ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL

Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanísticas

"INFLUENCE OF INTENSIVE READING PRACTICE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKIMMING SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT AN ECUADORIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY"

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

Previa la obtención del Título de:

MAGISTER EN ENSEÑANZA DE INGLES COMO IDIOMA EXTRANJERO

Presentado por:

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Guayaquil – Ecuador

2017

Acknowledgments

I would like to start expressing my sincere gratitude to God, who is the motor of my life and who inspire me. Without His blessings, it would not be possible for me to achieve this new goal in my life.

To my family, my husband and my kids, who have always supported me in every single goal I have wanted to follow. They have been there for me in the long nights and the stressful days with a beautiful smile that has inspired me and my glass of soda for waking me up. To my parents, my sister and my brother, who has helped me in many different ways through this path, my sincere gratitude, and love.

To my teachers and all the staff of this Master Program, who have worked hard to make me a better professional, sharing knowledge and advice.

To my dear tutor, who guided us through the development of this work, helping us to express our ideas and findings to improve the quality of Ecuadorian education.

To my colleagues, who spent eighteen months enjoying a great learning adventure, and from whom I have taken so many good ideas.

Finally, I have a great feeling of gratefulness for my friend Angelita, who has worked with me in this research work. She has supported and helped me; a big thank you to her for being patient and for all the fun we have had during this time.

Mónica

I would like to thank God in the first place for all his boundless blessings which allowed me to finish this Master's program and the present study.

I would also like to thank my mother Angela and siblings Ramon, Paola, Julissa and Isidro for all their love and support during this process.

To the professors and authorities of the Master's program my sincere acknowledgments for all their time and for all the valuable knowledge and resources they shared with me and my partners, and for helping me to be a better person and professional.

Many thanks also to Mg. Julio Rivadeneira, who was also part of this MTEFL program at ESPOL and who encouraged me to follow his path of excellence in such prestigious university.

To my dear tutor Ph.D. Lauren Rhodes, who guided and supported us during all this process, many thanks for her patience and all her valuable suggestions.

To my beloved husband, infinite thanks for all his love and support. For all the time we had to be away, for all the moments sacrificed and for all his patience until now.

Many thanks as well to all the people who participated in this study and to all the people who in one way or another helped and supported us during all this process.

Finally, to my dear classmate, co-worker and friend Monica for all the moments spent together during this program and project, for all her support, for letting me learn from her experience and knowledge, and of course for all the funny moments.
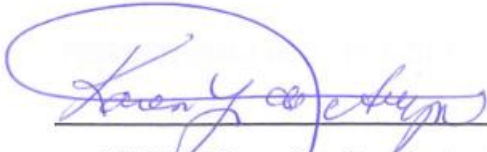
Ángela

Dedication

This work was done looking for improvement in the process of English language teaching in our country. I would like to dedicate this effort to all the educational community, teachers and learners of English as a Foreign Language. I also would like to dedicate this work to my kids, Diego and Irina, who I would like to be part of an excellent learning environment when they grow up.

Mónica

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mom who did everything possible so that my brothers and I could have a good education.

Ángela

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Abstract

This research is intended to investigate the real influence of an intensive reading program in the development of skimming skills. The researchers analyzed and interpreted data collected during an intervention to an experimental group of undergraduate students in a public university in the province of Manabí. These students were part of an intensive reading program during a period of four weeks. The researchers also compared the experimental group results to the data gathered from a control group that received lessons following the normal curriculum of the institution, defined as traditional methods in the present research.

The current research is a quantitative work that investigates a group of students who are attending classes in the second level of English. Students in both the experimental and control groups were asked to take a sample of the sections that evaluates skimming skills in the Pearson Test of English (PTE) in three different stages of the intervention (diagnostic, middle and end of the process) to collect data.

A survey applied to the experimental group supports the data obtained through the tests. The analysis of the data confirms an improvement in the development of skimming skills in both groups, but it also indicates a higher rate of improvement in the experimental group. This study suggests that it is important to consider a reformulation of the current curriculum in educational institutions, giving more emphasis to the development of reading skills, which are necessary for students in higher education for autonomous learning in any career.

