



**ESCUELA DE EDUCACIÓN**

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EXTRANJEROS**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

**INNOVATIVE DIDACTIC STRATEGY TO IMPROVE READING  
COMPREHENSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH STUDENTS IN  
ESMERALDAS**

**INFORME DE INVESTIGACIÓN:**

**ESTRATEGIA DIDÁCTICA INNOVADORA PARA MEJORAR LA  
COMPRENSIÓN LECTORA EN ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS DE EDUCACIÓN  
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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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Yo, PhD. Arelys Rodríguez Mestre, en calidad de directora de esta tesis, certifico haber revisado que el trabajo cumple los requisitos de calidad, originalidad y presentación exigibles y que se han incorporado las sugerencias del Tribunal al trabajo de grado.

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## **STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR**

I, Sabrina Patricia Góngora Daza, affirm that the investigation in the present report research is unique, authentic, and personal.

The content of this research is a legitimate legal and academic responsibility of the author and PUCE Esmeraldas.

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Sabrina Patricia Gongora Daza

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## **DEDICATION**

“I dedicate this work to the English teachers of PUCESE and to all the educators who are passionate and committed to transforming education, breaking barriers, and promoting quality educational inclusion.”

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I am deeply grateful to the king of kings and Lord of Lords, my God, for sustaining me up in moments of weakness, for being my refuge, my support and my strength. Thank you for helping me stay firm throughout this process journey and not giving up.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Reading comprehension allows for a better development in the English language learning, which challenges educators to look for teaching strategies to improve it. To design a teaching strategy to

improve the reading skill in English of elementary school students in Esmeraldas, mixed-approach research was carried out, with a descriptive and exploratory scope. The research included a sample of 20 5th grade students from an educational institution and 5 teachers from various educational institutions in Esmeraldas. The methods used were inductive-deductive, descriptive analysis and analysis-synthesis, supported by a questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. Among the techniques applied were surveys of students and interviews with teachers that helped us to know the main barriers and opportunities to improve reading comprehension. The results indicated that students face difficulties in understanding texts in English due to factors such as lack of vocabulary, grammatical complexity and lack of effective reading strategies. The research also identified students' interest in specific topics, such as adventure, science, and technology, which allowed text selection to be tailored to their preferences. Interactive activities and the use of digital tools favor more dynamic and personalized learning, increasing student motivation and engagement.

**Keywords:** Innovative didactic strategy; reading comprehension; English language learning; elementary school.

## **RESUMEN**

La comprensión lectora permite un mejor desarrollo en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés, lo que desafía a los educadores a buscar estrategias de enseñanza para mejorarla. Para diseñar una estrategia de enseñanza para mejorar la comprensión lectora en inglés de los estudiantes de primaria de Esmeraldas, se realizó una investigación de enfoque mixto, con un alcance descriptivo y exploratorio. La investigación incluyó una muestra de 20 estudiantes de 5to grado de una institución educativa y 5 docentes de diversas instituciones educativas de Esmeraldas. Los métodos

utilizados fueron el inductivo-deductivo, el análisis descriptivo y el análisis-síntesis, apoyados en un cuestionario como principal instrumento de recolección de datos. Entre las técnicas aplicadas se encontraron encuestas a estudiantes y entrevistas a docentes que ayudaron a conocer las principales barreras y oportunidades para mejorar la comprensión lectora. Los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes enfrentan dificultades para comprender textos en inglés debido a factores como la falta de vocabulario, la complejidad gramatical y la falta de estrategias efectivas de lectura. La investigación también identificó el interés de los estudiantes en temas específicos, como aventura, ciencia y tecnología, lo que permitió adaptar la selección de textos a sus preferencias. Las actividades interactivas y el uso de herramientas digitales favorecieron un aprendizaje más dinámico y personalizado, aumentando la motivación y el compromiso de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** Estrategia didáctica innovativa; comprensión lectora; aprendizaje del inglés; primaria.

# INTRODUCTION

## Theme Presentation

English is a widely spread language in the world. It stands for its crucial role in communication in the different scientific areas of study, work, business, research and so on. Mastering the language implies its four important language skills, which are speaking, reading, writing and listening. It should be noted that these skills are developed by applying different strategies, materials, and techniques that teachers use through the teaching and learning process; however, many teachers focus mainly on the abilities of speaking, listening, and writing, but what about the reading skill?

According to Kirby, (2007) reading comprehension is the process by which we understand the texts we read. It is an act of liberation and awareness; reading is a tool of social transformation, where you not only understand the text, but also critically reflect on your text and reality.

Students face multiple difficulties in reading English texts. Among the main causes are lack of understanding of written grammar, lack of effective teaching strategies by teachers, limited parental help, socioeconomic barriers, and lack of adequate vocabulary. These factors contribute to poor reading comprehension that manifests itself in difficult understanding of written texts, poor academic performance and lack of motivation towards learning English.

## **Problem Statement**

In Esmeraldas, many primary school students face difficulties in understanding English texts; reality that affects their performance while reading and limits their ability to progress in the language. Despite efforts to improve English language teaching, reading comprehension deficiencies are still observed among children at School. This problem impacts not only their learning of vocabulary and grammar, but also their confidence and motivation to learn a new language.

The causes of these reading comprehension difficulties are diverse. On the part of the teachers, there is a tendency to focus on reading aloud, neglecting aspects of reading comprehension. In terms of curricular design, there is insufficient emphasis on activities that develop this skill. In the students themselves, the lack of motivation represents an additional obstacle; and finally, from home, the lack of parental support also contributes to this problem (Taha (2022) ).

According to this situation, it is necessary to explore and apply effective strategies that strengthen reading comprehension skills in English, adapted to the context and level of students in Esmeraldas. This research seeks to propose a strategy that not only improves reading comprehension but also awakens students' interest in English and strengthens their confidence in learning a foreign language.

Thus, the following question arises: What effective pedagogical strategy can improve the English reading comprehension of elementary school students?

## **Justification**

The proposal of this project is to design an innovative didactic strategy that helps students improve reading comprehension in the English language by facilitating the acquisition of comprehension skills in students.

The justification for addressing this problem lies in the importance of reading comprehension as a fundamental skill in the educational process and in daily life, a tool for personality growth. To improve reading comprehension in basic education students, a didactic strategy is proposed that encompasses both innovative pedagogical approaches and the implementation of real and authentic resources.

This includes the design and use of interactive activities, the use of digital tools, tailored to the individual needs of students, and the integration of contextualized reading practices into various areas of the curriculum. These strategies aim to foster a deeper and meaningful understanding of the English language, thus promoting a positive effect on students' academic performance, self-confidence, and motivation.

In addition, it is considered crucial to address external factors that may influence reading comprehension, such as family support, access to diverse reading materials, and creating an inclusive and nurturing school environment. Taken together, these measures aim to develop strong reading comprehension skills that enable students to successfully cope with the linguistic and cognitive challenges that arise in their educational process and beyond.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

- To design a didactic strategy to improve students' English language reading comprehension in elementary school.

