading comprehension test", *Journal of Literacy Research. Pp. 63-64.* (2016, Mayo 23). Retrieved from http://jlr.sagepub.com/content/6/1/63.full.pdf

1. understanding the literal meaning of a writer.
2. understanding the implied meaning of a writer.
3. assessment of a writer's purpose, frame of reference, assumptions, and generalizations.
4. evaluation by the reader of the writer's ideas.
5. integration of information and ideas of a writer with the reader's information and related experiences.

Cleland (1965) proposed another model which explained the intellectual processes:

1. perception
2. apperception
3. abstraction
4. appraisal
5. ideation
6. application

Clymer (1968) presented a taxonomy of reading comprehension designed by Barrett where the categories of reading comprehension are:

1. literal
2. reorganization
3. inferential
4. evaluation
5. appreciation

Other researchers (Singer, 1965; Fagan, 1971; Simon, 1971; Davis, 1972) have investigated and presented models, theories, constructs, and taxonomies which have in common some kind of hierarchy of reading comprehension skills. All these studies, despite their differences, agreed with two broad categories at the very least: ***literal comprehension*** and ***inferential comprehension*** which have been considered to develop this investigation.

According to Barrett, literal comprehension focuses on ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading text while inferential comprehension needs thinking and imagination that goes beyond the printed page.

2.6.2. Reading Components

According to Pinzás, J.[23] reading has two components: decoding and comprehension. We have to always keep this in mind, as there are situations in which the problems students have in reading comprehension are due to, in a large extent, to poor decoding.

Decoding is to recognize and identify the words and their meanings, that is, know how to read and know their meaning. Technically, decoding leads to a rapid "word recognition". The second component, reading comprehension, is to give an interpretation to the sentence, passage or text, this is, give it a sense, a meaning.

We know there are certain cognitive processes that support decoding. The good decoding is characterized to be fast, accurate and fluent, indicating it relies on automation processes. The decoding needs to be automated, which means that it is necessary to decode without mental effort, almost without stopping to look at the words, almost unattended. Why? Because, when the reader does not centre his attention on what letters he is watching, how they sound and what words they form, the reader can devote his attention to understand what he is reading. It can also happen in the classroom something surprising: students that although decoded fine (they have a fast oral, correct and fluent reading), do not understand what they read. Often, this is because they do not know how to understand what they read, do not understand what they are asked to do or do not know they should always read understanding and not understanding is a sign that something is wrong.

It has been said that understanding of a text is to give an interpretation, that is, give it sense, a meaning, etc. Comprehension is a psychological function that is characterized as an intellectual operation through which we get awareness of a clear and transparent meaning of something, whether thought or object.

[23] Pinzas, J. (1993): *Cognitive Monitoring in Reading Comprehension: A study of differences among schools in Lima, Perú*. Disertación Doctoral, Belgica: Universidad de Nimega.

In other words, this means that we capture the intrinsic relationships between words, phrases and sentences that constitute a text penetrating the meaning of ideas, concepts, events, approaches and intentions of the author or authors.

2.6.3. Strategies for Reading Comprehension

Pinzás, J.[24] suggests the following strategies for teachers to guide the process of reading comprehension:

a) Cognitive Strategy continuously connecting what they read (while reading) with the information, previous experiences or situations associated with their environment.
The student requires training in this mental activity that takes place while reading. What kind of mental activity is it? It is the constant association between what they read with what they already know: comparing, integrating, rejecting or accepting the content based on their concepts, beliefs and past experiences. The connection with the knowledge and prior experience that brings students to the classroom can be stimulated by activities carried out before reading. But the most important is to connect them throughout the reading of the text. Experts recommend working connections with:

- the previously read in other texts (what is similar, related or different to the presented text).
- that has been learned about people and the world, and its connection to the topic of the text.
- the personal world of beliefs, feelings and experiences similar or different from those presented in the text.
- what is known about the author and his styles, themes, messages and his other works.

b) Cognitive strategy to visualize or generate sensory images from what they read. Also, this is a mental activity that takes place while you read. Generating sensory images means to

[24] Pinzás, J.(1999): "Importancia de la investigación aplicada: reflexiones en relación a la comprensión de lectura", Revista de Psicología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Vol. 8, No 16: 267-279.

picture what is being read without losing the thread or understanding of what follows. Imagine the aroma, setting, feeling (e.g. happiness, pain, sorrow). It can help students identify in the passages "powerful phrases", phrases that bring immediately to mind, one sensory image.

c) Cognitive strategy of generating inferences. Inferences are conclusions, deductions or judgments that go changing while reading the text. It can refer to the plot, characteristics, intentions and feelings of the characters, justice/injustice that tells the story, the credibility of the event described, the author's message or intentions. This type of mental activity is essential, as it is the basis of inferential comprehension.

d) Cognitive strategy of content prediction. This mental activity is known as *prediction*. When the person understands what he is reading, he can anticipate or generate expectations about what is coming in the text in the text. Predicting helps to activate experiences and concepts that are related and keeps the reader involved and aware of what goes on.

e) Cognitive strategy to determine what is important in the text. This mental activity implies that students know to remove all that is superficial, that is, those parts of the text that can be neglected without affecting the plot of the story without changing its message. It involves the ability to select the "backbone", which holds the text, without which this would not make sense.

f) Cognitive Strategy summarize ideas. Once students know how to determine what is important and what is not, summarize results to be an easier task, since the goal is to integrate the relevant parts and rewrite the text in its minimal meaningful version.

g) Metacognitive strategy to monitor, guide and regulate its comprehension and use of cognitive strategies to be efficient. This includes a set of mental activities from a relatively sophisticated level. All of them are mind control activities, in

the sense of managing the mental activities to ensure that a fluent comprehension is not lost.

2.7. Theories about reading models evolution

Theories about teaching and learning reading in L2 have greatly evolved in the last 35 years. For example, in the sixties L2 reading was seen as a reinforcement for oral language instruction. However, from the mid/late seventies, many researchers began to outline a theory of reading based on the work of Goodman (1976) and Smith (1971, 1979) and these works also evolved into a "psycholinguistic model of reading". Hence, the theory of reading cannot be seen as the simple decoding of vocabulary and grammar from a text. In the following, I will mention the four models have lead the present research taken from Redondo Madrigal Marto's research[25].

2.7.1. Goodman psycholinguistic model[26]

Goodman proposes the following components and operation:

Components

In the reading process the factors involved are optical, perceptual, syntactic and meaningful. Each blends into the next to go as soon as possible to the meaning, permanent goal of the reader.

Under a psycholinguistics coverage, interdisciplinary science interested in how speech and thought are interrelated, the information used by the model comes mainly from oral error analysis ("miscue" analysis) and is characterized by belonging to the space system of symbols (sounds - letters), to the arbitrary structure of language (grammar and syntax) and semantic memory system (concepts and conceptual structures).

[25] Redondo, M. (1994): *El proceso lector en L2: aproximación psico-pragmática y su pedagogía en I.F.E.* Tesis doctoral de la Universidad de Alicante. Pp. 114-123.
[26] Goodman, K. (1967): "Reading: A psycholinguistic Guessing Game", *Journal of the Reading Specialist* Volume 6, Issue 4: 126-135
identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and large language units.".

Operation

The reader maintains a continuous attention in the construction of meaning through the following phases:

- *Initiation and recognition.* The brain recognizes the graphic display in the visual field and starts reading. If there are breaks (tables, figures, etc.), the phase restarts.

- *Prediction*. The brain is always anticipating and predicting, since it seeks order and meaning in sensory stimuli.

- *Confirmation.* If the brain predicts, it must also verify its predictions. So, with each new stimulus, it checks to confirm what is expected.

- *Correction.* The brain process again when it finds inconsistencies or does not confirm the predictions.

- *Completion.* The brain stops reading activity for any of these reasons: the text ends, the activity is not productive, little meaning is built, the meaning is known, the content does not matter, or is unsuitable for the intended purpose, etc. Anyway, the ending is an option open at any time.

Although the phases have an intrinsic sequence within prediction precedes confirmation and this to correction, the same information can be used to confirm an earlier prediction and to develop a new one.

During the development process ruptures may occur ("short-circuits") that prevent finish reading with a meaning. They are due to erroneous strategies, acquired personally or poor education like self-spelled unknown words, join written code with spoken one without assigning significance, recognize superficial and deep structures but not reaching the meaning, etc. The result is the acquisition of a fragmented knowledge against the ideal of integral understanding.

2.7.2. The serial model of Laberge and Samuels[27]

Laberge and Samuels propose the following components and operation:

Components

The process involves the *visual memory* codes (visual features, letters, syllables, words, groups of words), phonological memory (sound of syllables, words, groups of words) and semantic memory (meaning of words and groups of words).

Operation

The reader activates the corresponding codes to recognize and link hierarchically the components and fields together. Visual perception, processing first level, is the basis for the next, the letter recognition, which will, in turn, be for syllabic integration, and so on, to process the text semantically.

The components of each field are processed analytically from lowest to highest level in each component and field, in other words, from the bottom to the top and from the right to the left, resulting in automation when the process of one or more components are obvious and evident to the reader.

In general terms, the skilled reader tends to move from the visual perceptive processes to the semantic ones as soon as possible, but actually they are mediatized processes by many circumstances. For example, if you encounter any unfamiliar word you may require to apply visual and phonological coding before moving to the semantic level.

On the whole, Laberge and Samuels postulate that learning reading skills is a process of automation of visual level, phonological and semantic. So that, at the beginning, the novice

[27] Laberge, D. and S. Samuels (1984): "Toward a Theory of Automatic Information Processing in Reading", *Cognitive Psychology* Vol. 6. Pp. 293-323.

reader's attention is focused on the lower levels, but with practice most of these are automated and attention is released to focus more intensely on semantic and interpretive levels.

2.7.3. The interactive model of Rumelhart and McClelland[28]

Rumelhart and McClelland propose the following components and operation:

Components

Sources of information spelling, lexical, syntactic and semantic. Mental Synthesizer and message centre.

Operation

Emphasizes the flexible processing of multiple information sources, depending on contextual circumstances, showing that the perspective of information processing lies in the reading field.

The type of orthographic, lexical, semantic and syntactic information influences text processing and final interpretation. All converge in a mental synthesizer that, through the message centre, accepts the information, retains and distribute it according to need.

The message centre has several functions. It stores the information received in temporary memory, opens the access of different sources for data analysis, and confirms, denies, removes or adds the hypothesis of the respective areas of knowledge, according to the results of the analyses. The procedure continues until a decision is reached, which is supposed to be correct (Rumelhart, 1977:589 - 590).

In all, the mind active individual characteristics (letters, groups of letters, context, syntax, semantics, speech topic, prior knowledge, etc.) To select the meaning and understanding of

[28] Rumelhart, D. and McClellan, J. (1981): "Interactive Processing Through Spreading Activation". in Lesgold, M. and C. Perfetti (Eds.), *Interactive processes in reading.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

words. As the activation of different sources increases, the lexicon that is not affected by any of the sources is blocked and only one or two words exceed the level of consciousness. The process is faster than the conscious inference. The automaticity of the process allows us to concentrate on comprehension rather than an active selection or word prediction.

2.7.4. The compensatory model of Stanovich[29]

Stanovich proposes the following components and operation:

Components

The same as above plus a compensatory mechanism.

Operation

For serial models, the bottom-up process of reading tends to represent the flow of information in a series of discrete stages; in each stage, the "input" is transformed and information registered moves to the next to be transformed and recoded. The processing sequence is ascending, from data entry to higher level encodings. Lacking of "feedback", these models do not explain what mental mechanism allows subsequent processing stages when a gap is in a lower stage. For this deficiency, it is difficult to explain with them, for example, the effects of the context in the sentence and the role of prior knowledge on the topic, both variables facilitate word recognition and comprehension.

This top-down model, however, conceives the reading process interactively. The reader simplifies text information to verify his hypotheses and predictions; the reading is conceptually directed to higher stages, typical of final processing stage, interacting with the previous sequences for those operations. Moreover, higher order stages seem to lead and direct the process making the hardest job. In summary, the top-down processes start

[29] Stanovich, K. (1980): "Toward an interactive-compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency", *Reading Research Quarterly* Vol. 16, Pp. 32-71.

with hypotheses and predictions and try to verify them going down to printed stimuli, the bottom-up ones base the process on an analysis of lower stimuli.

Both concepts have limitations. We have already mentioned some of the bottom-up procedures. From the top down ones, for example, we can say that if the reader has no prior knowledge of the topic in a text, he cannot generate predictions, or, although being a good reader and able to generate them, if he needs more time for it than word recognition he will choose reading. Thus, although he can explain the starting of the reading, with low levels of word recognition, the top-down models do not accurately describe the behaviour of an advance reading.

These four interactive models include within themselves the concept of reading as an interdependent mental process, at the same time, fast and accurate recognition of the characteristics of letters and words, extensive activation of lexical forms and the concept of automaticity in processing, without it depends on launching the attention for primary recognition of linguistic units.

However, there are other theories that also guide the L2 reading. So, trying to have a pattern to master the mental processes activated when reading would be a panacea. But unfortunately, there is no a single model of reading, on the contrary, those designed, so far, are partial and incomplete, as it is declared by their authors. Despite this, psychologists and linguists are constantly researching to find ways to provide explanations of which mental processes are involved in reading and how to achieve the meaning of written discourse.

For this, I have tried to pick up the main features of the more representative reading models of the last three decades, highlighting as regards the foreign language reading, and how the performance of the different constitutive process models has been setting under the paradigm of interactivity in all of them.

2.7.5. Reading Promotion Yepes[30]

Yepes states that reading is not only decode the written text (through translations from L2 to L1, for example). Furthermore, many researchers in the teaching of reading in L2 agree that beyond the decoding of a text, reading is acquiring and reconstructing meaning. In other words, interact with the written word[31]. The reader reads predicting information and *sampling the text*, then he confirms his predictions.

However, Fumero[32] goes much further, in this definition of reading, saying that it should not remain only in the understanding of the facts, but must come to the evaluation of them.