Keywords: skimming skills, intensive reading, undergraduate students.

Resumen

La presente investigación tiene el propósito de averiguar la influencia de un programa de lectura intensiva sobre el desarrollo de la habilidad de entender la idea principal de un texto. Esta fue desarrollada a través del análisis e interpretación de datos recolectados durante una intervención a un grupo experimental de estudiantes en una Universidad pública de la provincia de Manabí. Dichos estudiantes fueron parte de un programa de lectura intensiva durante un periodo de 4 semanas. Sus resultados fueron comparados con la informacion obtenida del grupo de control, el cual recibio clases siguiendo el curriculum normal de la institucion, definido como metodo tradicional en este estudio.

El presente documento es un trabajo cuantitativo que analiza a un grupo de estudiantes de segundo nivel de ingles. Los estudiantes de ambos grupos, tanto del experimental como del de control fueron evaluados usando una muestra del examen Pearson Test of English (PTE) en tres diferentes etapas de la intervención (diagnostico, mitad y final del proceso) con el fin de obtener datos.

La encuesta aplicada al grupo experimental da soporte a la información obtenida a través de los exámenes aplicados. El análisis de los datos confirma una mejora en el desarrollo de la habilidad de entender la idea principal de un texto en ambos grupos, sin embargo, este también indica un mayor porcentaje de progreso en el grupo experimental. Este estudio sugiere que es importante considerar una reformulación al actual currículo en las instituciones educativas de educación superior, brindándole un mayor énfasis al desarrollo de la habilidad de entender la idea principal de un texto, las cuales son necesarias para desarrollar un mejor aprendizaje autónomo en estudiantes de educación superior de las diferentes carreras.

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1.1 Introduction

The English language teaching field is constantly evolving. Both teachers and students are exposed to different methods, techniques, and skills so they can obtain better results in a shorter time. However, it could happen that some teachers foster some of the English skills to a greater extent than others.

The present research focuses on presenting the importance of the development of the reading area in the field of English language teaching. Despite the use of various classroom techniques, many students face difficulties concerning their lack of reading skills. That situation not only prevents students from comprehending reading activities and assignments, but also from further developing other language skills such as vocabulary and writing production. Previous works in the area such as that by Koons (2008) which highlights the work of Stanovich (2000) finds a positive relationship between increased reading practice and exposure to text and the writing production skill. Also, Nation (2009) and Harmer (2001) suggest the implementation of a reading program as a complement to the regular programs. It is, therefore, relevant to conduct research to investigate and analyze ways to improve the current English language program in this university and to help students to better learn the English language by fostering this specific language area.

1.2 Aims and Rationale

General Objective

The general purpose of this investigation is to determine the impact of intensive reading practice in the development of skimming skills in elementary undergraduate students at an Ecuadorian public university. To reach this objective, the researchers will evaluate students so they can know their skimming skills before the process. Later, the authors will

make an intervention to identify the influence of intensive reading practice in the development of skimming skills.

Rationale

One of the best ways to achieve success in the learning environment is through self-preparation and self-study. Developing reading skills provide students a great tool, not just for learning a foreign language, but for being self-competent in many different areas. After years of experience working at a higher educational level, we have realized that students at the undergraduate level in some universities in Ecuador demonstrate some difficulties with reading skills, especially when finding the main idea of the text or paragraphs (skimming skills). This fact regularly generates low and slow development in their learning process.

"Reading skills need to be fostered so that learners can cope with more and more sophisticated texts and tasks, and deal with them efficiently: quickly, appropriately and skillfully" (Ur, 2012). Lenski, Wham, Johns, and Caskey (2007) explains that the understanding of fictional text organizational patterns and literary elements will increase the motivation and pleasure when reading. The desire to be able to read for information or pleasure, for their career or academic purposes might be the main reason for students to need to master reading skills. (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Traditionally, English programs do not focus on the development of specific skills. The intention of this research is to test the effectiveness of implementing intensive reading practice programs in the improvement of skimming skills in groups of elementary level university students. "Skimming is mainly concerned with finding a key topic, main ideas, overall theme, basic structure, etc." (Scrivener, 2005). According to Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2011), one of the sub-skills of reading is reading for gist or skimming, which usually means to read for a global comprehension. "When skimming, we go through the

reading material quickly to know the gist of it, to know how it is organized or to get an idea of the tone or intention of the writer" (Grellet, 1981).