### **Specific Objectives**

- To diagnose the main difficulties students face when reading texts in English.
- To determine students' topics of interest concerning texts for reading.
- To establish the main stages and procedures to include in the strategy.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 Scientific theoretical foundation**

#### **1.1.1 What is reading?**

This work is oriented under some conceptual categories that research specify the focus of the study, following the stated objectives. A careful reading of different investigations and studies was carried out to systematize the concepts that the investigation requires. The chosen categories are explained below making the respective analogy with the established objectives.

According to Frankel, W.Rowe, Becker, & Pearson, (2016), literacy is the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and engagement with multimodal texts. Reading is the process of interpreting and understanding the meaning of written words and symbols. It involves decoding words and constructing meaning through text, which requires cognitive and linguistic skills and prior knowledge.

The reading levels represent successive phases that facilitate the reader's progress from elementary comprehension to a careful and critical analysis of the text.

- **Literal Reading:** This involves direct comprehension of the content, consisting of identifying explicit information in the text. According to Barrett (1976) , this level focuses on the ability to recall specific facts and data, along with textual details, regardless of the need to

interpret them; here, the reader answers questions such as “what does the text say?” and can identify characters, places, and major events.

- **Inferential Reading:** according to Goodman (1988) explains that inferential reading requires the reader to “fill in the gaps” in the text and construct meaning beyond what is explicit, hypothesizing about the author's intentions or underlying themes. This level focuses on addressing questions such as “What is the meaning of the text?” and is based on personal inferences.

- **Critical Reading:** Smith (2004), involves the evaluation of content, analyzing the author's purpose, the veracity of the facts, and the relevance of the information. In critical reading, the reader not only comprehends and infers, but also makes judgments about the quality and coherence of the text, evaluating its worth based on the evidence and arguments presented. This level deals with questions such as “Is the text reliable?” and “How valid is the argument?”.

- **Appreciative Reading:** The reader establishes connections between the content of the text and his or her own values, experiences and emotions. According to Tompkins (2006), appreciative reading allows the reader to enjoy and aesthetically value the text, appreciating aspects such as style, tone and emotional impact. This level addresses questions such as “how does the text make me feel?” and “how does it relate to my personal experiences?”.

- **Creative Reading:** According to Hernández and Montemayor (2015), creative reading consists of employing the information learned to suggest alternatives, adjust or create novel responses. At this level, the reader not only interprets the text, but also uses it as a starting

point for the generation of innovative ideas, addressing questions such as “what possibilities does this information hold?”.

There are several types of reading techniques that are used in reading education and teaching to develop different skills and meet various objectives.

### **1. Skimming**

Skimming is a reading technique that allows students to quickly grasp the main idea and general structure of a text. The goal is to understand, in a short time, what the content is about without dwelling on specific details. To practice this technique, the reader skims through the text quickly, paying attention to key ideas and skipping secondary information (Bonditvlai 2020) .

### **2. Scanning**

Scanning is a reading skill that allows the reader to locate specific information quickly and accurately. To use this technique effectively, it is important to be clear about the type of information you are looking for before you begin. The purpose of scanning is to find specific data without having to read the entire text word for word, which is especially useful for improving productivity in studying (Bonditvlai, (2020) Many students try to read every word, and this often slows down their reading process. By mastering scanning, students not only improve their reading speed but also their comprehension by focusing on the most important facts and saving time.

### **3. Selective Reading**

Selective reading consists of focusing only on the parts of a text that are most relevant or interesting to us, leaving aside the sections that we do not consider necessary at that moment. This technique allows us to save time and concentrate on the information that we really need or that arouses our interest.

#### **4. Critical Reading**

Critical reading requires analyzing content, evaluating information, judging the validity of arguments, and comparing the text with prior knowledge.

##### **1.1.2 Characteristics of reading comprehension in elementary school students**

Awareness of the characteristics of elementary school students is fundamental to teaching reading comprehension effectively, because these factors can significantly influence their ability to comprehend and interpret texts. At this stage, students are in a process of integral development that involves their cognitive, emotional, social and linguistic skills. Each of these aspects has a direct impact on text comprehension and interpretation.

- **Linguistic and Cognitive Skills in Reading Comprehension**

It is important to consider students' language skills. Infants in the primary stage are developing their vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structures. According to Cain and Oakhill (2007), a strong foundation in these skills is critical for progress in reading comprehension. However, many students have limited vocabulary, which can lead to difficulties in their ability to interpret more complex meanings in texts. Therefore, the role of the teacher is

not only to teach reading, but also to expand the child's linguistic repertoire so that they can understand more deeply.

- **Motivational Factors and Personal Interests**

Motivation and interest play a key role at this stage. Children who are motivated or find that texts deal with topics close to their experiences are more likely to actively engage in reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argue that motivation increases a student's ability to persist in reading, which improves comprehension. So much so is the significance of selecting texts that are not only level-appropriate, but also culturally relevant and that match their everyday experiences. Reading becomes meaningful when students can see themselves reflected in the content, which strengthens their ability to acquire knowledge.

- **Impact of Socioeconomic and Family Context**

Socioeconomic factors and family context have a notable impact on reading development. Students from homes where reading is part of everyday life tend to have an advantage in vocabulary and comprehension of narrative structures (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In contrast, those who lack this assistance present additional challenges and may be more motivated to read. In these cases, the teacher acts as a mediator, providing an enriching learning environment that, to the extent possible, compensates for the shortcomings of the home environment.

- **Emotional Traits and Behaviors in the Reading Experience**

Understanding students' emotions and behavioral characteristics is critical. Self-confidence and the ability to cope with challenges have an influence on a child's readiness to

read and comprehend texts. A student with low self-esteem may experience anxiety when reading aloud or facing complex texts, which affects their comprehension process (Dweck, 2006). Conversely, fostering an environment in which mistakes are seen as learning opportunities can help establish a growth mindset in children, making them more resilient to reading challenges.

### **1.1.3 Reading comprehension strategies**

Reading comprehension strategies are fundamental in the educational environment, since they promote an active and deep reading process, enabling students to understand and interpret texts in a meaningful way. According to Pressley and Afflerbach (1995). Using reading strategies such as predicting, visualizing, questioning, and synthesizing information contributes to reflective learning and greater information retention. These strategies not only increase comprehension but also boost students' motivation and interest because they allow them to connect the content of the text to their own experiences and prior knowledge (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

The most fundamental strategy is to ask questions before, during, and after reading. According to Keene and Zimmermann (1997), this method encourages students to question the content of the text and actively seek out answers, which increases their analytical and comprehension skills. Observation, or the elaboration of mental images from the text, is another fundamental strategy that enables students to appreciate the content, which makes

comprehension possible by stimulating both their imagination and their capacity for interpretation (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

#### **1.1.4 Didactic strategies**

Teaching strategies are methods, procedures or resources used by the teacher to ensure that students achieve significant learning, transforming learning into an active process. Ausubel emphasizes that effective teaching strategies must build on what students already know, thus facilitating a stronger and more meaningful understanding of new material. As he states, “If I had to reduce all educational psychology to a single principle, I would say this: The single most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows”. Find out and teach accordingly (Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View, Ausubel, 1968, p. vi).