Yepes (2001) also argues this process happens it is necessary to have organized knowledge, so that visual information (called text) can be joined to non-visual information (called cognitive structure). In fact, "the reader interacts with the text to create meaning as their mental processes work together at different levels" (Rumelhart, 1977). This seems to be very difficult, but it is enough to understand that more information, more knowledge and more prior knowledge, better understanding of what has been read (Yepes, 2001). Fraca[33] presents a definition of reading which can summarize all the above stated:

...a psycho – sociolinguistic process that consist in the integration to our social cognition of meanings made from the information provided by the text and the prior knowledge, through mechanisms of metacomprehension and recognition of writer's purposes, all framed in a specific context of communication.

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[30] Yépes, L. (2001): "La promoción de la lectura. Más allá de la palabra escrita", en *Candidus*, año 2, N° 17, Setiembre/Octubre 2001. P.30.

[31] Spiro, R. (1980): "Constructive process in prose comprehension and recall", in R. Spiro et al. (Eds.) Theoretical Issues in reading comprehension, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 245-278.

[32] Fumero, F. (2001): "La lectura y su concepción constructivista", en *Candidus*, Año2, N° 17. Septiembre-Octubre 2001. P.41.

[33] Fraca, L. (2001): "La comprensión textual como proceso psicolingüístico", en *Candidus*, Año 3, Nº 16, Julio 2001. P. 93.

Such approaches are crucial for the beginning level reading students in L2 because when reading teaching is focused as an interactive process through which seeks to reach a general understanding of the text, it is discarded the reading model word by word. The great difficulty for beginners is they have to know all the vocabulary and grammar contained in a text instead of using cognitive strategies. This approach is essential in our academic contexts in which the vast majority of students are "equipped" with a precarious competition in L2: they read word by word, are not able to enjoy reading and have low language skills as poor reading habits in L1 (Pine, 1992). For this reason, greater emphasis should be placed on developing reading comprehension skills in the classroom where the foreign language is taught (Mikulecky, 1983).

Among some cognitive strategies that take into consideration the reading comprehension skills in L2, are the following: the use of titles and illustrations to understand a passage, skimming, scanning, summarizing, and inferring the meaning of vocabulary and awareness of the reading process. (Barnett, 1988).

However, as the same author remarks about reading comprehension skills in L2, each reader brings to the reading process a unique set of past experiences, different mental and emotional processes, different levels of cognitive development, and varied interest in the topic. Therefore, not all teaching strategies are effective for all students.

The development of reading skills mentioned above can be promoted in the classroom through activities based on those skills. Mikulecky[34] states that a good training program should include four types of activities which are:

- Training on specific skills of reading skills.
- Practice with adapted materials to the level of knowledge of the student of L2 (intensive reading)
- Practice in fast reading

[34] Mikulecky, B. (1984): "Reading skills instruction" in On TESOL '84/ P. Larson et al. (Eds.), 275-276.

- Reading material selected by the student as an object of enjoyment (extensive reading).

That is to say, the whole practice of teaching reading has to be necessarily directed to reading comprehension in L2, in order to lead to those activities in which the individual can implement comprehension skills. Therefore, a reader can be autonomous and enjoy reading. To do that, however, this practice should be promoted inside and outside the classroom. Alvarez (1997) defines reading promotion as:

> "Social practice aimed to transform the ways to perceive, assess, imagine, and use reading (not only visual) as a cultural construction. That is to say, as a fully integrated device to the mastery of basic psycholinguistic skills (thinking, speaking, listening, reading and writing), with communicative and constructive intentions clearly recognizable. From this perspective, reading promotion seeks to establish a dynamic relationship (conscious, voluntary, permanent) with man and reading and writing as potentially liberating and edifying activity of a citizen, but it wants to make an all-round education, to promote individual and community" [35].

Reading, that promotes foreign language (especially English), has to be communicative and meaningful to each student, so that it can be enjoyed by them. In other words, the language teaching-learning process proposes placing the pedagogy, analyse the social purposes and use effective strategies to develop the learner's communicative competence which is defined by Hymes as:

> "… an ability to choose right verbal and non-verbal medium as well as to take into consideration the specific speaking situation" [36].

[35] Álvarez, D. (1997): "La promoción de la lectura como trabajo bibliotecario de carácter sociocultural", en *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología,* V.20 No. 1 Antioquia: Universidad de Antioquia Colombia p. 20.

[36] Hymes, D.H. (1966): "Two types of linguistic relativity." In W. Bright (ed) Sociolinguistics pp. 114-158. The Hague: Mouton.

In addition, the reading experience should be focused on the tastes and preferences of each individual, since learning of reading is a social process structured in the mind of each individual, depending on the restrictions of social and cultural types and individual differences of the students in the act of learning and/or teaching (Odreman, 1996). Several authors have noted that promoting reading should be the promotion of pleasure and enjoyment linked to it, which would lead to an assessment of it. For example, Zapata (1994) points out that the fundamental principle of all recreational reading (extensive reading) should be pleasant and enjoyed by the reader. Also, do not forget the playful perspective because otherwise the objectives of intensive and extensive reading will not be achieved. To put in another way, if there is enjoyment the development of this skill and its assessment by the students comes as well (Zapata, 1994).

Castillo and Muñoz (2001) also assert that most materials (such as comics, music, pets and sports magazines) may serve to initiate the reader into the true reading, in the development and consolidation of that reading attitude.

It is possible to see that all the authors agree that reading promotion is of great importance in teaching both L1 and L2. These theories are the essential basis of this work since they allow to give ideas and direction to design the reading promotion program to be applied in this research.

2.8. Theories about “Interactive skill-focused lesson”

Currently, the development of reading skills is considered an important component in teaching a second language (L2), but it was not always so. In the past, reading comprehension was understood as the simple encoding and decoding of texts related to the grammar/translation approach. Where it was promoted the "comprehension" almost mnemonic of isolated words and disjointed sentences that did not give a great contribution to reading comprehension. Because of this reason, reading comprehension was not considered an important skill that deserved a special focus or research. It changes from 1970 to 1980 when some studies were conducted in the field of psycholinguistics and

cognitive psychology in order to understand reading as a psycholinguistic process.

So, researchers like Goodman[37] to demonstrate the importance of reading describes the reader:

> "…as a user of language who, during the reading process, works at reconstructing the message encoded in the graphic display by the writer ... No matter how this process is fractionated or atomized linguistic and psycholinguistic questions are always involved. Understanding of the process must depend on understanding how language works and understanding of how language is used, that is how language and thought are interrelated. Psycholinguistics is the study of these relationships." (page. 11)

Other authors such as Smith (1973) state that:

> "Reading is not primarily a visual process. Two kinds of information are involved in reading, one that comes from in front of the eyeball, from the printed page, that I call visual information, and one that derives from behind the eyeball, from the brain, that I call nonvisual information. Nonvisual information is what we already know about reading, about language, and about the world in general." (p. 6)[38]

This shows that during the process of interaction the reader constructs the meaning of the text. It is an active process in which students integrate their prior knowledge with text information to construct new knowledge.

The definition of reading as a psycholinguistic process promoted research on the problems developed in this area, as well as several investigations, to name a few as Alderson[39] who attributes poor L2 reading to four possible causes (p.4) :

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[37] Goodman, K (1969): "Analysis of Oral Reading Miscues: Applied Psycholinguistics" *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn), pp. 9-30.

[38] Smith, F. (1973): "Psycholinguistics and Reading" in Macaulay, M. (1990): *Processing Varieties in English: An Examination of Oral and Written Speech across genres.* Canada: The University of British Columbia, p. 95.

[39] Alderson, J. C. (1984): *Reading in a Foreign Language: a reading problem or a language problem?* In *Reading in a Foreign Language,* (ed.) J.C. Alderson and A.H. Urquhart, New York London: Longman. Pp. 1-27.

a) Poor reading ability in the first language.
b) Inadequate knowledge of the foreign language.
c) Incorrect strategies for reading in the foreign language.
d) Reading strategies in the first language not being employed in the foreign language, due to inadequate knowledge of the foreign language.

The interest awakened in reading comprehension has led many researchers to develop techniques based on their studies to help in the improvement of reading skills. Among them is Janet King Swaffar who received an award for her book on techniques in language teaching[40], which presents certain techniques that help any adult reader, regardless of the text, method, language level or language to achieve the understanding of a text. In her research (1981), she describes the failure of passive reading model and indicates the following points of importance (p.176):

a) Active control of isolated structures and vocabulary does not guarantee reading comprehension.
b) The ability to translate the foreign language to the native language is not, in itself, a guarantee of reading comprehension.
c) The use of interrogative questions, the "who, what, when and where" questions, is not an efficient way to foster or check reading comprehension of a text because they isolate new bits of information and thereby remove them from their meaningful context.
d) To categorize the reading task as a "skill ", unrelated to listening, speaking and writing tasks, teaches and reinforces a distinction which may well be unproductive in a communicative setting.

2.9. Didactic approach of Mikulecky and Jeffries

The list would be endless to mention authors, approaches, theories and techniques since the study of reading comprehension is still in process, but my main interest was to find activities that would develop in students the necessary skills to improve their reading techniques in the

[40] Swaffar, J. (1991): *"Reading for Meaning: An Integrated Approach to Language Learning",* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

classroom, since many of them do not have the time to develop them outside it.

I found that the techniques and exercises developed by the researcher and author Beatrice Mikulecky could reach that goal. In the book "More Reading Power" (p.290) the exercises developed by Mikulecky and Jeffries are based on a "process approach" in which students are always encouraged to pay attention to their reading process. These exercises also encourage students to examine their reasoning process and promote their metalinguistic awareness, giving many opportunities to work in pairs or small groups. In her book "A Short Course in Teaching Reading" (p. 46) Mikulecky proposes the following *General Lesson Plan* to teach reading skills:

1. Focus on one reading/thinking skill at a time.
2. Explain the purpose of working on this skill, and convince the students of its importance in reading effectively.
3. Work on an example of using the skill with the whole class. Explain your thinking aloud as you do the exercise.
4. Assign students to work in pairs on an exercise where they practice using the same skill. Require them to explain their thinking to each other as they work.
5. Discuss students' answers with the whole class. Ask them to explain how they got their answers. Encourage polite disagreement, and require explanations of any differences in their answers.
6. In the same class, and also in the next few classes, assign individuals to work on more exercises that focus on the same skill with increasing complexity. Instruct students to work in pairs whenever feasible.
7. Ask individual students to complete an exercise using the skill to check their own ability and confidence in using it.
8. In future lessons, lead the students to apply the skill, as well as previously mastered skills, to a variety of texts.
9. Apply the new skill and practice previously mastered skills in whole-class intensive reading lessons.
10. Interaction and focus on thinking processes are the key features of these activities!

Mikulecky and Jeffries' books are designed for different levels of English. *Basic Reading Power* (from which most of exercises have been taken) is developed for 'basic-level' students, *Reading Power* for

'high-beginning' students and More Reading Power for 'low-intermediate' to 'intermediate' level students. They present interactive activities focused on developing skills and are grouped in reading for pleasure, reading comprehension skills (on which our research is focused), reasoning skills and activities to increase reading levels.

Taking into account that students who developed the activities had very little knowledge of English or didn't have it, it was necessary to encourage and train them to acquire vocabulary, for this purpose the course started with the development of "word web" activities, as recommended by Thornbury Scott in his book "How to teach vocabulary" (2002):

> "Learners need tasks and strategies to help them organize their mental lexicon by building networks of associations – the more the better."[41] (p. 30)

The reason to choose the "Interactive skill-focused lesson" of Beatrice Mikulecky is this provides the necessary opportunities to students to develop their reading skills in the classroom. According to Mikulecky[42] "reading skills by themselves do not produce an effective reading, but it is the approach used to teach these skills, promoting communicative and interactive environment to make students aware of the use of their skills, which will succeed in reading comprehension." (p. 44).

In the designing of the skill-focused lesson the author always recommends to choose what skills the student will develop and list them in a certain order:

[41] Thornbury, S. (2002): *"How to teach vocabulary"*, England: Pearson Longman.
[42] Mikulecky, B. (2011): A Short Course in Teaching Reading, 2nd ed., USA: Pearson Education.

1. Automatic decoding. Being able to recognize a word at a glance.
2. Previewing and predicting. Giving the text a quick once-over to be able to guess what is to come.
3. Specifying purpose. Knowing why a text is being read.
4. Identifying genre. Knowing the nature of the text in order to predict the form and content.
5. Questioning. Asking questions in an inner dialog with the author.
6. Scanning. Looking through a text very rapidly for specific information.
7. Recognizing topics. Finding out what the text is about.
8. Classification of ideas into main topics and details. Categorizing words and ideas on the basis of their relationships; distinguishing general and specific.
9. Locating topic sentences. Identifying the general statement in a paragraph.
10. Stating the main idea (or thesis) of a sentence, paragraph or passage. Knowing what the author's point is about the topic.
11. Recognizing patterns of relationships. Identifying the relationships between ideas; the overall structure of the text.
12. Identifying and using words that signal the patterns of relationships between ideas. Being able to see connections between ideas by the use of words such as first, then, later.
13. Inferring the main idea, using patterns and other clues.
14. Recognizing and using pronouns, referents, and other lexical equivalents as clues to cohesion.
15. Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context. Using such clues as knowledge of word parts, syntax, and relationship patterns.
16. Skimming. Quickly getting the gist or overview of a passage or book.
17. Paraphrasing. Re-stating texts in the reader's own words in order to monitor one's own comprehension.
18. Summarizing. Shortening material by retaining and re-stating main ideas and leaving out details.
19. Drawing conclusions. Putting together information from parts of the text and inducing new or additional ideas.
20. Drawing inferences and using evidence. Using evidence in the text to know things that are unstated.
21. Visualizing. Picturing, or actually drawing a picture or diagram, of what is described in the text.

22. Reading critically. Judging the accuracy of a passage with respect to what the reader already knows; distinguishing fact from opinion.
23. Reading faster. Reading fast enough to allow the brain to process the input as ideas rather than single words.
24. Adjusting reading rate according to materials and purpose. Being able to choose the speed and strategies needed for the level of comprehension desired by the reader. (Mikulecky, 1990)

Then the teacher has to design a sequence of exercises that increase their complexity. The ability chosen should be the only challenge in the activity to avoid distraction or confusion on the pupil. It is important that students have opportunities to practice orally, exchanging ideas and talking about making sense of a text to gain confidence in reading.