Harmer (1998) in his book about teaching English stated that "Students need to be able to skim a text." Taking into consideration that reading is a vital input skill in the EFL learning process, we believe it is highly relevant to train students in this reading practice to gather data about its impact on skimming skills.

As the professional world is getting more global, and English is the most spoken transactional language, developing reading skills is becoming a basic requirement to be successful. The results of this research will serve as a guide for teachers to make decisions about the best ways to help English learners develop reading skills, especially skimming skills which will enable students to be stronger autonomous learners.

Teachers need to help students to develop reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, thorough comprehension and reading critically. In this particular study, the development of skimming skills helps students understand, in any text, the general idea. (Gebhard, 1996). "If the students can get an overall idea of the meaning they can more easily deduce unknown words and go on to a more detailed understanding. So focus on their general or global understanding before their grasp of detail" (Gower, Phillips, & Walters, 2005).

1.3 Research Questions

Research Question:

Do groups exposed to intensive Reading practice develop better skimming skills than groups exposed to traditional methods (English classes taught as they are regularly proposed in the syllabus, without an emphasis on skimming skills) at elementary undergraduate levels at an Ecuadorian public university?

Sub-Research Questions:

1. Does intensive reading practice help to improve skimming skills?

2. Do skimming skills improve with the practice of traditional methods?

3. Does intensive reading practice help to improve skimming skills better than traditional methods?

1.4 Overview of the Enquiry

The purpose of the present investigation is to evaluate the influence of intensive reading practice in the development of skimming skills in undergraduate students who come from a wide range of backgrounds. Along the chapters, there is the definition of different terms that might have a specific meaning for this study. The literature review contains a wealth of information from highly qualified sources to present previous perspectives regarding the topic and also to support the view of the current study. Also, in the next chapters, the methodology is also explained in detail followed by the results and analysis are also presented in a clear way that allows the reader to easily understand the process, the analysis and the results obtained. Appendixes are also attached to this paper to expose some of the material used through the process.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Every research varies depending on the environment and context in which it is conducted. The researcher must clearly identify which are the characteristics of the environment where the investigation is going to be carried out. When we refer to the environment, many factors are involved, such as the type of institution, the characteristics of the target group of students, and the teaching style and personality of the instructors. All of these factors must be understood deeply, so the analysis of data matches the real world in which the participants have grown and developed (Pennycook, 1999). This chapter will also analyze how important this study is to the community related to its environment. It will state how this data will help to develop better skills when learning a language, and as a side effect, the whole community will get benefit from a better group of professionals.

2.2 The Institution, its Students and Instructors

This present research has been conducted in a public institution in the city of Portoviejo. In this institution, students study English as a mandatory subject which is part of the different majors that the university offers for the community. Every major has different levels to cover, but the minimum is a total of 4 levels of General English. The learning-teaching process of foreign languages, like English, is monitored by the Foreign Language Institute. There are more than 15,000 students in the institution, 8,300 are studying English. The university authorities have divided the language program into six levels; each level are 16 weeks, and every week they receive four hours of instruction.

The students that are involved in the research are studying their second level of English. They have a basic level that is equivalent to the A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). They study different majors and only get together during their English lessons. They have different abilities, ways of learning and interests, so it results in a classroom with a great variety of learning needs (Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012).

Teachers are another important stakeholder. The Foreign Language Institute worries about looking for the best teachers available in the province. Most of them are high intermediate level or B2 according to the CEFR, and some of them are internationally certified. There is a total of 32 teachers in the group. In the present research, the two researchers are also the teachers in front of the groups. These two teachers-researchers have certificates awarded internationally with the B2 level in FCE according to the CEFR.

2.3 The Need for this Research Project

After some years of teaching, it was noticeable that one of the biggest weaknesses of our students was understanding reading selections. They have not developed the basic skills of the process of reading, apparently not even in their mother tongue. As students at a superior level, they need to read a lot and understand the main idea of different topics, and the most relevant information tends to be presented first in the English language. According to Hinkel (2006), it is basic that students get training on understanding the general idea of different texts to develop more complex skills.