#### **1.1.5 Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and process the meaning of written text, which includes both literal interpretation and the ability to make inferences and connect ideas. According to Catherine (2002), reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and engagement with written language. This process involves various cognitive and linguistic skills, such as prior knowledge, vocabulary and the ability to analyze and synthesize information.

#### **1.1.6 Advantages of reading comprehension**

The act of reading offers numerous advantages, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social advantages. The following are some of the primary advantages of reading:

- **Improvements in cognitive skills:** The practice of reading regularly enhances one's vocabulary and language proficiency.
- **Enhancement of concentration and attention:** Reading needs concentration and focus; thereby, enhancing attention to other areas of life. Reading provides mental stimulation by challenging the brain and promoting its active and healthy functioning; thus, reducing the possibility of developing cognitive diseases such as Alzheimer's.

### **1.1.7 THE SOCIO CULTURAL-APPROACH**

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights how learning is shaped by the social environment, especially through interaction between people and the surrounding culture. His concept of the zone of proximal development (ZDP) argues that learners can achieve deeper understanding when they receive support from a mentor or more advanced peer. This type of help enables them to overcome challenges and acquire skills that, without such guidance, would be difficult to achieve alone. (Vygotsky, 1978)

### **1.1.8 THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF READING BY LOUISE ROSENBLATT.**

Louise Rosenblatt developed *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (Rosenblatt, 1978). He suggests that reading is a dynamic “transaction” between reader and text. In this model, the interpretation of a text is not a passive process in which the reader simply absorbs information, but an active interaction in which the reader and the text influence each other.

Louise Rosenblatt's reading transaction theory assumes that the understanding of a text depends largely on the reader's experiences, emotions, prior knowledge, and context. This approach implies that each act of reading is unique, as each reader brings his or her own personal and emotional background to the process of interpreting the text.

In this sense, Rosenblatt argues that the meaning of a text is not fixed or resides solely in the author's words but is actively constructed through the interaction between the reader and the text.

From this perspective, Rosenblatt's theory is highly relevant in the educational field, as it suggests that for students to effectively understand a text, literal or structural teaching is not required. Teacher must consider students' interests, knowledge, and context, encouraging activities that enable students to connect their personal experiences with reading. In this way, instead of seeking a “correct” or universal interpretation, students are encouraged to construct their own meaning, generating more comprehensive and meaningful learning.

### **1.1.9 THEORY OF INFORMATION PROCESSING**

Neisser (1967). Through his book *Cognitive Psychology*, he addresses the way in which the human mind processes, organizes and retrieves information, establishing a parallelism between human cognition and information processing systems, such as computers.

According to this author, cognitive processes can be understood as stages of information processing, which include encoding, storage and retrieval. This approach has been essential for the progress of theories that examine how people interact with information.

## **1.2 ANTECEDENTS**

Salvatierra, (2019) conducted research entitled *“Didactic Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills in the Teaching-Learning Process of the English Language* at the ‘Nuevo Ecuador’ High School in Esmeraldas. The objective of this descriptive research with a qualitative and quantitative approach was to analyze the didactic strategies to improve reading comprehension skills in the teaching-learning process of English. The population consisted of 1,089 students and

5 teachers, and the sample was selected intentionally, including 102 students and 5 teachers, since this was the place of work of the author, who was immersed in the problem addressed. The research employed methods of analysis, synthesis and hermeneutics, together with survey techniques and reading tests. The results indicated that most students read only when instructed to do so by the teacher, reflecting a lack of motivation to read in English. In addition, there was little evidence that students enjoyed reading aloud. Although some showed reading comprehension with the help of dictionaries, the scanning strategy was the most commonly used. Despite low motivation, most students were more comfortable looking at pictures and reading magazines. The research concluded that reading strategies needed to be reinforced to improve English text comprehension effectively.

Cevallos, (2023) conducted a study entitled “*Techniques and Strategies for Reading Comprehension: A Didactic Proposal*” with the objective of identifying the reading comprehension level of third year students of General Basic Education at unidad Educativa San José Benito Cottolengo.

A qualitative study was carried out with a descriptive-explanatory approach, in which semi-structured interview techniques were applied to the teachers of the year and a documentary study was conducted. This included research in databases and virtual libraries such as Scopus, SciELO and Google Scholar, using keywords such as reading comprehension, inferential reading, critical reading, metacognitive strategies and teaching strategies.

The results showed that there are shortcomings and weaknesses that limit students' more accelerated progress. Among these are the shortage of cognitive, metacognitive and resource management strategies used in reading classes, which are based only on the organization of sentences of small paragraphs, self-assessment of reading comprehension, questions on reading topics, transformation of sentences of a text and monitoring of reading speed.

It is concluded that the didactic-methodological process used by teachers limits the progress of reading comprehension to the desired level, so it is imperative to carry out the didactic proposal resulting from this research.

Zamora, (2020) conducted research entitled. *A socio-Culturally Based Didactic Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Skills* descriptive mixed-scope research with the purpose of designing a sociocultural didactic strategy to improve students' reading skills. The study population consisted of 100 English teachers from various schools in Esmeraldas, and the sample consisted of 28 randomly selected teachers. The methods used were analysis, synthesis and hermeneutics, while the techniques applied were surveys and documentary review. The results indicated that the main difficulties of the students in reading skills were the lack of critical thinking and low analysis of the content of the readings. Most of the students were able to identify the main ideas but had difficulties in delving deeper into the meaning and context of the texts. In addition, the reading strategies employed by teachers were predominantly individual and did not favor social interaction in learning.

Based on these findings, a sociocultural didactic strategy consisting of three stages was designed: Socio-Interactional Reading Preparatory, to prepare students through socio-interactive activities, and Socio-Interactional Reading, which creates a collaborative environment for learning to read.

Sosa Daza, E. P., Macías Angulo, F. del R., & Ramírez Lozada, H. (2023) conducted research entitled *ChatGPT-Based Didactic Strategies to Improve Students' English Language Reading and Writing Skills*. The objective of this research was to design ChatGPT-based strategies to improve English language reading and writing skills of high school seniors in Esmeraldas, 2023. The research used a mixed approach, with methods of analysis and synthesis, hermeneutic, descriptive statistical, inductive and deductive. The scope was descriptive, and the design was non-experimental. The population (Sosa Daza, 2023) consisted of 60 English teachers from different schools in Esmeraldas, both private and public. The results revealed that 70.50% of the teachers' faced difficulties in developing reading and writing skills, while 84.7% showed interest in using ChatGPT for teaching. Key content for the strategies included expressing critical opinions and organizing ideas. The main topics diagnosed were leisure activities, environment, stories and personal reflections. This diagnosis allowed the design of didactic strategies with three stages: Preparation, Immersion Activities and Free Use of the Language, each with their respective objectives, procedures and activities.