Mikulecky recommends, although it seems counterproductive, beginning-level students should be allowed to use their L1[43] to discuss and use reading skills in order to facilitate the cognitive process. It is also recommended that students keep a record of their achievements (graphics, list of books read and tables) to promote their awareness as readers of English. It is important to ask students about their achievements, skills used and ask them explanations about these achievements. This will strengthen his knowledge of the skill and its role in reading.

[43] Mikulecky, B. (2011): A Short Course in Teaching Reading, 2nd ed., USA: Pearson Education.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

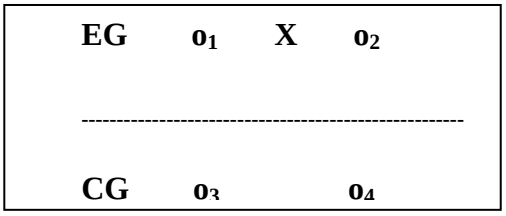
3.1. Investigation Type

The type of this investigation is quantitative. Therefore, the following study is considered as a quasi-experimental, transactional, prospective investigation. Quasi-experimental because it intends to observe the resulting effects of manipulation of the independent variable over the dependent one. In order to do this, an input test and output test to evaluate both groups. Transactional, since the instruments will be applied in a single moment. Prospective, as the research process is oriented in future[44].

3.2. Design of the Investigation

The design of this investigation is quasi-experimental. And for this design two groups will be used: a control group and an experimental group with moments: Moment 1 (before time) and Moment 2 (after time), which representation according to Hernandez, R., Fernandez, C. and Baptista, P. (1991) is:

[44] Kerlinger, F. y Lee, H. (2002): *Investigación del comportamiento*, 4ta ed. México: Mc Graw Hill.



Where:

EG = Experimental group
CG = Control group
X = stimulus ("Interactive skill-focused lesson")
o_1 , o_3 = Observation before manipulation.
o_2 , o_4 = Observation after manipulation.

The level of this research is descriptive, correlational.

3.3. Population and study sample

3.3.1. Universe

The universe is composed of all the students from different languages in the PIE (Programa de Idiomas Extranjeros) from the EPG – UNMSM (Escuela de Posgrado de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos).

3.3.2. Population

The population consists of 92 students attending English language classes twice a week in the PIE with a total of 32 pedagogical hours per module.

3.3.3. Samples

The study sample constitutes 40% of the population A non-probabilistic and intentional sample was chosen, because it does not depend on the probability but on causes related to the characteristics of the research. Therefore, the sample is determined as follows:

- Control group (CG) considered 18 students.
- Experimental group (EG) with 19 students.

3.3.4. Individual

Each student that belongs to the Control group and Experimental group and provides information for the research, attending English language classes in the PIE of the EPG – UNMSM (Escuela de Posgrado de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos). Their age ranges from 35 to 60. The group included masculine students and feminine students at the beginner level, belonging to different careers.

3.4. Variables

Independent Variable: "Interactive skill-focused lessons"
Dependent Variable: L2 reading comprehension

3.5. Techniques and instruments for gathering of data

The techniques and instruments used to gather data in this research are mainly tests, quizzes, pictures and videos developed in different activities in the classroom with different strategies. These are explained in detail in the following sections and shown in a time table in Appendix H

3.5.1. Strategies used in the "Interactive skill-focused lesson"

The strategies used in the interactive lessons, applied only to the experimental group, were divided into two groups: recognition strategies and inference strategies, following Mikulecky's didactic proposal.

3.5.1.1. Recognition strategies

Word web

According to Scott Thornbury[45], "Learners need to be actively involved in the learning of words". In his book, the author presents several techniques that can be used to

[45] Thornbury, S. (2002): *"How to teach vocabulary"*, England: Pearson Longman.

increase students' vocabulary. To make more effective this acquisition he recommends having students personalize the new words that promotes greater student engagement in learning:

> "Personalisation is simply the process of using the new word in a context that is real for the learner personally. ..., that 'memory of new words can be reinforced if they are used to express personally relevant meanings" (Thornbury, 2002, p.88).

Among the activities mentioned is the "association network" also known as "word web". In this activity, learners are asked to make an "association network" centred on the new word. That is, they connect the new word to other words that are associated with it, for example if you put the word "butterfly" in the middle of a board, they should add words related to the animal, so, the student draws branches with the words: "insect", "legs", "fly", "crawl", etc. or, "beautiful", "colourful", "light", etc.

This strategy was used in Module I with the intention of teaching learners to acquire and expand their vocabulary. First, they were given certain words to search and create "word webs" (See Appendix A, Activity 1). They handed in sheets of paper to be corrected individually. In the second step, they were given three words and asked to bring pieces of paper with words connected to those given. Then, in the classroom, the students attached their words on the board around the words previously given, doing a collaborative task, some of the students took photos of the final work to keep record of new words *(*See pictures and video link in Appendix A, Activity 2). Finally, in Module II the "word web" is practiced again but in a different way. Students were grouped in 4 or 5 people. Then, they were given a marker of a different colour for each group and wrote on the blackboard words connected with new words dictated at the moment. Students had to use a dictionary and work collaboratively without repeating the words wrote by another group. This last phase was more competitive and showed that students were

more interested in participating in the activity and took notes and pictures of the new words found (See pictures and video link in Appendix B, activity 4).

Scanning for specific words and numbers

In this activity, Mikulecky's proposal has been considered to develop reading ability known as "scanning" in order to increase the speed of students' reading. According to the author:

"Scanning is a high-speed reading skill that is used for locating specific information. … Scanning is important and useful for all readers because it is another skill that helps students develop reading fluency. When students practice scanning, they learn that they can obtain information from a text without reading every word. In addition, they develop the ability to visualize words in English as they scan for them. And they discover that they can use scanning as a strategy for speeding up their sampling of any text, even a text that they cannot fully comprehend.

Scanning cannot be learned in a single lesson. Students need repeated practice in order to improve their ability to move their eyes rapidly and feel comfortable in skipping over large amounts of text. Students must understand that scanning is an extremely high speed reading activity and that they should not try to read an entire passage carefully. The teacher should impose strict time limits for completing a scanning exercise in order to keep students working at top speed. Some teachers have found that if they make scanning exercises into competitions, either between two groups of students or between everyone in the class, the students are more willing to risk skipping over many words in the text to find the information required. The success of this use of competition will depend, of course, on the background of students and their familiarity with (and acceptance of) competitive activities." (Mikulecky, 2011, p.77 -78).

Two activities were developed, following the author's indications, to promote "scanning", both taken from Mikulecky's book *"Basic Reading Power"* (p.42).

The first was applied in Module I, the aim is to find a word in a row, of similar written words, one that is identical to the main word in bold. This activity (See Appendix A, Activity 3) was developed in about 2 minutes, asking students to work as fast as possible. The second activity was applied in Module III and belongs to the book "Reading Power" (p. 36, 37) by the same author. In this activity (See Appendix C, Activity 8) called "Scanning an Index", the student looks for and write down the page numbers where the information requested is, while another student controls the starting and ending time of the activity that is written on the same answer sheet.

Scanning for specific information

In these activities "scanning" is based on "realia" or real life material for specific information to answer certain questions. According to the author, the most exciting classes are those that the teacher designs, since they can be adapted to the interests and ages of the students, here she mentions the use of real materials or "realia" such as restaurant menus, television schedules, articles of *Time* and *Newsweek*, etc. ... In the first activity, developed in Module II, (See Appendix B, Activity 5) (*Basic Reading Power*, pgs.50 -51) the student reads the questions and quickly locates the data in a newspaper classified section, then he/she talks with his/her partner about preferences or opinions regarding the items in the newspaper. In the second activity, developed in Module III, (See Appendix C, Activity 9) (Reading Power, p. 43) the student scans the news about the consequences of a natural disaster that appears in The New York Times and answers questions. In this activity each student is controlled in his reading speed by his/her partner who records the starting and ending time of the activity in order to measure his/her reading speed.

Lesson Plan 2: Experimental Group

Topic: Vacation Activities
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:
- Use Present Progressive (affirmative) to describe vacation activities.
- Describe weather, seasons, and holiday activities.
- Improve Ss' reading speed in a text in a newspaper to enhance literal level.

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4a – pages 49 – 51) / Interactive Whiteboard / sheet of reading comprehension activity
Vocabulary focus: The weather; seasons; seasonal activities
Structures: Present Progressive (affirmative)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Talk about the weather at the moment, describe the weather in our country. Elicit from the students some answers.	**5'**	Two pictures of places in our country.
Ask Ss to open their book on page 49. Drill the sentences and match the pictures to the sentences. Compare answers. Check answers. Ask Ss to name some cities in our country with similar weather conditions.	**6'**	Text book and projector.
Ask Ss to complete the "Over To You" section. Check answers in pairs. Ask Ss complete the weather description of their city.	**5'**	Text book
Continue activity on next page. Ask Ss to match the vacation activities to the pictures. Check answers. Repeat the sentences.	**4'**	Text book and projector.

Present the P*resent Progressive* affirmative structure. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using Present Progressive and vacation activities	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive. Text book page 50. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop pronunciation practice. Ss complete –ing forms of the verbs and practice the pronunciation in pairs.	**4'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop listening activity. Check answers. Ask Ss to write complete sentences with the phrases.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop reading activity. Elicit answers to the questions in the book. Check answers. Underline in the postcards the Simple Present sentences and transform them to Present Progressive form.	**8'**	Textbook page 51 and projector.
Develop Speaking and writing activity in pairs. Ask Ss to write sentences about Puebla using the phrases given. Check answers in groups of four.	**6'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.
Writing activity assigned as homework. Present the model on the screen, discuss with the Ss many possible answers.	**2'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.
Interactive skill-focused activities Hand out the sheet of scanning activity about Typhoon Damage. Ask Ss to write the starting time of the activity and read the questions underlining the key words. Then they have to answer the questions. Ask them to write down the finishing time and calculate the minutes taken in the activity. Check answers. Ask Ss to look for new words in the article. Ask students their opinions about the article, where they can find it (newspaper or magazine). Ask Ss compare the weather condition in the article with the one in their country.	**15'**	Activity Sheet: Practice 3b (**Bibliography: Activity 9**)
Follow up activity: Ask Ss to bring similar news collected from internet or a newspaper to next class.		

3.5.1.2. Inferential strategies

Make inferences from pictures

This activity aims to develop in students the ability to make inferences from texts to read later. Since the students are from a very basic level, the best way, according to the author, to introduce them to this skill is using pictures to answer certain questions, deducing their answers through observation of the situation presented in them.

"What is an inference? It's a way of guessing. When you make an inference, you have some information and you guess more things from that information. You often make inferences in your life. You can make inferences on the bus, for example. You hear two people talking. You do not know what they are talking about. But after you listen a little, you can guess what they are talking about. Making inferences is important when you read. It can often help you understand what you are reading. Good readers, in fact, make inferences all the time."[46]

The first inference activity from pictures (See Appendix B, Activity 6) is taken from the book "Basic Reading Power" (p.57) but other pictures were used. It was developed in Module II, students observed the pictures presented, answered the questions, and then compared their answers with their peers. The second activity (See Appendix C, Activity 10) of this type was in Module III and is taken from the book Instant Lessons 1 Elementary[47]. It asks students to work in pairs, in the first event they have to observe a picture and read a text that is supposed to describe the picture but it contains some errors in the description, they should find out the mistakes and correct them. In the second part of the activity, the students should answer the questions

[46] Mikulecky, B. and Jeffries, L. (1997): *Basic Reading Power*. USA: Addison Wesley Longman, p. 56.
[47] Howard-Williams, D. (2001) "Instant Lessons 1", England: Pearson, p. 15.

given, inferring the answers as they see in the photograph. Then, the answers of all groups are compared.

Lesson Plan 4: Experimental Group

Topic: Shopping
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:
- Use Present Progressive (negative and question) to talk about actions happening now.
- Describe where they are, what they are doing and what they are wearing.
- Improve Ss' reading comprehension in a text making inferences to enhance inferential level.

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4b – pages 52 – 54) / Interactive Whiteboard / sheet of reading comprehension activity.
Vocabulary focus: clothes
Structures: Present Progressive (negative and question)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Ask students what their favorite weather or season is. What they like wearing in that season. Show the realia.	**5'**	Some realia like gloves, a scarf, a hat, etc.
Ask Ss to open their book on page 52. Point the pictures, make the pronunciation with the words of the clothes and then ask Ss to say the name of the clothes without showing the words.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Ask Ss to answer the questions "What do you usually wear at… a party / at work / at home / at a hot sunny day / when it's raining". Pair work, for 4' and then ask them to report the information of their partners.	**7'**	Textbook

Develop reading activity. Answer questions in the book. Read again and complete sentences. Check answers	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the P*resent Progressive* negative structure and questions. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using the Present Progressive and clothes.	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive (negative and questions). Textbook page 53. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop activity 5. Pair work describing the people on the pictures.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Complete the spaces in the text. Compare answers in pairs.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the Simple Present and the Present Progressive. Contrast uses. Ask Ss to complete the exercises. Check answers. Ask them to write similar sentences (4 for each use). Ask them to read or hand over the sheets.	**8'**	Textbook page 53 and projector, Ss' notebooks and pens. Powerpoint contrasting the Present Simple and the Present Progressive.
Develop Speaking and writing activity. Ask Ss to describe famous people on pictures, what they are doing and wearing.	**6'**	Pictures of famous people.
Interactive skill-focused activities Hand out the sheet of active strategy to make inferences. Ask Ss to work in pairs looking at the picture for one minute. Then ask them to find the mistakes in the description. Check the answers with the Ss. Ask them to read the questions and give possible answers. Then, they have to compare their answers to those from other students. Elicit some possible answers.	**12'**	Activity Sheet: Practice 4b (**Bibliography: Activity 10**)
Follow up activity: Ask Ss to bring pictures similar to that presented in the activity sheet. Present in class what their inferences are.	**2'**	Pictures from magazines or internet.

Deducing the topic

According to Mikulecky (2011), who is based on recent research, prior knowledge affects a student's ability to develop reading skills in L2.