In the research entitled *"Didactic Strategies Applied to Reading Comprehension in English"* Caceres (2014), the author studied how didactic strategies can improve reading

comprehension in English within the high school context. The study, conducted at the Centro Universitario Anglo Mexicano, Cancun campus, aimed at identifying strategies that promote a hybrid learning environment to enhance reading comprehension in C1 level students. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, the research incorporated participant observation techniques, interviews, questionnaires, and self-assessment with a sample of 17 students. The findings highlighted that the effective use of reading strategies before, during, and after reading activities benefits students' performance, emphasizing the importance of motivation toward the topics proposed by teachers to achieve a positive impact on the reading comprehension process.

V.V. Macias Loor y Zambrano Acosta (2023) proposed *Open educational resources as a didactic strategy for strengthening reading comprehension in the English language* ‘explored how information and communication technologies (ICT) can transform the process of reading comprehension in English, highlighting the importance of teachers motivating students to read through innovative tools. In their paper, the authors analyzed the theoretical foundations of reading comprehension in English and how open educational resources (OER) can support more effective pedagogical practices. To do so, they used a qualitative approach and methods such as inductive-deductive, analysis-synthesis and historical-logical, reviewing scientific articles and theses. Their findings showed that the use of OER, especially platforms such as YouTube, can make reading more engaging and dynamic, fostering greater motivation in students. They concluded that integrating OER-based teaching strategies is a powerful tool to improve reading comprehension in English, promoting interactive and meaningful learning. In the same way, the author of the

present thesis coincides that these new ways of communication and that are familiar to children, may work as efficient tools to learn, ever since they are correctly used

## **CHAPTER II**

### **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Context**

The research was conducted in a basic education institution, located in an urban area of Esmeraldas, Ecuador. Esmeraldas is a city known for its diverse population and rich cultural heritage. Most public schools in this region have limited resources, and the level of English education has generally been low due to lack of materials and adequate teacher training.

## **2.2 Type of investigation**

The study used mixed methods research design to investigate and develop an innovative didactic strategy aimed at improving English reading comprehension among primary school students in Esmeraldas. Mixed methodology is a research method that allows the collection, analysis and combination of quantitative and qualitative data. According to Sampieri & Baptista (2014), mixed research does not replace quantitative or qualitative methods but rather takes advantage of the strengths of both by combining them and minimizing their possible weaknesses.

## **2.3 Population and Sample**

The research was applied to 5th grade students in a basic education institution of Esmeraldas who were learning English as a second language. A purposive sample of 20 students and 5 teachers from various elementary schools in Esmeraldas.

## **2.4 Operationalization of the Variables (Appendix 1)**

- **Independent variable:** didactic strategy for reading comprehension
- **Dependent Variable:** English language reading comprehension of basic students.

## **2.5 Methods**

In this research, a questionnaire addressed to students and an interview with English teachers were used as instruments. The inductive method focused on the observation and analysis of phenomena, starting from these to derive theories or generalizing patterns. On the other hand, the deductive method began with a theory or hypothesis, which was then tested using empirical data, as pointed out by Mill (2023). This study used a combined approach, integrating the inductive-deductive and analysis-synthesis methods, since the main objective was to design a didactic strategy to improve students' English reading comprehension.

## **2.6 Techniques and instruments for collecting data**

A test was used as a research technique and a specific questionnaire was designed to fit the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of five multiple-choice questions based on a Likert scale. Its main objective was to gather the opinion of students to diagnose the main difficulties students, face when reading texts in English on effective teaching strategies to improve reading comprehension in English. In addition, it aimed to identify students' preferred reading topics and to define the key steps and procedures to be included in the proposed strategy.

## **2.7 Hypotheses**

The application of a reading comprehension strategy that considers the characteristics of elementary school students and their context in the various activities they perform, along with good teacher preparation, will effectively develop the reading comprehension skills of elementary school students.

The use of teaching strategies tailored to each student's specific needs and level, such as guided reading and vocabulary-building activities, has been shown to significantly improve primary

students' reading comprehension in English. This approach promotes greater motivation and confidence in dealing with new texts in the target language.

## **2.8 Data processing**

Using descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages are determined. These data were taken to Microsoft Excel to design figures with bar graphs and charts were created to visually represent the results.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **RESULTS**

The main objective of this study is to propose a strategy for better understanding of the English idiom in primary education students of the city of Esmeraldas. For this purpose, a mixed methods approach was implemented, which included a questionnaire to students and interviews with English teachers. These tools were used to identify the main challenges that students face in

reading comprehension and the teachers' opinions on effective strategies to address these difficulties.

It was carried out by 3 English teachers from different educational institutions in Esmeraldas. The interviews were structured to explore their experiences, training and the specific methods they use to improve reading comprehension, as well as their perceptions of students' interests and preferences regarding reading topics.

The analysis of the data includes a detailed comparison of the resources, with the focus on the identification of barriers to reading in communities and options for better reading.

**Table 1: First part of interview to teachers**

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<i>Questions</i>	<i>Teacher A</i>	<i>Teacher B</i>	<i>Teacher C</i>
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1. What do you consider to be the main difficulties your students face when reading texts in English? I think the main difficulties are related to limited vocabulary. Many students struggle with understanding habits, so they find it hard to focus on texts for long periods. This, combined with unfamiliar cultural meaning of the text. I've also noticed that they struggle to identify main ideas and details because they're not used to strategies like skimming or summarizing.

2. What methods have you used to help students overcome difficulties in reading comprehension in English? I've tried various strategies, such as teaching vocabulary before reading a text, breaking readings into smaller parts, and explaining the context. I also use guided questions to help them focus on specific points in the text. Group activities have been helpful for them to share ideas and support each other.

3. How would you describe your students' motivation and interest in reading texts in English? What factors influence this?

Some students are curious about topics related to popular culture, such as movies or celebrities. If the text connects to these interests, they're much more engaged.

The level of difficulty is key. If the text is too advanced, students lose confidence and motivation. Providing texts that are slightly above their level encourages them to try without feeling overwhelmed.

Technical or scientific texts are often very difficult for them because they use language that students are not familiar with. I've also noticed that long stories or texts with very formal vocabulary frustrate them. They prefer everyday topics and shorter texts.

4. What types of topics do your students find most challenging and why?

Technical or scientific texts are often very difficult for them because they use language that students are not familiar with. I've also noticed that long stories or texts with very formal vocabulary frustrate them. They prefer everyday topics and shorter texts.