First language literacy fosters thinking process, metalinguistic processes and brain structures that facilitate reading comprehension in that language, but some of these processes can be unhelpful or even counterproductive for comprehending English. This is true of all aspects of reading an English text: orthography, lexicon, and textual structure.

In some languages, a single passage may include many topics. Speakers of those languages are accustomed to listening to or reading materials with multiple topics, and they can make sense of them in that language. English discourse, however, is topic-centred. That is, whether it is a sentence, a paragraph, or an essay, the text in English focuses on a single main topic. Consequently, comprehension in English requires the reader or listener to identify the topic of the discourse and to determine the specific idea that the writer (or speaker) expresses about that single topic by linking the writer's details that topic."[48]

As mentioned before by the author, identifying the main topic of paragraphs and texts is crucial in reading comprehension. For her the definition of topic is:

"What is a "topic"? A topic tells what something is about. Good readers always look for the topic when they read. Then they can understand and remember what they read. There are two kinds of topics. One kind of topic is the name of a group of things. Another kind of topic is the name of a thing with many parts." (Basic Reading Power, p. 64).[49]

[48] Mikulecky, B. (2011): *A Short Course in Teaching Reading*, 2nd ed., USA: Pearson Education, p. 138.
[49] Mikulecky, B. and Jeffries, L. (1997): *Basic Reading Power*. USA: Addison Wesley Longman, p. 64.

However, to introduce students to the recognition of the main topic, moreover when they are from a basic level, is not an easy task. That's why they should be trained in this skill progressively. So, in the first practice (See Appendix B, Activity 7) taken from *Basic Reading Power* with different figures (p.64), applied in Module II, the student is asked to write the topic of the group of figures they see, it is a practice seemingly simple but leads the student to think and evoke the knowledge learned.

In the second practice (5b) (5c) (See Appendix C, activities 11 and 12) (*Reading Power*, p. 80) in Module III, paragraphs are presented and response options for students to choose the answer that seems most appropriate. In this activity, students are asked to choose the right topic of the paragraph.

Identify words in a text

In this activity presented in Module III (See Appendix C, Activity 13) a short text with words in bold is presented to the students, they are asked to separate them into two columns, adjectives and nouns. Then they have to find the antonyms of some words and finally answer some questions about the text. The objective of this activity is to make students aware that there are differences in the types of words that occupy a specific place in the grammatical construction; this can be reinforced after the activity making students questions such as: *What is kiss?* A noun, a verb or an adjective. *How do you know*? You can mention that although they seem to be the same word one is an adjective and the other is a verb, giving at the same time examples in a context. Then, they are asked to connect some words with their antonyms without the use of a dictionary. The activity ends with literal level questions. As post activity, students are asked to write a paragraph describing in a similar way the younger sister of the character, using some words that are in the text.

"Although Nation and others pointed out that students develop reading fluency most readily when their reading materials contain only a very few unknown words, it is a fact of life that most ESL/EFL students find themselves in situations that require them to read materials with many more unfamiliar words. They are responsible for learning the material, and they need to know how to deal with unknown words that they encounter. [50]"

3.5.2. Methods of investigation

In general, the quantitative method was used, according to Hernandez[51], researchers "expect to establish possible effects of a cause that is manipulated".

In the research, several methods will be used, which allow us to obtain information from the problem planning, its objectives, variables, hypotheses, results; in order to analyse them, test the hypothesis, confirm the hypothesis, and reach final conclusions. Some indirect methods are suggested according to the needs of the research conducted:

3.5.2.1. Induction

It is a mode of reasoning that consists in deducing from particular facts a general conclusion. It analyses the proportion of a whole so it goes from the particular to the general.

3.5.2.2. Deduction

It is a mode of reasoning that leads to conclusions going from the general, accepted as valid, to particular applications. This method starts with an analysis of the principles, theories, rules and principles of universal

[50] Mikulecky, B. (2011): A Short Course in Teaching Reading, 2nd ed., USA: Pearson Education, p. 118.
[51] Hernández, R., Fernández, C. y Baptista, P. (1991): Metodología de la investigación, 5ta ed. México: Mc Graw Hill.

application and, by deduction reasoning and assumptions, among others, its validity is checked for application in particular.

3.5.2.3. Comparative method

This method will collect information from the quasi-experimental and control group. It will continue a process of systematic comparison of case analysis to be applied to verify the hypothesis.

3.5.2.4. Analytical method

This method will analyse the elements of research and revise orderly each separately, that is to say, the independent variable, the dependent variable, the results of each variable across their dimensions and indicators will be analysed.

3.5.2.5. Synthetic method

This method will relate the seemingly isolated facts of the investigation and formulate a theory that unifies the elements.

3.5.3 Techniques

3.5.3.1 Direct observation

As the research model is a quasi-experimental design, it considers the field technique which consists of direct observation of the research study. Thus, a checklist has been developed in order to allow the student’s attitudes during the application of the "Interactive skill-focused lesson".

3.5.3.2 Test

Data collection for the carrying out of the research will be conducted through instruments called *pre-test* and *post-test* (*See Appendix D*) for students. Below the details:

- *Pre-test* or prior measurement of experimental treatment, in both groups.
- *Process Test* (output of each training session)
- *Post-test* or measurement after experimental treatment, in both groups, which will enable to check the level of reading comprehension achieved by students in the experimental group.

CHAPTER IV:
DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Current reading comprehension research confirms that interacting and talking about text in particular ways is essential[52]. It is also proven that students must read faster and with more fluency if they wish to read effectively[53],[54]. From the previous said, we can deduce that students who interact and are interested in reading will do it better than those who are passive and lack the desire of developing reading activities. As indicated in Chapter I, the main purpose of this study was to get a better performance of the students in the classroom with "interactive skill-focused lessons" based in Mickulecky's work, rising students' interest through activities focused on one skill at a time.

4.1. Methods of Data Analysis

4.1.1. Descriptive Analysis

For the analysis and statistical treatment of the results, the following aspects were taken into account:

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[52] Casanave, C. (1988): "Adding communication to the ESL reading class", Tesol Newsletter, Vol. XII No. 3.

[53] Eskey, D (1986): "Theoretical foundations" in *Teaching Second Language reading for academic purposes*, Dubin and Eskey (Eds.), Reading Mass: Addison-Wesley.

[54] Anderson, N. (2005): "Fluency in L2 Reading and Speaking", *TESOL* 2005 colloquium.

a) Measures of central tendency
   - Arithmetic mean: which is the sum of a set of scores divided by the total number of numbers in the score.
   - Mode: it is the score that occurs most frequently in a distribution of data.
   - Median: the middle value in a frequency distribution, below and above which lie values with equal total frequencies.

b) Measures of dispersion
   - Variance: it is the high standard deviation squared and symbolizes S^2. It is the sum of the deviations of the measures squared, divided by the number of observations minus one.
   - Standard or typical deviation: it is the average deviation of the scores from the mean that is expressed in the original units of measurement of the distribution.

4.1.2. Analysis related to the hypothesis

For the testing of hypothesis, the *Student's T-test* is used, to verify significant differences between the experimental group and the control group.

The *T-test* is a statistical test that is used to determine if there is a significant difference between the mean or average scores in two groups.

The statistical hypothesis for this work consists in hypothesis of difference between two groups, where the research hypothesis proposes that both experimental and control group differ significantly from each other and the null hypothesis proposes the groups do not differ significantly.

4.2. Data Analysis

The analysis, interpretations and the findings of the study are given in the following sections, where tables with the information collected are presented and the hypothesis testing is developed to prove the validity of the null hypothesis (Ho) or the alternative hypothesis (Ha). This analysis

starts with the General hypothesis and is followed by the analyses of the Specific hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4, each one leads to a conclusion that supports the purpose of this research.

4.2.1. General Hypothesis Analysis

Ha: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Ho: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons does not improve reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Decision Rule Based on P-value

1. If $p > 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis (Ho)
2. If $p < 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (Ho), and accept Ha.

In testing the research hypothesis the *T-test* technique was applied to compare the means of both the experimental and control group. For this purpose, the means obtained in the pre-test and post-test were compared. In the pre-test, it was intended to observe that there are no significant differences between the experimental and control group. While in the post test, it was intended to find significant differences between the groups.

Table 1: Comparison of means in the L2 pre – reading comprehension test between EG and CG

Statics of group					
	Groups	N	Mean	Typical Deviation.	Typical mean error
READING COMPREHENSION Pre Test	Experimental group	18	7,72	1,602	,378
	Control group	19	9,05	1,079	,247

In **Table 1** the results of the pre-test from both groups is analysed, which enter the treatment with relative different means, taking into account that the control group has one point of

advantage to the experimental group. However, as the difference is minimal we can infer that both groups are admitted in the same conditions, and it is expected that in the output test more significant changes would be recorded, according to the treatment group: Experimental Group.

Table 2: **Hypothesis testing regarding the L2 pre – reading comprehension test between EG and CG**

Independent Samples test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*T-test* for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
READING COMPREHENSION Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	6,371	,016	-2,978	35	,005	-1,330	,447	-2,237	-,424
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,947	29,590	,006	-,1,330	,451	-2,253	-,408

Table 1 clearly shows that the mean of the control group (9.05) is slightly higher than the mean of the experimental group (7.72) in the pre-test of reading comprehension in L2 of postgraduate students of San Marcos.

Also **Table 2** shows that p = 0.006 is greater than alpha (p> α), which means that before treatment there was no significant difference in the mean between the experimental and control group.

Table 3: **Comparison of means in the Post-test of reading comprehension EG and CG**

Group Statistics					
	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
READING COMPREHENSION Post-test	Experimental Group	18	16,94	1,211	,286
	Control Group	19	11,35	1,079	,247

In **Table 3**, the means from both groups, after the treatment, are analysed in the post–test (reading comprehension test), and it is observed that after the treatment the EG registers a higher mean (16,94) than the CG (11,35). This means that the EG improves its results about reading comprehension due to the treatment used in the "Interactive skill-focused lesson". While, the CG only improves in one point and a half from the mean this group started.

Table 4: **Hypothesis testing for the Post-test of L2 reading comprehension in the EG and CG**

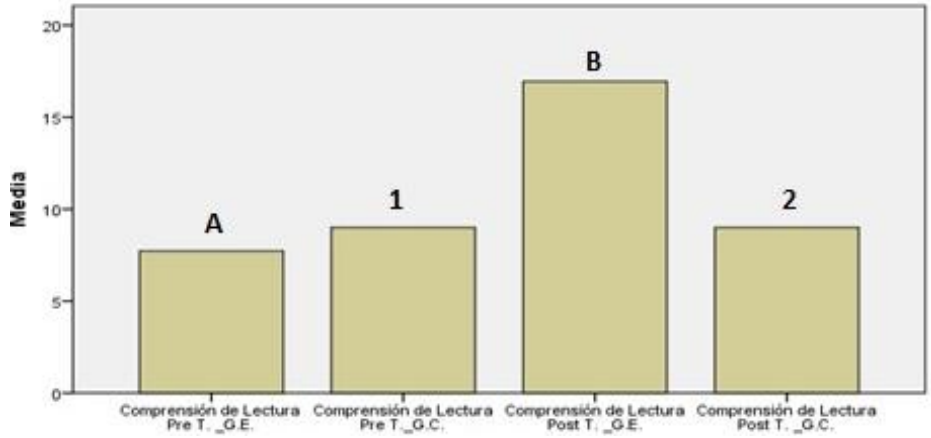
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*T-test* for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Experimental and Control groups	Equal variances assumed	,516	,477	20,953	35	,000	7,892	,377	7,127	8,656
	Equal variances not assumed			20,886	34,010	,000	7,892	,378	7,124	8,660

To the same extent, **Table 4** shows p = 0.000 less than alpha ($p<\alpha$). Which means that the treatment applied to the EG was very positive to improve reading comprehension in L2, but not in the CG that received no treatment.

Confronted with the evidence presented before, the decision to reject the null hypothesis and accept the general research hypothesis was taken, which states:

The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Chart 1. Comparative results between the pre–test and the post–test of L2 reading comprehension in the EG (pre-test: A, post-test: B) and CG (pre-test: 1, post-test: 2)[55]



4.2.2. Specific Hypotheses Analysis

4.2.2.1. Specific hypothesis 1

Ha: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the literal level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

55

Comprensión de lectura = Reading comprehension
Pre T. = pre – test
Post T. = post – test
G.E. = Experimental group
G.C. = Control group

Ho: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons does not improve the literal level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Decision Rule Based on P-value

1. If $p > 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis (Ho)
2. If $p < 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (Ho). And accept Ha.

Table 5: Comparing the means in the post test with regard to the literal level between EG and CG

Group Statistics					
	Literal Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post Test	EG	18	8,72	1,406	,331
	CG	19	6,16	,958	,220

In **Table 5**, we can observe that the means in the post test present significant differences with respect to the literal level in both groups and much higher on favour of the EG which got (8,72) while the CG got (6,16).

Chart 2: Results of the means in the Post-test over the literal level in L2 reading comprehension in both groups EG and CG

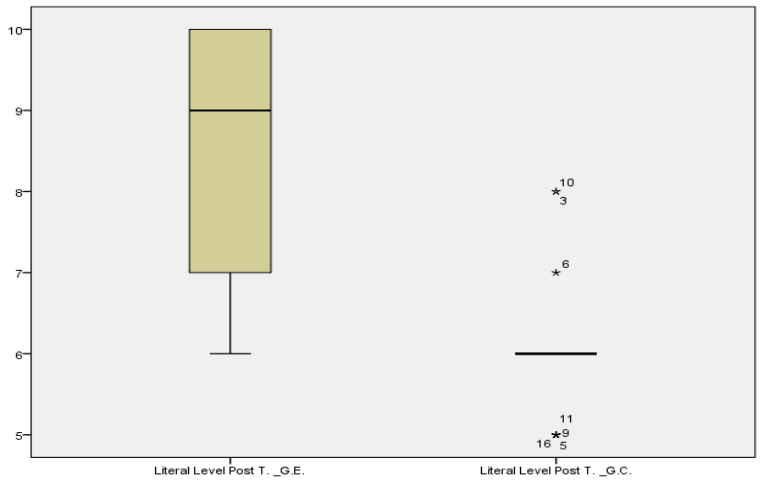


Table 6: Hypothesis respect to the post-test with regard to the literal level between the EG and the CG.

Independent samples test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*T-test* for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Experimental and Control Groups	Equal variances assumed	6,978	,012	6,514	35	,000	2,564	,394	1,765	3,364
	Equal variances not assumed			6,448	29,801	,000	2,564	,398	1,752	3,377

Table 6 shows p = 0.000 less than alpha (p<α), which means that the treatment was positive to improve the literal level of L2 reading comprehension of postgraduate students of San Marcos University. This is demonstrated because the EG received the treatment, but the CG did not. Thus, the EG got the highest arithmetic mean.

Confronted with the evidence presented before, the decision to reject the null hypothesis and accept the general research hypothesis was taken:

The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the literal level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

4.2.2.2 Specific Hypothesis 2

Ha: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Ho: The application of interactive skill-focused lessons does not improve the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

Decision Rule Based on P-value

1. If $p > 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis (Ho)
2. If $p < 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (Ho). And accept Ha.

Table 7: Comparison of means in the post-test on the inferential level between EG and CG.

Group Statistics					
Reading Comprehension Inferential Level		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post Test	EG	18	8,22	1,215	,286
	CG	19	2,89	,994	,228

In **Table 7**, we can observe that the means in the post test presents significant differences with respect to the inferential level in both groups and much higher in favour of the EG which got (8,22) while the CG got(2,89).

Chart 3: Results of means in the Post-test in the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension of the EG and CG.

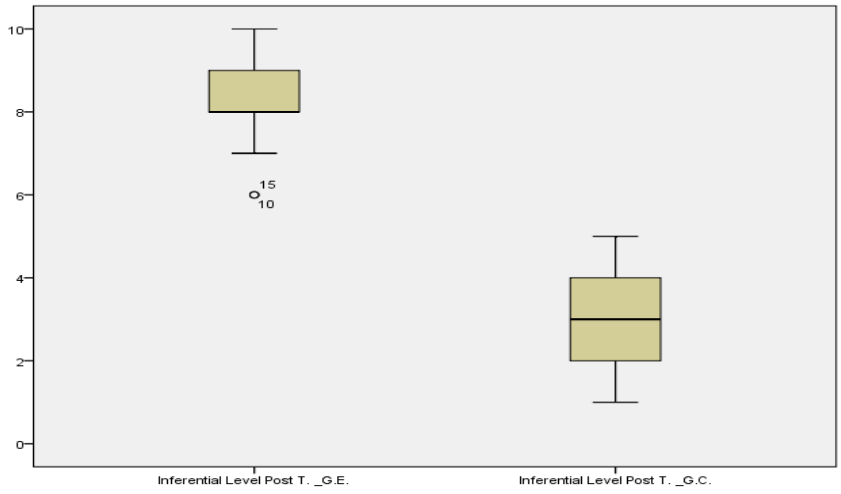


Table 8: Hypothesis respect to the post-test with regard to the inferential level between the EG and the CG.

Independent samples test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*T-test* for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Experimental and Control Groups	Equal variances assumed	,612	,439	14,630	35	,000	5,327	,364	4,588	6,067
	Equal variances not assumed			14,549	32,898	,000	5,327	,366	4,582	6,073

Table 8 shows that $p = 0.000$ is smaller than alpha ($p < \alpha$), which means the treatment was positive to improve the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in postgraduate students of San Marcos University. This is inferred because the EG was the one who received the treatment and not the CG, and so the EG presents the highest arithmetic mean.

Due to the evidence presented above, the decision to reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis was taken, which states that:

The application of interactive skill-focused lessons improves the inferential level of L2 reading comprehension in UNMSM postgraduate students.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study, as indicated in the preceding chapters, was to prove the effectiveness of "Interactive skill-focused lessons" in the improvement of reading comprehension in second language acquisition in a group of postgraduate students in the classroom. The importance of such an issue is of great significance since these students' specific purpose is to pass the Proficiency Exam at the end of the eight modules of their English course in order to be able to support their theses. In addition to this, the intention of the course is to provide students with a useful tool to do their researches with the possibility of getting updated information.

In the theoretical framework, a research and analysis of the topic was carried out and we can conclude that there is not even a specific research on developing reading skills on postgraduate students in the classroom as an L2. There are theoretical and empirical studies about reading skills and strategies that can improve them through different activities which involve the student's active participation. Accordingly, we find that the investigative trends tend to change from one researcher to another, but most of them agree that the most important aspect is that students construct meaning in the reading process (e.g., Alliende and Condemarín 1986 and Yepes 2001), and the best way to do that is connecting students' personal experiences with the text (e.g., Pinzas 1993 and Fraca 2001). This defines reading as an interactive process which can be improved in the classroom through appropriate activities that foster the development of reading skills (e.g., Mikulecky 1983).

Based on the results of this study after applying the "Interactive skill-focused lessons" in the classroom, as recommended by Mikulecky[56], we can state that:

1. The use of "Interactive skill-focused lessons" in the classroom, according to Mikulecky, has a very positive effect in the improvement of reading comprehension at both the literal and the inferential level. This is depicted in the statistical tables of Literal level (Table 6) and Inferential level (Table 8).

2. The enthusiasm that the teacher fosters in each lesson plays an important role in the students to promote their interest and participation. This was an enabling factor observed in the students of the control group who were more willing to participate in the activities. These activities also gave the students enjoyable moments which contributed to develop a friendly environment. This was very important for them since they came to the classes after their stressing work. It also allowed the students to build a better relationship with their classmates, which also shown an influence in the improvement of their reading comprehension.

3. The use of colourful materials (e.g., Activity 2 and 4), pictures (e.g., Activity 6 and 7) or topics of the texts connected with their personal interests (e.g., Activity 9 and 12) engage the students in the reading process.

4. Reducing the *affective filter* is another important aspect to take into consideration. As it is stated by Krashen[57] in his fifth hypothesis, if students are anxious, "on the defensive", or not motivated, they may understand the input, but the input will not enter the "language acquisition device". His recommendation to reduce that "affective filter", composed by three principal variables (motivation, self-

[56] Mikulecky, B. (2011): *A Short Course in Teaching Reading*, 2nd ed., USA: Pearson Education, p. 41.
[57] Krashen, S. (1988): *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, Prentice-Hall International.

confidence and anxiety), is to make the students feel comfortable during all the process of the class by providing them with meaningful tasks, highlighting their achievements at every moment, reducing their anxiety through interactive and collaborative tasks during the process in “Interactive skill-focused lessons” so as to help them learn in a better way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the conclusions mentioned above, the following recommendations may be provided in order to develop and improve students' reading comprehension skills with the purpose of passing successfully the English Proficiency Exam in the Postgraduate School of San Marcos University:

1. The students should continue with the "Interactive skill-focused lessons" in the future modules. In order to do this, the teachers should select or design a sequence of exercises that begins with simple tasks and gradually increases in complexity[58] until the students master a skill before moving to another task as it is also recommended by Mikulecky (2011) in her course.

2. According to Salataci and Akyel's research[59], the process of reading strategies transfer is bi-directional and interactive, this means that students can transfer some abilities in L1 reading comprehension to the L2, which can be an advantage for the students. For this reason, the recommendation is to apply a test to the students before starting the course, in order to know their reading comprehension level in their L1, to find their weak points, and to design tasks with the purpose of reinforcing those in the L2.

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[58] Tierney, C. and Cunningham, J. (1984): "Research on Teaching Reading Comprehension", in *Handbook of Reading Research* (Ed.), Pearson D. New York: Longman.

[59] Salataci, R. and Akyel, A. (2002): "Possible Effects of Strategy Instruction on L1 and L2 Reading",en *Reading in a Foreign Language* Vol. 14 No.1.

3. It is crucial to put great emphasis in the first modules of teaching, providing students with all the opportunities to work with the language with a specific objective in each class, without forgetting the repeated practice as recommended by Mikulecky.

4. Due to the effectiveness of the "Interactive skill-focused lessons" at the literal level, they should be used to introduce students to the vocabulary, expressions and context connected with their careers. Precisely, the purpose of their English course is for them to use the skills acquired so as to develop research in their areas.

5. Since the "Interactive skill-focused lessons" were also effective at the inferential level, students should be taught to infer the main idea of the text and to predict future outcomes from this. This should also be very helpful for them in their researches.

6. Teachers should start their classes exploring how much their students remember about their last activity and ask them in which situations the ability acquired can be applied; for example, predicting the topic of a text can help to connect some vocabulary related to the topic.

7. Use authentic texts related to the careers of students in order to familiarize them with the appropriate vocabulary and expressions so as to let them apply these to other skills like speaking or writing.

8. Raise student's awareness of the importance of developing reading habits in L2 outside the classroom, providing, as far as possible, readings and exercises that enable the development of the skills acquired.

To conclude, I think that the application of "Interactive skill-focused lessons" is the most suitable strategy to improve reading comprehension for the specific situation presented in this research.

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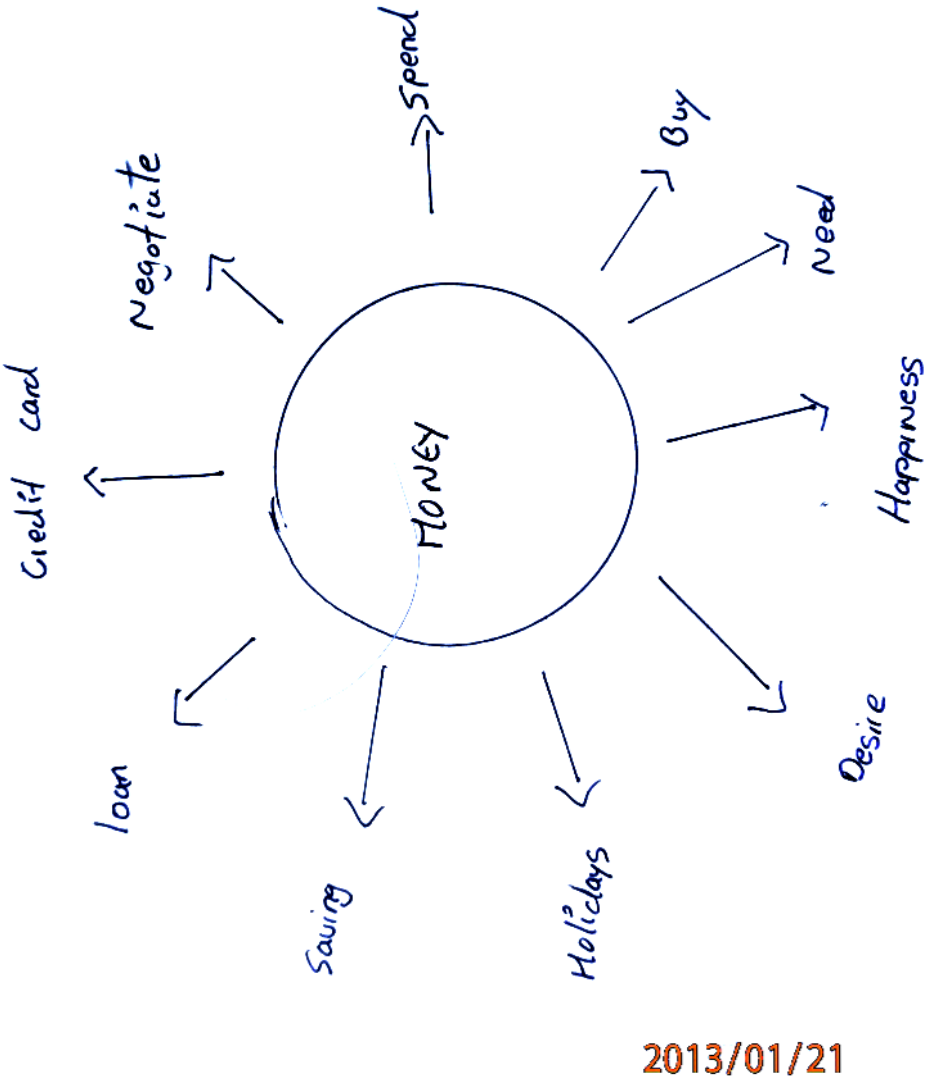
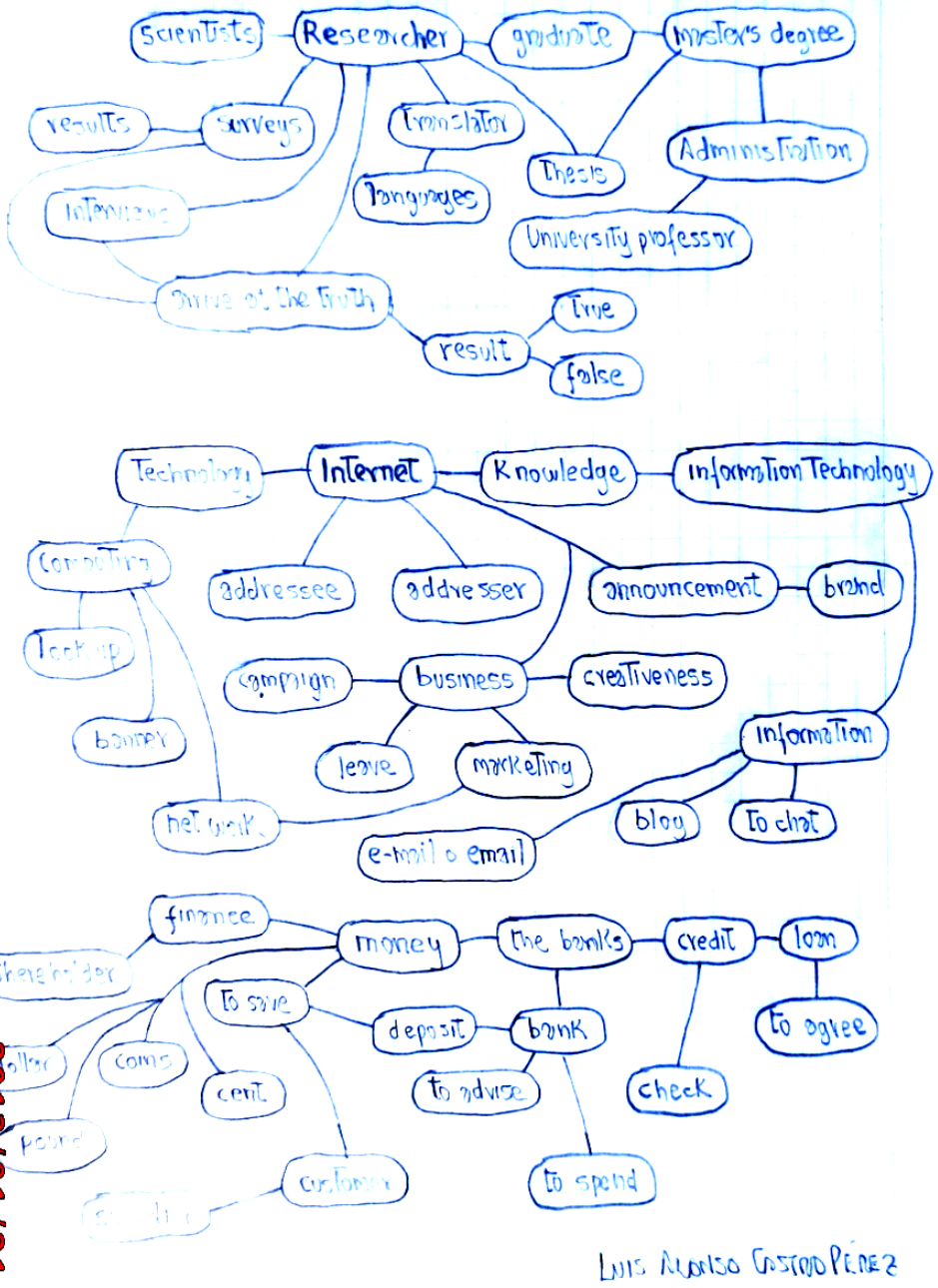
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Module One / Activities