Historical texts or those with old-fashioned language are particularly tough for them because the vocabulary and sentence structures feel outdated and irrelevant.

Poetry or texts with figurative language are challenging because students take everything literally. They struggle to interpret metaphors or idiomatic expressions in English.



7. How do you identify when a student has reading comprehension difficulties in English? If they can't answer basic questions about the text, like 'What is it about?' or 'What happened at the end?', it's a clear sign there's an issue. Sometimes they show frustration or disengagement, like looking away or quickly putting the book aside. I notice it when students avoid reading aloud or say they don't understand without even trying. Sometimes they just repeat sentences without processing their meaning.

8. What tools or resources do you use to support reading in English in the classroom? I use pictures and illustrations to accompany the readings since students understand better when they can relate the text to something visual. I like to use songs or short rhyming stories because they are easier to remember, and students enjoy them a lot. Sometimes, I use apps or interactive games in English to reinforce reading activities.

9. What role do pre-reading activities play in understanding English texts? Pre-reading activities are essential to activate prior knowledge and prepare students for the text. Without them, they're going blind. They help students get familiar with the words and context before reading, which makes them feel more comfortable and confident. They're especially useful for generating interest. If I introduce the text with intriguing questions or a short talk, students are usually more motivated to read.

10. How do you encourage interest in reading? I look for texts that align with their interests. I organize activities like dramatizing stories or challenges. I organize reading challenges or games where

English texts among your interests, like animal creating drawings about students can earn points or students? stories, adventures, or what they read. This makes rewards for reading and stories related to reading more fun and understanding correctly. They holidays such as meaningful. are very motivated by friendly Halloween or competition. Christmas.

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**Note:** Interview applied to teachers

### **Results of the observation and interviews to teachers**

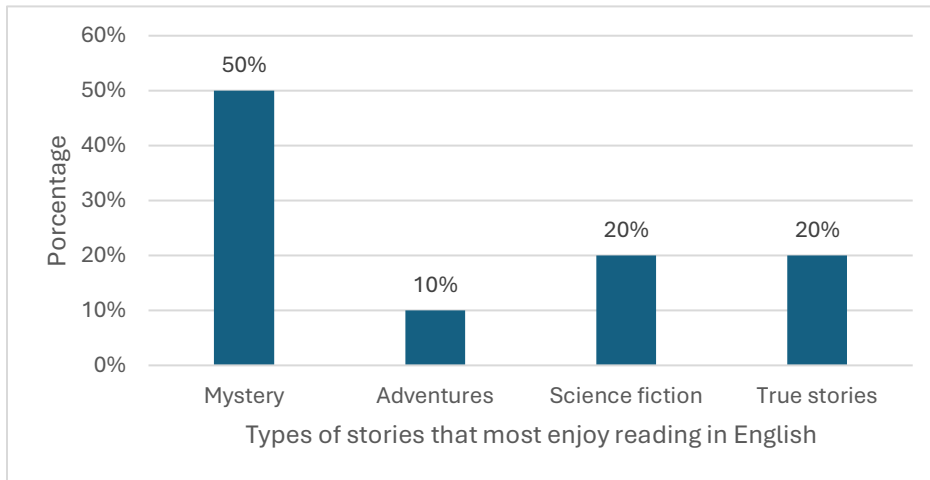
The teachers interviewed reported that students face significant challenges when reading English texts, mainly due to a lack of vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and a lack of cultural context related to the texts. Teachers resort to strategies such as the introduction of prior vocabulary, preparation activities before reading, and the use of visual resources that simplify comprehension. They also pointed out that students show greater interest and motivation when the texts deal with topics related to their tastes and preferences, which underlines the importance of adapting the pedagogical content to their specific needs.

### **Results of the survey applied to students**

About types of stories that most enjoy reading in English (figure 1). The results obtained reveal that the majority of students (50%) prefer the adventure genre, suggesting that they enjoy dynamic and action-packed stories. This result is followed by the mystery genre and true stories, each with 20%. Finally, the science fiction genre had the lowest preference with 10%, indicating that students show less interest in futuristic or technological stories.

**Figure 1**

*Types of stories that most enjoy reading in English*

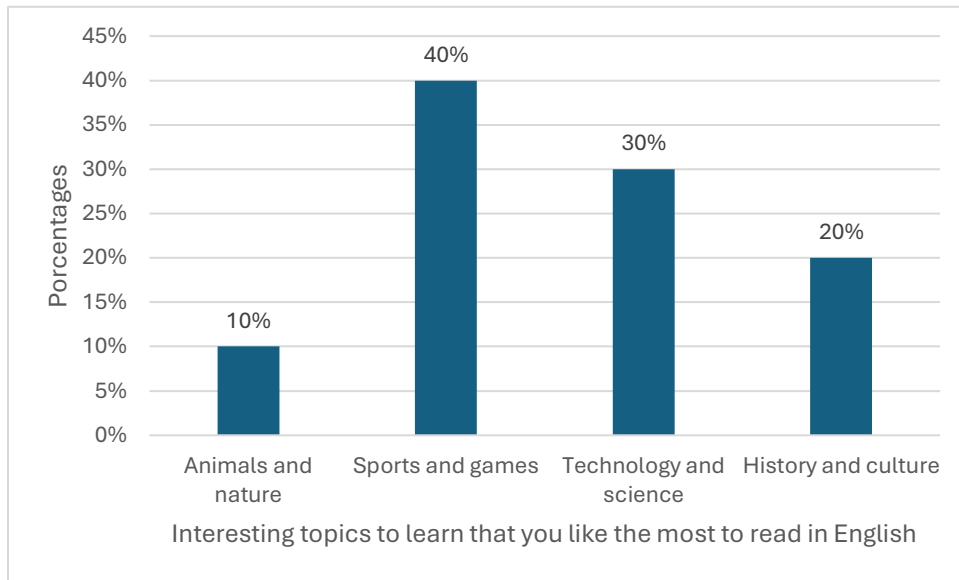


**Note:** Survey applied to students

About interesting topics to learn that you like the most to read in English (figure 2). As for reading topics, 50% of students indicated that they prefer to read about sports and games, suggesting that texts related to recreational activities may better capture their interest. Topics about animals and nature, as well as science and technology, were chosen by 20% of respondents, reflecting a moderate interest. In contrast, history and culture were the least preferred topics, at 10%.