Activity 1: Word web (1)



Vocabulary:



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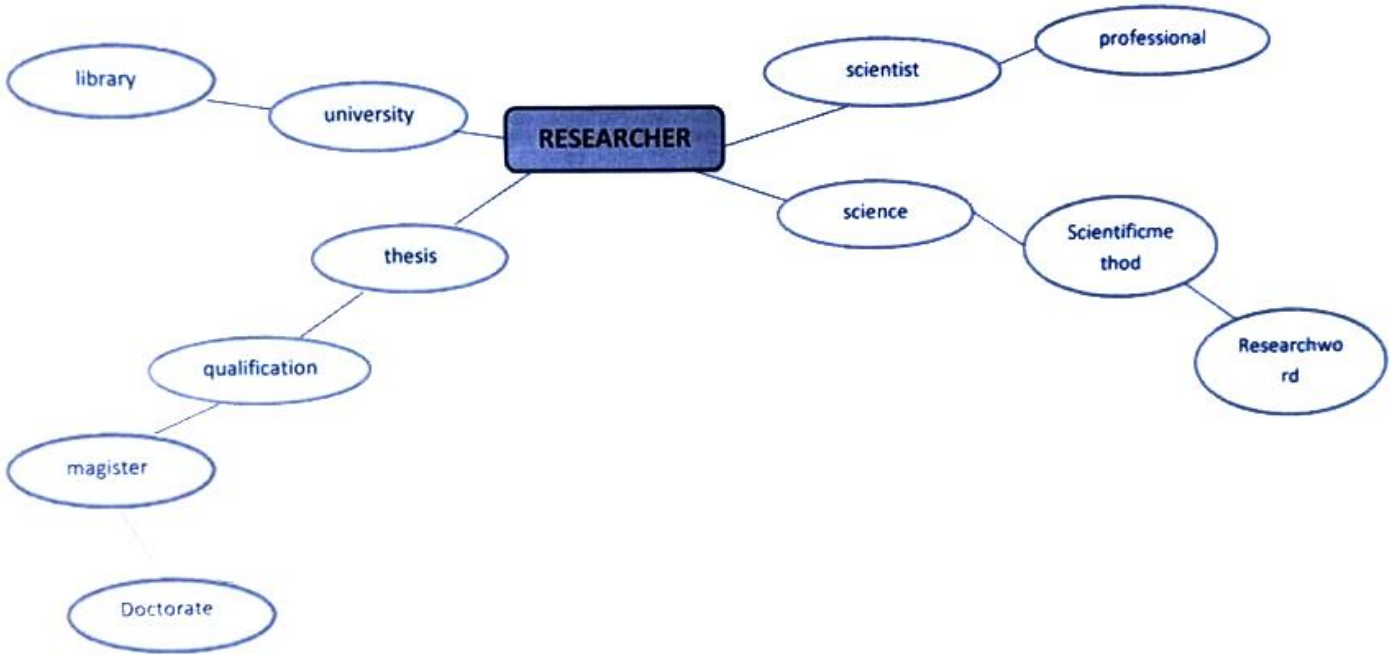
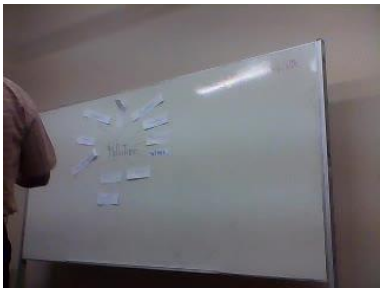


2013/01/21
ALUMNA: TERESITA E MATURRANO RÍOS

2013/01/21
network
Worlwidesite
website
messaging
chat
e- mail
INTERNET
twitter
facebook
Social network
blogger
computer
Searchengine
yahoo
google
laptop
Mobile phone

Activity 2: Word web (2)
Link to video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVg9YPy8Pgc



Activity 3: Scanning for specific words or numbers (1)

Example:

Key words

1. **read**	real	(read)	reel	raid	(read)
2. **three**	tree	there	(three)	these	trees

Exercise 1

➤ ***Circle the key word every time you see it in the line. Work quickly.***

Key words

1. **into**	onto	unto	into	intro	into
2. **been**	been	bean	born	been	barn
3. **back**	black	bark	back	bank	book
4. **must**	much	must	mist	mush	muse
5. **then**	them	then	ten	than	then
6. **way**	way	why	wax	way	wry
7. **out**	our	cut	oust	own	out
8. **all**	ail	all	awl	owe	alm
9. **with**	witch	with	wish	will	wilt
10. **over**	ever	aver	over	our	over

Exercise 2

➤ ***Circle the key word every time you see it in the line. Work quickly.***

Key words

1. **they**	thy	they	then	them	they
2. **what**	what	when	white	what	whit
3. **down**	dawn	darn	done	dean	down
4. **may**	my	may	many	way	marry
5. **time**	twine	tine	turn	time	time
6. **would**	want	would	walked	should	world
7. **you**	you	yes	yon	you	yore
8. **also**	alas	alto	also	ails	also
9. **much**	must	mast	mush	much	munch
10. **after**	alter	alter	after	afar	otter

APPENDIX B: Module Two / Activities

Activity 4: Word web (3)
Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1bRcEpTzWk

Practice 3

Active Strategies

Name:_____

Date: _____

Scanning for information

Scanning is a skill that helps you read very fast. When you scan you don't need to read every word or line.

Scan the ads and answer the questions. Work quickly

1. How many bicycles are for sale?

_____

2. What is the price of the 21" TV and VCR?

_____

3. How many dogs were found?

_____

4. Were any cats found?

_____

5. Where was the camera lost?

_____

6. What is the price of English lessons in your home?

_____

7. What is the telephone number for Chinese lessons?

_____

8. When does the new class for singing lessons begin?

_____

9. How much is the reward for the lost keys?

_____

10. Where was the piano made?

_____

Los Angeles News

Classified Ads

For Sale	Lost and Found	Classes and Tutoring
Bed. $150. Like new. 223-3222	Lost. Keys on ring. Near High St. $25. reward. Call 321-1212.	Learn to sing. New class begins in June. Five students in a class. Ten weeks, $75. Call today! 525-0800
Table and 4 chairs. Beautiful, old. $700. 342-9982	Lost: Black and white cat. 2 years old. Near Green St. Please call 939-9310.	Math lessons. Tutor can help you! $15/hour. Call 566-7878.
Bicycle. 1 year old. 21 speeds. $75. 663-9280	Lost. Sunglasses in red case. Near School St. Reward. 773-7219	English lessons in your home. Very good teacher. $20/hour. 793-7287
Bicycle. Men's. Good for hills. $90. 641-2398	Found. Black and white cat. Green St. at City Park. 794-4582	Learn to speak Chinese. Hong Kong teacher. $25/hour. 356-4678
Piano. Made in Germany. Like new. $3,000. 663-2929	Found. Big black dog. Small ears. Short hair. Near Flower St. 393-1974	Piano lessons. Teacher from Russia. Call today. 894-0759
21" TV and VCR. 2 years old. Must sell now. $350. 769-5055	Lost. Near University Rd. Camera in brown case. Need for my job. Reward. Please call 723-2901.	English classes for beginners. Six students in a class. 736-2984

a. Talk about the ads with another student.

11. Are any of these ads interesting to you? Why?

12. Look at the "Lost and Found" ads. There are two ads about cats. What do you think?

13. Can you give lessons in a language? Or a sport? Or music?Tell what can you do.

Activity 6: Making inferences (1)

Practice 4

Active Strategies

Name: _____

Date: _____

Making Inferences

An inference is a way of guessing, with some information you can deduce more information.

Look at the picture and answer the questions. Try to make inferences from the picture. Work in pairs.

Example:

1. Where are these people? *in a supermarket*
2. What are their jobs? *They are both housewives*
3. What are they doing? *They are shopping*
4. What are they saying? *They are saying, "We studied together!"*

Exercise 1

1. Where are these people? _____
2. What are their jobs? _____
3. What are they doing? _____
4. What are they saying? _____

Exercise 2

1. Where are these people? _____
2. What are their jobs? _____
3. What are they doing? _____
4. What are they saying? _____

Exercise 3

1. Where are these people? _____
2. What are their jobs? _____
3. What are they doing? _____
4. What are they saying? _____

Activity 7: Deducing the topic (1)

Practice 5

Active Strategies

Name:_____

Date: _____

Deducing the Topic

A good technique to understand what your read is to deduce what the reading is about. You can do it from pictures or some words you find in the text.

Example:

Topic:_____*birds*_____

1.

Topic:_____

2. Topic:_____

3. Topic:_____

4. Topic:_____

APPENDIX C: Module Three / Activities

Activity 8: Scanning for specific words or numbers (2)

Practice 2b

Active Strategies

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scanning for information

Scanning is a skill that helps you read very fast. When you scan you don't need to read every word or line.

Exercise 1

SCANNING AND INDEX

Look for the answers to these questions in the **index** on the next page. Ask your partner to write down exactly how many seconds it takes to complete the page. (Hint: The index is in alphabetical order.)

Starting time _____

On what page(s) can you read about:

	Page
1. *TOEFL*	_____
2. taste	_____
3. vocabulary	_____
4. writing	_____
5. sound	_____
6. stereotype	_____
7. *Time* Magazine	_____
8. University of Illinois	_____
9. Andrew Wright	_____
10. Garry Trudeau	_____

Finishing time _____

Scanning time _____

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behavior, 43
character, 14
meaning, 78
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Teachers of English To Speakers of Other Languages, 31
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Trudeau, Garry, 66
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II. Catch (exercise), 87
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Volkshochschule, 129
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warm-ups, 7, 17, 18, 25, 40, 41, 46, 71-73, 76, 139, 140, 141, 144, 145, 147, 151, 152
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Activity 9: Scanning for specific information (2)

Practice 3b

Active Strategies

Name:_____

Date: _____

Scanning for information

Scanning is a skill that helps you read very fast. When you scan you don't need to read every word or line.

SCANNING A NEWSPAPER STORY

Scan this news story to find the answers to these questions. Work fast. Write the starting and finishing time.

Starting time :_____

1. How many people died in the typhoon (storm)?
   _____
2. On what day did the typhoon begin?
   _____
3. How many people lost their homes (were homeless)?
   _____
4. What is the name of the island that was hit worst?
   _____
5. What is the name of the typhoon?
   _____
6. How many people are missing?
   _____

Finishing time: _____

Scanning time: _____

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Philippines Sends Aid For Typhoon Damage

MANILA, Nov. 10 (AP) — The Philippine Air Force ferried medical teams and relief supplies today to provinces ravaged by Typhoon Agnes. The authorities said 515 people had died in the typhoon and more than 400 were missing.

An air force spokesman said more than 163 tons of food, medicine and clothing had been sent to the Visayan region, 300 miles south of Manila, and more aid was on the way.

The typhoon hit the region Monday.

The spokesman said helicopters were rescuing people stranded by floods that remained chest-deep today in some areas of Panay Island, which appeared to have been hit the worst. Most of the fatalities and missing were on the island, where 445,000 people were homeless.

The Philippine National Red Cross reported that 90 percent of the 86,000 houses in Capiz Province on Panay were destroyed. Many of the dead were children who drowned as 30-foot waves smashed into coastal villages.

Activity 10: Making inferences (2)

Practice 4B

Active Strategies

Names: _____

Date: _____

Making Inferences

Work in pairs or small groups. Discuss these questions.

1 Why do you think the man is looking at the women and baby?
2 What kind of work do you think the man does? Why do you think this?
3 What do you think the relationship is between the two women?
4 Where do you think the boat is? **a** by the sea **b** on a canal **c** on a river?
5 How do you feel when you look at this picture? Can you say why you feel this?

Work in pairs. Look at this picture for one minute.

There are some mistakes in this description of the picture. Find the mistakes.

A man is standing with his back to us – we can't see his face. His arms and shoulders are bare and he has one hand on his hips. He's looking down into the doorway of a boat. In the doorway there are two women, an older woman and a young woman. The young woman is holding a baby in her arms. The baby has a t-shirt on and is smiling at the man. The woman is wearing earrings and has bare feet. There's a dog between the two women. There's another dog near the man, looking up at the baby. The dog is standing on some rope.

Activity 11: Deducing the topic (2)

Practice 5B

Active Strategies

Names: _____

Date: _____

Deducing the Topic of a Paragraph

The topic of a paragraph tells you what it is about. Ask yourself, "What is this paragraph about?"

EXAMPLE A

Mexico City is a popular place for tourists. Every year thousands of people go to Mexico City. They visit the old and beautiful buildings in this city. In the museums they learn about the history of Mexico. And in the restaurants they enjoy the spicy and delicious Mexican food.

What is the topic?

a. Mexican food
b. Mexico
c. Mexico City

The right answer is *(c) Mexico City.* It tells what the paragraph is about.

(a) *Mexican food* is too specific. It is only one part of the paragraph.
(b) *Mexico* is too general. It includes many ideas that are not in the paragraph.

EXAMPLE B

The food in Mexico sometimes surprises tourists. It can be very, very spicy! Mexican cooks use a special kind of pepper. This pepper is so spicy it almost burns your mouth. But most people start to like the spices after a while. They learn to like Mexican food very much.

What is this paragraph about? Check (✓) the best topic. Write "too specific" or "too general" after the other topics.

a. Mexican cooks _____
b. Mexican food _____
c. food _____

The right answer is (b) *Mexican food.*

(a) *Mexican cooks* is too specific. The whole paragraph is not about Mexican cooks.
(c) *food* is too general. It can include many kinds of food that are not in the topic.

What is the topic of both Example A and Example B? _____

Activity 12: Deducing the topic (3)

ACTIVITY 5 C

1 CHOOSING THE BEST TOPIC

A. Read each paragraph. Ask yourself, "What is this about?" Make a check after the best topic. Write "too specific" or "too general" after the other topics. Work with another student. The Answer Key is on page 263.

1

Mexico City is growing very fast. In 1970 the city had about nine million people. Now it has over 17 million. All these people are causing problems for the city. There are not enough jobs. Also, there is not enough housing. Large families have to live together in very small homes. Many homes do not have water. They also do not have bathrooms or electricity. The Mexican government is worried about all these problems. It is working hard to make life better in the city.

a. Mexican government _____
b. large cities _____
c. Mexico City's problems _____

2

Why is Mexico City growing so fast? Where are all these people coming from? They are coming to the city from the country. Life is hard on the farms in Mexico. Most people on farms have to live a very simple life. They have no extra money for modern things. People think life in the city must be better. So they leave their farms and move to Mexico City.

a. why people are moving to Mexico City _____
b. how Mexicans live in the country _____
c. life in Mexico today _____

3

All around the world large cities have the same problem. That problem is air pollution. Mexico City has very bad air. The air there is dirty and very unhealthy. Cars are one reason for the dirty air. Many Mexicans now own their own cars and drive in the city. The factories in the area also cause air pollution. These factories put a lot of smoke into the air. It is not easy to clean up the air in a large city. The government has to make new laws and everyone has to help.

a. air pollution _____
b. Mexico City's air pollution _____
c. how factories cause air pollution _____

B. Write the topic for all three paragraphs. _____

Practice 6

Active Strategies

Name:_____

Date: _____

When you read it is important to identify words like **nouns**, **adjectives** or **verbs** to understand what the text is about.

Exercise 1

Read the text and write the words in bold in the correct column. You **don't need to use** all the words

Alfred is an American boy. He lives in Los Angeles, California. He **lives** with his family in a **modern house**. He is eleven years old. He is **short** and **chubby** with short **red hair** and **blue eyes**. He **has** an older brother, David, and a younger sister, Emma.

He starts his day at about half past seven. He gets up, goes to the **bathroom**, takes a shower, **brushes** his teeth and get dressed. Then he has breakfast and at a quarter to eight he leaves home and catches the bus to school.

Classes begin at half past eight. He usually **has** lunch at the school canteen at half past twelve. After school, at a quarter past five, he **goes** home. There he does his school homework and when he finishes it he helps his Mum laying the **table**. At half past seven the family has dinner together.

Alfred is a very **helpful** boy, so he helps his mother cleaning up everything after **dinner**.

He usually watches TV for a while after dinner and at about ten o'clock the most he brushes his teeth again, puts on his Spider Man pajamas and goes to **bed**. His parents always **kiss** him good night before he gets asleep. Alfred is a very **happy boy**!

ADJECTIVES	NOUNS

Exercise 2

Match the antonyms.

modern	enters
older	alone
starts	end
leaves	old-fasioned
begin	unhappy
together	younger
helpful	finishes
happy	unhelpful

Exercise 3

Answer the following questions:

1. Where does Alfred live? ----------
2. What time does he wake up? ----------
3. Does he have breakfast at home? ----------
4. What time does he leave home? ----------
5. Does he make homework at school or at home? ----------
6. Is he a helpful boy? ----------

APPENDIX D: Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan 1: Control Group

Topic: Vacation Activities
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:

- Use Present Progressive (affirmative) to describe vacation activities.
- Describe weather, seasons, and holiday activities.
-

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4a – pages 49 – 51) / Interactive Whiteboard
Vocabulary focus: The weather; seasons; seasonal activities
Structures: Present Progressive (affirmative)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Talk about the weather at the moment, describe the weather in our country. Elicit from the students some answers.	**5'**	Two pictures of places in our country.
Ask Ss to open their book on page 49. Drill the sentences and match the pictures to the sentences. Compare answers. Check answers. Ask Ss to name some cities in our country with similar weather conditions	**6'**	Text book and projector.
Ask Ss to complete the "Over To You" section. Check answers in pairs. Ask Ss to complete the weather description of their city.	**5'**	Text book

Continue activity on the next page. Ask Ss to match the vacation activities to the pictures. Check answers. Repeat the sentences.	**4'**	Text book and projector.
Present the P*resent Progressive* affirmative structure. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using Present Progressive and vacation activities	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive. Text book page 50. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop pronunciation practice. Ss complete –ing forms of the verbs and practice the pronunciation in pairs.	**4'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop listening activity. Check answers. Ask Ss to write complete sentences with the phrases.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop reading activity. Elicit answers to the questions in the book. Check answers. Underline in the postcards the simple present sentences and transform to present continuous form.	**8'**	Textbook page 51 and projector.
Develop Speaking and writing activity in pairs. Ask Ss to write sentences about Puebla using the phrases given. Check answers in groups of four.	**6'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.
Writing activity can be developed in class or as a homework. If the first, present the model on the screen.	**10'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.

Lesson Plan 2: Experimental Group

Topic: Vacation Activities
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:

- Use Present Progressive (affirmative) to describe vacation activities.
- Describe weather, seasons, and holiday activities.
- Improve Ss' reading speed in a text in a newspaper to enhance literal level.

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4a – pages 49 – 51) / Interactive Whiteboard / sheet of reading comprehension activity
Vocabulary focus: The weather; seasons; seasonal activities
Structures: Present Progressive (affirmative)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Talk about the weather at the moment, describe the weather in our country. Elicit from the students some answers.	**5'**	Two pictures of places in our country.
Ask Ss to open their book on page 49. Drill the sentences and match the pictures to the sentences. Compare answers. Check answers. Ask Ss to name some cities in our country with similar weather conditions	**6'**	Text book and projector.
Ask Ss to complete the "Over To You" section. Check answers in pairs. Ask Ss complete the weather description of their city.	**5'**	Text book

Continue activity on next page. Ask Ss to match the vacation activities to the pictures. Check answers. Repeat the sentences.	**4'**	Text book and projector.
Present the P*resent Progressive* affirmative structure. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using Present Progressive and vacation activities	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive. Text book page 50. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop pronunciation practice. Ss complete –ing forms of the verbs and practice the pronunciation in pairs.	**4'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop listening activity. Check answers. Ask Ss to write complete sentences with the phrases.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Develop reading activity. Elicit answers to the questions in the book. Check answers. Underline in the postcards the Simple Present sentences and transform them to Present Progressive form.	**8'**	Textbook page 51 and projector.
Develop Speaking and writing activity in pairs. Ask Ss to write sentences about Puebla using the phrases given. Check answers in groups of four.	**6'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.
Writing activity assigned as homework. Present the model on the screen, discuss with the Ss many possible answers.	**2'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and projector.
Interactive skill-focused activities Hand out the sheet of scanning activity about Typhoon Damage. Ask Ss to write the starting time of the activity and read the questions underlining the key words. Then they have to answer the	**15'**	Activity Sheet: Practice 3b (**Bibliography: Activity 9**)

questions. Ask them to write down the finishing time and calculate the minutes taken in the activity. Check answers. Ask Ss to look for new words in the article. Ask students their opinions about the article, where they can find it (newspaper or magazine). Ask Ss compare the weather condition in the article with the one in their country.		
Follow up activity: Ask Ss to bring similar news collected from internet or a newspaper to next class.		

Lesson Plan 3: Control Group

Topic: Shopping
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:

- Use Present Progressive (negative and question) to talk about actions happening now.
- Describe where they are, what they are doing and what they are wearing.

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4b – pages 52 – 54) / Interactive Whiteboard
Vocabulary focus: clothes
Structures: Present Progressive (negative and question)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Ask students what their favorite weather or season is. What they like wearing in that season. Show the realia.	**5'**	Some realia like gloves, a scarf, a hat, etc.
Ask Ss to open their books on page 52. Point at the pictures, make Ss pronounce the words of the clothes and then ask Ss to say the name of the clothes without showing the words.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Ask Ss to answer the questions "What do you usually wear at… a party / at work / at home / at a hot sunny day / when it's raining". Pair work, for 4' and then ask them to report the information of their partners.	**7'**	Textbook

Develop reading activity. Answer questions in the book. Read again and complete sentences. Check answers	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the *present Progressive* negative structure and questions. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using Present Progressive and clothes.	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive (negative and questions). Textbook page 53. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop activity 5. Pair work describing the people on the pictures.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Complete the spaces in the text. Compare answers in pairs.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the Simple Present and Present Progressive. Contrast uses. Ask Ss to complete the exercises. Check answers. Ask them to write similar sentences (4 for each use). Ask them to read or hand over the sheets.	**8'**	Textbook page 53 and projector, Ss' notebooks and pens. Powerpoint contrasting the Present Simple and the Present Progressive.
Develop Speaking and writing activity. Ask Ss to describe famous people on pictures, what they are doing and wearing.	**6'**	Pictures of famous people.
Follow up activity: Ask Ss bring pictures of their friends and family and describe what they are doing and wearing.	**2'**	Textbook, Ss' notebook and pictures of their family.

Lesson Plan 4: Experimental Group

Topic: Shopping
Level: A2 (Elementary)
Number of Students: 20
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Aims:

- Use Present Progressive (negative and question) to talk about actions happening now.
- Describe where they are, what they are doing and what they are wearing.
- Improve Ss' reading comprehension in a text making inferences to enhance inferential level.

Materials: Book Prime Time 1 (Unit 4b – pages 52 – 54) / Interactive Whiteboard / sheet of reading comprehension activity.
Vocabulary focus: clothes
Structures: Present Progressive (negative and question)

T = Teacher
Ss = Students

PROCEDURE	TIME	RESOURCES
Warm up: Ask students what their favorite weather or season is. What they like wearing in that season. Show the realia.	**5'**	Some realia like gloves, a scarf, a hat, etc.
Ask Ss to open their book on page 52. Point the pictures, make the pronunciation with the words of the clothes and then ask Ss to say the name of the clothes without showing the words.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Ask Ss to answer the questions "What do you usually wear at… a party / at work / at home / at a hot sunny day / when it's raining". Pair work, for 4' and then ask them to report the information of their partners.	**7'**	Textbook

Develop reading activity. Answer questions in the book. Read again and complete sentences. Check answers	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the P*resent Progressive* negative structure and questions. Ask Ss to write some sentences about them using the Present Progressive and clothes.	**10'**	Ppt. about Present Progressive (negative and questions). Textbook page 53. Ss' notebooks and pens.
Develop activity 5. Pair work describing the people on the pictures.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Complete the spaces in the text. Compare answers in pairs.	**5'**	Textbook and projector.
Present the Simple Present and the Present Progressive. Contrast uses. Ask Ss to complete the exercises. Check answers. Ask them to write similar sentences (4 for each use). Ask them to read or hand over the sheets.	**8'**	Textbook page 53 and projector, Ss' notebooks and pens. Powerpoint contrasting the Present Simple and the Present Progressive.
Develop Speaking and writing activity. Ask Ss to describe famous people on pictures, what they are doing and wearing.	**6'**	Pictures of famous people.
Interactive skill-focused activities Hand out the sheet of active strategy to make inferences. Ask Ss to work in pairs looking at the picture for one minute. Then ask them to find the mistakes in the description. Check the answers with the Ss. Ask them to read the questions and give possible answers. Then, they have to compare their answers to those from other students. Elicit some possible answers.	**12'**	Activity Sheet: Practice 4b (**Bibliography: Activity 10**)
Follow up activity: Ask Ss to bring pictures similar to that presented in the activity sheet. Present in class what their inferences are.	**2'**	Pictures from magazines or internet.

APPENDIX E: Pre-test and Post-test

Pre-Test

PRE TEST

Active Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension
Basic II

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

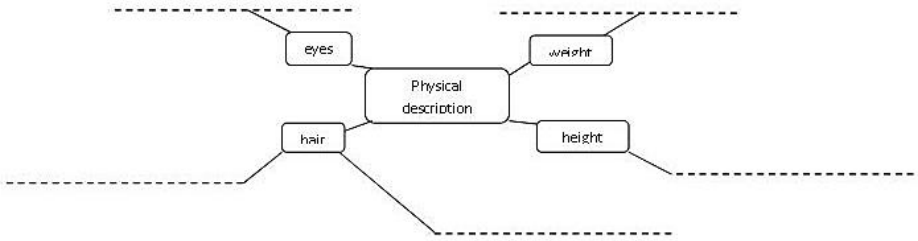
TEXT 1
Literal Level:

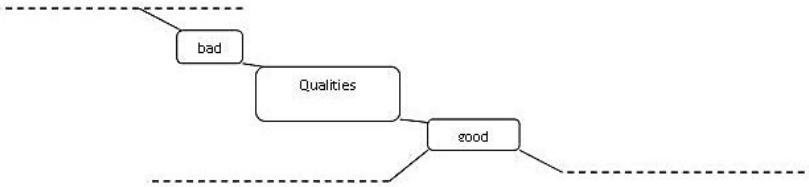
Read the text and complete the spidergrams with words from the text. You don't need all the words. (4 points)

Emily Grover is seven years old and she attends the 2nd grade. She lives with her parents and her two older brothers in Plockton village on the shores of Lochcarron; Scotland.