**Figure 2**

*Interesting topics to learn that you like the most to read in English*

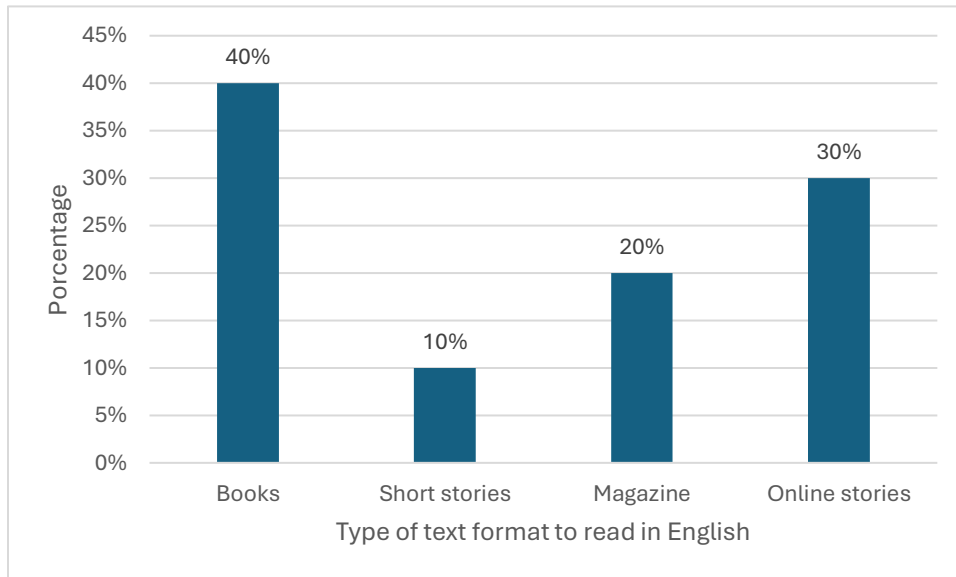


**Note:** Survey applied to students

About of text format to read in English (figure 3). The results show that traditional books are the least used format (40%) for reading in English. In contrast, short stories reached 10%, indicating the preference for short and accessible texts. Magazines represent only 20%, reflecting a limited use of this resource. Finally, online stories obtained 30%, suggesting that digital formats are not yet the main choice for students.

**Figure 3**

*Type of text format to read in English*

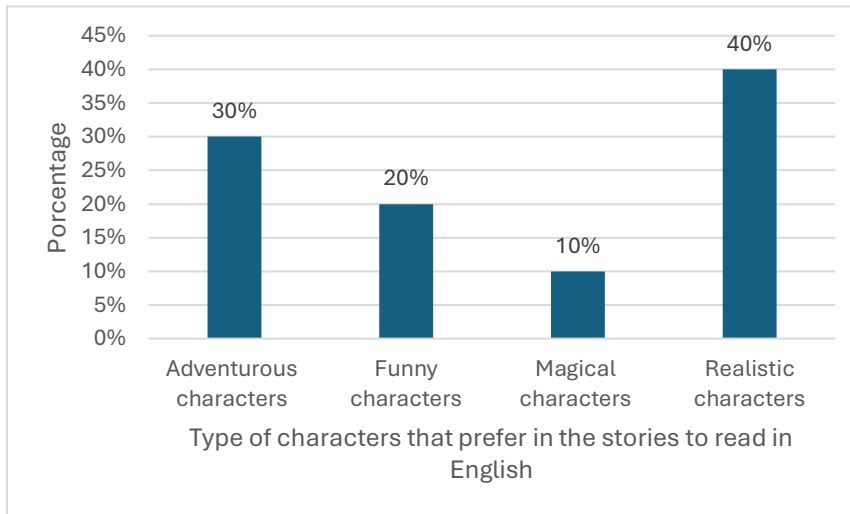


**Note:** Survey applied to students

About type of characters that prefer in the stories to read in English (figure 4). Students showed a greater affinity for entertaining characters (40%), showing that humor fun are important factors in reading motivation. Realistic and adventurous characters scored 30% each, indicating that some students prefer stories with protagonists they can relate to or who have exciting experiences. On the other hand, magical characters were the least chosen (10%), showing a lower inclination towards this type of narrative.

**Figure 4**

*Type of characters that prefer in the stories to read in English*

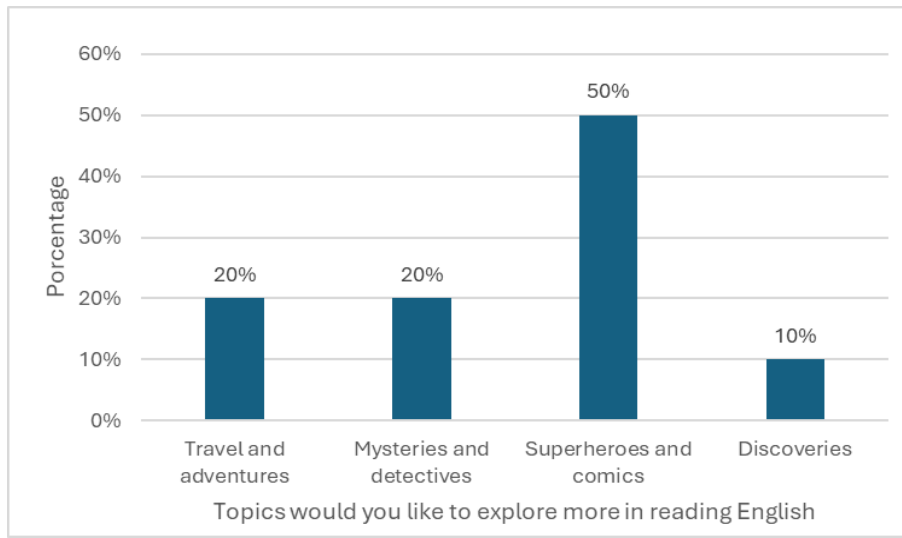


**Note:** Survey applied to students

About topics would you like to explore more in reading English (figure 5). Data analysis shows that superheroes and comics were the most valued, with 50%, indicating that these types of stories can be an effective tool to improve reading comprehension, as they combine visual and narrative elements that are attractive to students. Mystery and detective themes scored 20%, reflecting that a significant group of students enjoy intriguing relationships that stimulate logical thinking and deduction. Travel and adventure were chosen by 20% of respondents, suggesting that stories of exploration and discovery generate a high level of interest. Finally, scientific discoveries

scored only 10%, evidencing a lower enthusiasm for this type of content, possibly due to its more technical or abstract nature.

*Topics would you like to explore more in reading English*



**Note:** Survey applied to students

## **Proposal**

### **Title: Reading train**

An innovative teaching strategy was designed to improve students' reading comprehension called Reading Train. This strategy consists of 3 steps, each step has an activity, detailed below:

### **General Objective**

To improve elementary students' English reading comprehension

**PHASE I: PRE-READING (Start Station)**

**Objective:** To familiarize students with new vocabulary and concepts to prepare them for the reading lesson.

**Activity:** Introducing key vocabulary through visual aids, contextual examples, technological resource.

**Teacher's Role:** Active-guiding and providing instructions

**Teacher's procedures:**

- Show flashcards containing key vocabulary related to reading.
- Write the vocabulary words on the board with example sentences.
- Pronounce each word and sentence aloud for students to listen.
- Engage students in a brainstorming activity about the meaning of the words.
- Create a word wall or chart linking the vocabulary to visual representations.

**Students' role:** Active observing, listening, and participating.

**Students' procedures:**

1. Observe the flashcards attentively.

2. Read the vocabulary words and sentences written on the board.
3. Listen to the correct pronunciation and contextual usage.
4. Participate in brainstorming meanings and associating vocabulary with images.

## **PHASE II: WHILE-READING (content manipulation)**

**Objective:** To engage students in activities that promote understanding and retention of the reading material.

**Activity:** Using guided reading and interactive exercises to support comprehension.

**Teacher's role:** Passive -acting as a guide and monitor.

### **Teacher's procedures:**

- Distribute printed versions of the reading text and complementary worksheets.
- Conduct a guided reading session, stopping explaining, challenging words or concepts.
- Ask questions to encourage predictions and inferences about the text.

**Students' role:** Active-practicing and collaborating.

### **Students' procedures:**

1. Follow along with the teacher during the guided reading.
2. Highlight key information and unfamiliar words in the text.
3. Work in pairs or small groups to answer comprehension questions and complete activities.

4. Discuss their answers with the class to reinforce understanding.

### **PHASE III: PRODUCTION**

**Objective:** To encourage students to demonstrate their understanding of the reading material through creative and communicative tasks.

**Activity:** Creating role-playing on the reading.

**Teacher's role:** Passive -observing and facilitating.

**Teacher's procedures:**

1. Provide guidelines for creating summaries or story maps.
2. Assign roles and scenarios for role-playing activities.
3. Observe students' presentations or performances, taking notes for feedback

**Students' role:** Active-creating and performing.

**Students' procedures:**

1. Write a summary or create a story map based on the reading.
2. Collaborate with peers to prepare and rehearse role play.
3. Present their work to the class, demonstrating their understanding of the text.

## **PHASE IV: FEEDBACK AND CORRECTION**

**Objective:** To provide constructive feedback and reinforce reading comprehension skills.

**Activity:** Reviewing students' work and providing targeted feedback.

**Teacher's role:** Active -advising and clarifying.

### **Teacher's procedures:**

1. Review students' summaries, story maps, and performances.
2. Highlight strengths and areas for improvement.
3. Conduct a group discussion to address common challenges and clarify doubts.

**Students' role:** Active -reflecting and improving.

### **Students' procedures:**

1. Listen attentively to feedback from the teacher and peers.
2. Revise their work based on the feedback received.
3. Participate in discussions to clarify doubts and reinforce learning.

### **Methodology**

- Constructivism
- Active learning
- Communicative approach
- **Resources**

Didactic cards, pictures, videos, pencils, marker, papers.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DISCUSSION**

The results of this research confirmed that reading comprehension in English remains a major challenge for primary school students in Esmeraldas, coinciding with the studies by Salvatierra (2019) and Cevallos (2023), who highlighted the lack of effective teaching strategies and low motivation towards reading in English. The main difficulty was identified as the lack of vocabulary and grammatical complexity of the texts, which coincided with the findings of Zamora (2020). Furthermore, interviews with teachers revealed that students became demotivated when texts were not aligned with their interests and when linguistic structures were too advanced for their level of proficiency, reinforcing the importance.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach, according to which learning is facilitated when content is linked to the student's environment and previous experiences. Students were also found to prefer reading over adventure, mystery, and games and technology, which was consistent with Rosenblatt's (1978) theory that the interpretation of a text depends on the interaction between the reader and his or her individual experience.

Teachers also indicated that traditional teaching prioritized reading aloud and identifying key words, leaving aside inferential and critical reading, which was consistent with Neisser's (1967) information processing model, which highlights the need to guide students in developing cognitive skills. In this context, the present research provided evidence on the effectiveness of a structured teaching strategy in phases (pre-reading, guided reading, and post-reading) to improve reading comprehension in English, increasing not only academic performance but also students' confidence and motivation.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

- To diagnose the main difficulties students, have in reading comprehension in English, a questionnaire was carried out which showed that students face obstacles due to a lack of vocabulary, lack of interest and difficulty in identifying key ideas in texts.

They often feel overwhelmed and bored by the topics covered in class, as they are not always of interest. In fact, they prefer to read about topics such as games, mystery, sports, technology and superheroes. Therefore, it is important to consider their opinions and tastes, adapting the materials to different learning styles to improve their motivation and results.

- Determining students' interests and tastes significantly influences their level and motivation in reading comprehension. Adapting reading materials to personal preferences and experiences can increase their commitment and facilitate the assimilation of information in a language.

- The elaboration of a pedagogical teaching strategy must contemplate fundamental phases. To achieve this, it is essential to recognize the problem and structure the crucial phases that will guide students in the progress of their reading skills. These phases include the activation of prior knowledge, guided reading, implementation of comprehension tactics, creation of tasks after reading, as well as evaluation and feedback.

- Throughout this process, it is essential to utilize techniques like skimming and scanning. These strategies help students pinpoint the main idea and find specific information efficiently. The design of a didactic strategy aimed at improving reading comprehension in English in elementary school students is not only limited to a methodological issue but also implies a significant commitment to their academic and personal development.

- Throughout this research, it was concluded that the difficulties associated with reading do not depend exclusively on the level of English proficiency, but are also influenced by factors such as motivation, students' interests, and the way texts and activities are presented.

Therefore, the proposed didactic strategy does not focus solely on reading techniques; it also focuses on establishing a meaningful connection between the learner and the text, through the implementation of dynamic and structured activities. These activities range from the activation of previous knowledge to the practical application of what has been learned, with the objective that children not only perform the action of reading but also manage to fully understand and enjoy the process.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results obtained from the interview with teachers, aimed at designing a proposal that highlights the importance of applying teaching strategies to improve reading comprehension in elementary school children, the following recommendations are presented:

- For elementary school teachers in the city of Esmeraldas, it is essential to recognize, search for, design, and include dynamic, interactive teaching strategies in English classes to improve reading comprehension skills. Incorporating topics of interest to them can be of great help. When the content is aligned with their preferences, attention, motivation, and learning are more meaningful.

- For the educational district, it is crucial to provide English teachers with training and resources that integrate teaching strategies for reading comprehension in English. These trainings should focus on active methodologies such as the communicative approach, task-based learning, and explicit teaching of reading strategies. In addition, it is necessary to update and strengthen the curriculum to include a progressive approach to student development. In fact, it is suggested to select and adapt reading materials based on students' interests and levels, with the aim of increasing their motivation and active participation in the learning process.