She has ***long brown*** hair and ***green*** eyes. She is ***tall*** (for her age) and ***thin***. She loves to walk through Plockton Bay and see the beautiful rocky hills in the distance. She also likes to ***read adventure stories*** and to ***stay at home***. She doesn't like ***going shopping***; she prefers to ***play with her friends*** at home.

Her favorite animals are the ***butterflies***, but she doesn't like flies at all. She is ***honest*** and ***friendly***, but sometimes she is a bit ***disobedient*** to her parents, because she doesn't want to eat her vegetables.
When she grows older, she wants to be a ***veterinary***, just like her grandfather, or perhaps a ***lawyer***.





Literal Level:
According to the text write the correct answers in the spaces. (1.5 points)

1. How old is Emily?
_____.
2. How many brothers does she have?
_____.
3. She doesn't like _____.

Inferential Level:
Write the opposite of the adjectives. (4.5 points)

1. dishonest man ≠ _____
2. short woman ≠ _____
3. fat cat ≠ _____

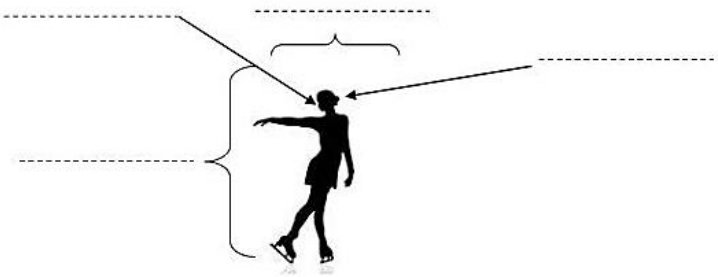
TEXT 2

Literal level:
Read the text and write Tara's physical description in the picture. (2 points)

Tara Kristen Lipinski is a famous American ice-skater. Tara was born on June 10, 1982. She is an Olympic gold medal winner. She is considered the youngest individual gold medalist in the history of the Olympic Winter Games. She is also the 1997 World Champion, two-time Champions Series Final Champion (1997-1998) and 1997 U.S. Champion.

Her father's name is Jack and her mother's name is Patricia. Tara doesn't have any brothers or sisters. She is an ***only child***. Tara is short and slim. She has long fair hair and big blue eyes. She trains every day, goes to the gym, runs every morning and has a special diet. She is a ***hardworking person***.

She has practiced skating since she was four years old and won her first prize when she was nine years old. Tara can cook very well. She can also swim and play tennis, but she can't play basketball. Her favorite color is purple and her favorite actor is Tom Cruise.



Literal level:
Read the text and circle the correct answer (2 points)

1. Tara is from
    a. South America
    b. America
    c. Russia
2. She was born
    a. 21 years ago
    b. 16 years ago
    c. 31 years ago
3. How many adjectives are in the text to describe physical appearance?
    a. 5
    b. 4
    c. 3
4. Tara can't...
    a. play tennis
    b. play basketball
    c. play tennis and basketball

Inferential Level:

Read the text and circle the correct answer. (6 points)

1. What is the meaning of ***only child***
    a. The person is the oldest child.
    b. The person is lonely
    c. The person doesn't have brothers or sisters.

2. What is the meaning of ***hardworking***
    a. The person works hard
    b. The person walks hard
    c. The person talks hard

3. According to the picture Tara feels...
    a. excited
    b. sad
    c. unhappy

4. This article is from...
    a. a newspaper
    b. a webpage
    c. a sport magazine

Post Test

POST TEST
Active Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension
Basic III

Name: _____ Date: _____

TEXT 1
Literal Level:

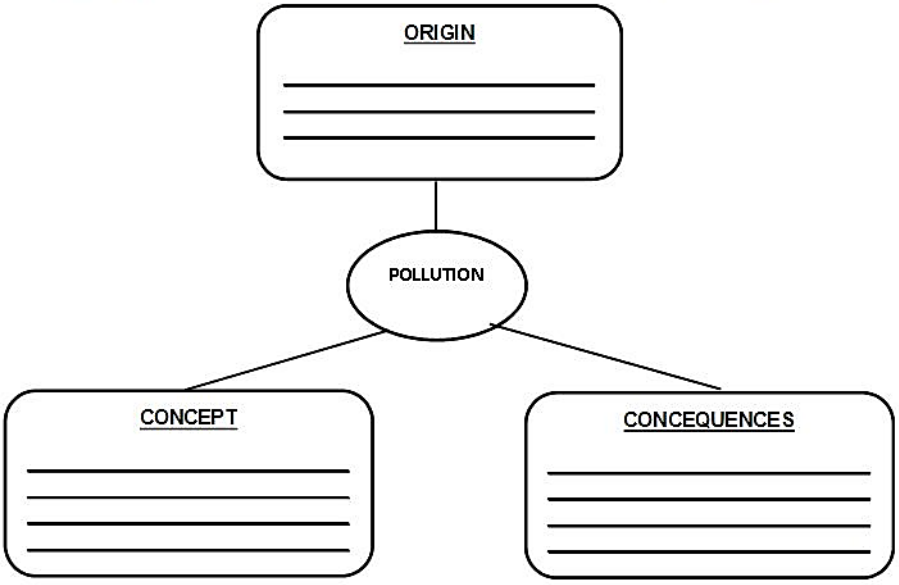
Read the text and complete the spidergram with words from the text. (6 points)

(1) Many people are anxious about "global warming" which increases with the time and produces a lot of problems melting glacial icebergs, producing inundations, fire forest and the most important weather change; scientists discovered the principal cause of global warming is "pollution".

(2) Pollution is all kinds of contamination that cause bad effects or degradation of natural environment. The causes are external substances that affect human health, ecosystem quality. This can produce permanent change in the life on land (insects, plants, etc.) and water (fish, sea life, etc.). Pollution occurs when ecosystems can't eliminate substances introduced into the environment. The balance of the ecosystem is destroyed.

(3) The origins of pollution are numerous. They are caused by natural disasters or human activity, such as leaving liquid out of containers, nuclear accidents, etc. The consequences of this are terrible; people and animal species die and natural habitat is damaged.

(4) The prevention of pollution is not an easy work. We need to satisfy the needs of today and at the same time think of the future. International organizations say that it is necessary to anticipate and prevent future pollution with laws that force polluters to pay for the damage caused to the environment. This can also reduce "global warming".



Literal Level:
According to the text mark true (T) or false (F). (4 points)

1. Pollution is something that destroys human and animal life. T F
2. The result of elimination of bad substances is pollution. T F
3. Laws can reduce pollution. T F
4. Global warming is not connected with pollution T F

Inferential Level:

What is the best tittle for the text? (2 points)

a) Human Pollution
b) Pollution and Global warming
c) The Importance of Pollution
d) Pollution and Natural Disasters

Inferential level:

1. **What is the topic of paragraph (1). Make a check after the best topic. Write "too specific" or "too general" after the other topics. (3 points)**
   a. Inundations produced by global warming _____
   b. Connection between global warming and pollution _____
   c. Pollution _____

2. **What is the topic of paragraph (4). Make a check after the best topic. Write "too specific" or "too general" after the other topics. (3 points)**
   a. Solution to pollution _____
   b. Solutions _____
   c. Solution to pollution and global warming _____

3. **What is the topic of the text? (2 points)**

_____

APPENDIX F: Report of Experts

REPORT OF VALIDATION

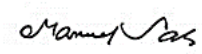
Lima, March 26th, 2015.

To whom it may concern,

After revising the Pre-Test and the Post-Test, which are part of the thesis entitled "Application of an Interactive Skill-Focuses Lesson to Improve Reading Comprehension in L2 in Postgraduate Students of UNMSM (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos)", it has been found that both the reading texts and the questions have been originally produced by Ms. Ana Rosa Ríos Revoredo, the author of the thesis.

The texts contain language at the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and the questions are designed to evaluate comprehension at both literal and inferential levels.

This document is issued upon request of Ms. Ana Rosa Ríos Revoredo, for the purpose which she should consider pertinent.



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APPENDIX G: Permission to develop the research

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS
(Universidad del Perú, Decana de América)

ESCUELA DE POSGRADO
"Dr. Pedro Alejandro Fernández Álvarez"

PROGRAMA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

Lima, 18 de enero del 2013

OFICIO N.º 007/UNMSM-EPG-PIE/2013

Profesora
ANA RÍOS REVOREDO
Docente del Programa de Idiomas Extranjeros
Escuela de Posgrado de la UNMSM

Es grato dirigirme a usted para saludarla muy cordialmente y manifestarle en atención a la solicitud presentada con fecha 8 de diciembre del 2012, que la Dirección Académica de la EPG está de acuerdo en la realización del trabajo de investigación para su tesis de maestría y le agradeceremos hacernos llegar los resultados de su investigación .

Sin otro particular, augurándole los mejores éxitos en el desarrollo de su trabajo, me despido de usted.

Atentamente,

DR. JULIO LÓPEZ CASTILLO
Director Académico
EPG-UNMSM

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS
ESCUELA DE POSGRADO
Dirección Académica

APPENDIX H: Timetable of the Development of Activities

Timetable of Activities

MODULE	ENERO 2013				FEBRERO 2013				MARZO 2013				ABRIL 2013			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Module 1			Pre-Test	Word web 1	Word web 2	Scanning words/numbers 1	Word web 3	Scanning specific information 1	Making inferences 1	Deducing the topic 1	Scanning words/numbers 2 Scanning specific information 2	Making inferences 2 Deducing the topic 2	Deducing the topic 3 Identify words in a text	Post-Test		
2. Module 2																
3. Module 3																

APPENDIX I: Timetable of the Development of the Thesis

Actividad	Responsable	DICIEMBRE 2012				ENERO 2013				FEBRERO 2013				MARZO 2013				ABRIL 2013				MAYO 2013			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Elaboración del Proyecto	Tesista																								
2. Aprobación del Proyecto	Jurado revisor																								
3. Implementación del Proyecto	Tesista																								
4. Recolección de datos	Tesista																								
5. Organización de los resultados	Tesista																								
6. Procesamiento de la información recogida	Tesista																								
7. Análisis, interpretación de los resultados	Tesista																								

Actividad	Responsable	DICIEMBRE 2013				ENERO 2014				FEBRERO 2014				MARZO 2014				ABRIL 2014				MAYO 2014			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
9. Elaboración del informe de investigación	Tesista																								
10. Calificación y aprobación de la tesis	Jurado revisor																								
11. Sustentación de la tesis	Tesista																								

Actividad	Responsable	JUNIO 2013				JULIO 2013				AGOSTO 2013				SEPTIEMBRE 2013				OCTUBRE 2013				NOVIEMBRE 2013			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8. Análisis, interpretación de los resultados	Tesista																								

APPENDIX J: Proficiency Exam

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS
Universidad del Perú, Decana de América
ESCUELA DE POSGRADO
PROGRAMA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS
PROFICIENCY EXAM

TEXT 1

Between the ancient Italian cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, mount Vesuvius, the volcano, has received much attention because of its frequent and destructive eruptions. The most famous of these eruptions occurred in A.D. 79.

The volcano had been inactive for centuries. There was little warning of the coming eruption, although one account unearthed by archaeologists says that a hard rain and a strong wind had disturbed the celestial calm during the preceding night. Early the next morning, the volcano poured a huge river of molten rock down upon Herculaneum, completely burying the city

Meanwhile, on the other side of the mountain, cinders, stone and ash rained down on Pompeii. Sparks from the burning ash ignited the combustible rooftops quickly. Large portions of the city were destroyed in the conflagration. Fire, however, was not the only cause of destruction. Poisonous sulfuric gases saturated the air. These heavy gases were floating in the atmosphere and therefore sank toward the earth and suffocated people.

Over the years, excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum have revealed a great deal about the behavior of the volcano. By analyzing data, much as a zoologist dissects an animal specimen, scientists have concluded that the eruption changed large portions of the area's geography. For instance, it turned the Sarno River from its course and raised the level of the beach along the Bay of Naples. Meteorologists studying these events have also concluded that Vesuvius caused a huge tidal wave that affected the world's climate.

In addition to making these investigations, archaeologists have been able to study the skeletons of victims by using distilled water to wash away the volcanic ash. By strengthening the brittle bones with acrylic paint, scientists have been able to examine the skeletons and draw conclusions about the diet and habits of the residents. Finally, the excavations at both Pompeii and Herculaneum have yielded many examples of classical art, such as jewelry made of bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius and its tragic consequences have provided everyone with a wealth of data about the effects that volcanoes can have on the surrounding area. Today, volcanologists can locate and predict eruptions, saving lives and preventing the destruction of other cities and cultures.

After reading the text, choose the best option to complete the idea upon it.

1. Herculaneum and its harbor were buried under _____ lava.
a. liquid b. solid c. smoke d. gas

2. The poisonous gases were not _____ in the air.
a. able to descend b. heavy c. able to evaporate d. dangerous

3. Scientists analyzed data about Vesuvius in the same way that a zoologist _____ a specimen.
a. describes in detail b. studies by cutting apart
c. photographs d. chart

4. _____ have concluded that the volcanic eruption caused a tidal wave.
a. Scientists who study oceans
b. Scientists who study ash
c. Scientists who study atmospheric conditions
d. Scientists who study animal behavior

5. Scientists have used _____ water to wash away volcanic ash from the skeletons of victims.
a. bottled b. volcanic c. distilled d. pure

6. People from Pompey used an alloy of _____ to make their jewels in bronze.
a. copper, iron and nickel
b. lead and tin
c. niquel and palladium
d. tin and copper

TEXT 2

Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts. Massachusetts was a Colony at that time. His family was poor, his father was Josiah Franklin and his mother was Abiah Folger. Benjamin was Josiah's 15th child and Abiah's 8th child. Franklin went to school until he was ten years old.

When he was ten, his father took him out of school and taught him how to make soap and candles.

When he was twelve, he started working for his half-brother as a printer apprentice. He worked for his brother for five years. Later he became an editor, writer, and newspaper owner. He bought the Pennsylvania Gazette with a partner and became rich. It was the first newspaper to include a political cartoon.