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<i>Questions</i>	<i>Teacher A</i>	<i>Teacher B</i>	<i>Teacher C</i>
1.What do you consider to be the main difficulties your students face when reading texts in English?	I think the main difficulties are related to limited vocabulary. Many students don't know key words, which prevents them from understanding the overall meaning of the text. I've also noticed that they struggle to identify main ideas and details because they're not used to strategies like skimming or summarizing.	Many students struggle with understanding sentence structure in English, especially when it's different from their native language. This confusion makes it hard for them to follow the meaning of the text.	Students often lack reading habits, so they find it hard to focus on texts for long periods. This, combined with unfamiliar cultural references, makes it challenging to grasp the context.
2. What strategies or methods have you used to help students overcome difficulties in reading comprehension in English?	I've tried various strategies, such as teaching vocabulary before reading a text, breaking readings into smaller parts, and explaining the context. I also use guided questions to help them focus on specific points in the text. Group activities have been helpful for them to share ideas and support each other.	I encourage students to use dictionaries or online tools to look up words, but I also teach them how to infer meanings through context clues. This helps them become more independent readers.	I've incorporated visual aids like pictures and diagrams to support the text. For example, pairing a story with images helps students connect the words to what's happening in the narrative.
3. How would you describe your students' motivation and interest in reading texts in	Some students are curious about topics related to popular culture, such as movies or celebrities. If the text connects to these interests, they're much more engaged.	The level of difficulty is key. If the text is too advanced, students lose confidence and motivation. Providing texts that are slightly	Technical or scientific texts are often very difficult for them because they use language that students are not familiar with. I've also noticed that long stories or texts with very formal

<p>English? What factors influence this?</p>		<p>above their level encourages them to try without feeling overwhelmed.</p>	<p>vocabulary frustrate them. They prefer everyday topics and shorter texts.</p>
<p>4. What types of texts or topics do your students find most challenging and why?</p>	<p>"Technical or scientific texts are often very difficult for them because they use language that students are not familiar with. I've also noticed that long stories or texts with very formal vocabulary frustrate them. They prefer everyday topics and shorter texts.</p>	<p>Historical texts or those with old-fashioned language are particularly tough for them because the vocabulary and sentence structures feel outdated and irrelevant.</p>	<p>Poetry or texts with figurative language are challenging because students take everything literally. They struggle to interpret metaphors or idiomatic expressions in English.</p>
<p>5. In your experience, how do students' prior skills (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) affect their ability to comprehend texts in English?</p>	<p>They have a big impact. Students with a solid foundation in vocabulary and grammar have a huge advantage because they can infer the meaning of unknown words from context. On the other hand, those without that foundation feel lost, even with simple texts. It's like they have to translate word by word, which really slows their progress.</p>	<p>If students have good listening and speaking skills, they can sometimes connect what they hear to the words they see, which helps with comprehension. Without this, it's much harder for them to make sense of texts.</p>	<p>Grammar plays a crucial role. Students who understand tenses and sentence structures can follow the narrative better, while those who don't often misinterpret the sequence of events in the text.</p>

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

*Interview with the teachers*

### **APPENDIX 2**

## **Instruments**

### **Questionnaire 2: Determining students' topics of interest concerning texts**

**Instructions: Choose the option that best describes your interests.**

1. What type of stories do you enjoy reading the most in English?

a) Adventures

b) Science fiction

c) Mystery

d) True stories

2. What topic interests you the most for reading in English?

a) Animals and nature

b) Sports and games

c) Technology and science

d) History and culture

3. What type of text format do you prefer to read in English?

a) Books

b) short stories

c) Magazine articles

d) Online stories

4. What type of characters do you prefer in the stories you read in English?

a) Heroes and villains

b) Animals and fantasy creatures

c) Ordinary people

d) Historical figures

5. Which of these topics would you like to explore more in your English reading?

a) Travel and adventures

b) Mysteries and detectives

c) Superheroes and comics

d) Science and discoveries

APPENDIX 3



ESMERALDAS

CARRERA PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Esmeraldas  
Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros  
Esmeraldas

13 de diciembre del 2024  
Mgt. Mariana González Jama  
Rectora de la Unidad Educativa Fiscal  
"Manuel Nieto Cadena"

Estimada compañera

Reciba un cordial saludo de parte de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Esmeraldas y, en particular, de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros. Por medio de la presente, deseamos solicitar su amable autorización para que la estudiante SABRINA PATRICIA GÓNGORA DAZA, de nuestra carrera, con cédula de identidad: 0804097236, pueda aplicar los instrumentos de investigación correspondientes a su trabajo de titulación en su prestigiosa institución. El título del trabajo es:

**ESTRATEGIA DIDÁCTICA PARA MEJORAR LA COMPRENSIÓN LECTORA EN IDIOMA INGLÉS EN ESTUDIANTES DE NIVEL BÁSICO EN LA CIUDAD DE ESMERALDAS**

El propósito de esta solicitud es permitir a nuestros estudiantes recolectar datos de manera responsable y ética dentro de su institución, contribuyendo al desarrollo académico tanto de ellos como de la comunidad educativa en general. Los datos obtenidos serán tratados con estricta confidencialidad y únicamente con fines académicos, respetando los derechos de los participantes y cumpliendo con las normativas vigentes.

Agradecemos de antemano su disposición para apoyar el proceso formativo de nuestros estudiantes y quedamos atentos a cualquier consulta o requerimiento adicional que pudiera tener respecto a esta solicitud.

Quedamos a la espera de su respuesta y reiteramos nuestro compromiso con el fortalecimiento de los lazos académicos entre nuestras instituciones.

Atentamente,

Mgt. Marjorie Perlaza Rodríguez  
Coordinadora de la carrera



RECIBIDO SEC. GRAL  
Fecha: 20 Diciembre 2024  
FIRMA

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Variables	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Dimensions	Indicators	Techniques	Instruments
<p><b>Dependent</b></p> <p>English language reading comprehension of basic students.</p>	<p>Variable focuses on students' ability to understand the meaning of text, identify the main idea and key details, make inferences based on reading and employ didactic strategy to improve their overall understanding of written material in English.</p>	<p>It is a process in which specific activities are developed through didactic strategies that promote comprehensive reading. These activities are designed to improve students' ability to identify the main idea and key details, make inferences based on the reading, and apply critical thinking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Text</li> <li>❖ Critical thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Identify the main idea</li> <li>❖ Inferences and critical thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Test</li> <li>❖ Observation</li> </ul>	<p>Questionnaire</p>
<p><b>Independent</b></p> <p>Didactic strategy for reading comprehension</p>	<p>Refers to the specific methods and techniques employed by educators to enhance the ability of basic school students in Esmeraldas to understand, interpret, and</p>	<p>It is a process that includes specific, measurable techniques and methods used by teachers to improve the English reading comprehension skills of elementary school students in Esmeraldas. It</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Pre-reading strategy</li> <li>❖ Active reading strategy</li> <li>❖ Post-reading strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Note-taking</li> <li>Highlighting main ideas</li> <li>❖ Asking questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<p>Survey</p>

	analyze written texts in English	includes strategies in three stages: before, during and after reading, and focuses on improving the interpretation and analysis of written texts in English.		during reading		
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