There has not been conducted any research on the topic in the present context so far. One of the sub-skills that require more emphasis because of the needs of university students is skimming, or getting the main idea of a reading selection. Developing this skill will help students to check a lot of material quickly and identify, from the main idea, if the texts are

useful for their intentions. It is necessary to clarify as Ur (1991) explain that in academic language, reading is not just decoding symbols to recognize words, but understanding several aspects of the article presented, like how the words are linked and the context around them.

Through this research, it is intended to identify the best practice to help students acquire a standard level of understanding of reading selections. A program focused on intensive reading which will focus on comprehension, and the development of strategies (Nation, 2008) will be piloted in a classroom during a month, trying to encourage the group to identify the best tools for their development as professionals. This research will be useful for the whole community. Teachers will identify strengths and weaknesses of an intensive reading program so that they can apply it in future courses.

2.4 Conclusion

Every research has relevance in the context in which the study takes place. The degree of the relevance needs to be carefully studied. The present research is highly relevant to the group of students and the community. It will help students to discover and develop tools for their learning, not just of a language, but of any subject. The community will receive a group of better professionals, autonomous learners, and citizen who are going to be always researching.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The theme of the present investigation is directly related to the formation and development of a very useful and important communicative skill, reading comprehension. In particular, it deals with the influence of intensive reading practice in the development of skimming skills in elementary undergraduate students at an Ecuadorian public university. Under this circumstance, the process to obtain this result is within the framework of the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language in the Ecuadorian context.

The present literature review is a collection of data related to the topic under investigation, and at the same time, it makes a contrast among the point of view of the different authors who have felt interested in the same research area. It is relevant to mention that there are plenty of sources available related to this area of inquiry worldwide. However, just a very small portion of those sources come from Ecuador which is the country where the investigation takes place. The authors have done a deep analysis and then selected the most applicable previous works and the ones with a closer relation to the topic. Also, it is also valid to remark that this work of investigation makes reference specifically to the skimming skill and might refer to other reading skills but in a broader perspective.

3.1 Definition of Terms

This section focuses on the definitions of the main concepts related to this topic. To do so, the authors have first selected the concepts, organized them in a logical order according to their hierarchy, from general to more specific, and determined the more acceptable ones according to the objective of this thesis, from an analytical, critical, reflective, and conclusive perspective.

Due to its impact on the rest of the concepts, it has been important to start by an approximation to, and a definition of the approach followed in the study regarding foreign language teaching and learning. An approach, in general terms in research, consists of the theoretical positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings. At the top level, an approach consists of a clear group of related assumptions about language teaching and learning.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the teaching of foreign languages in general and of the English language, in particular, was dominated by the structural approach. According to Hauptman (1971), "A structural approach prescribes the gradation of grammatical and lexical material in order of increasing difficulty or complexity." Its essence consists in the use of certain syntactical items and structures and their best arrangements to enable the learner to master the language for use (Patel, 2014). In other words, this approach centers the learning process in the structure of the language, mainly grammar and to a lesser degree, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Under this approach, the students could learn large texts in the foreign language with a high level of accuracy, but with limited possibilities of using them in real communication.

According to Richards & Rodgers (1986) after the mid-nineteenth century, several factors contributed to a questioning and rejection of the Grammar-Translation Method. Increased opportunities for communication among Europeans created a demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages. Yousaf, Umar, & Habib, (2017) cite the work of Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989) when he states that "The era of communicative language teaching began at the beginning of the 1970s as this concept spread mostly after the research contributions of experts of Council of Europe". At present, this approach has resisted the passing of decades and its essence is still dominating the teaching learning process of foreign

languages at international levels and is also dominating what has been called by specialists as the English language learning industry.

Therefore, it is necessary to define what is meant by the Communicative approach. Beneath this approach lies a progression of pedagogical efforts to look carefully at the properties of communicative language teaching and language learning, to ask how learners can best internalize a foreign language, and to experiment systematically with classroom practice pointed towards accomplishing learner's communicative goals.

According to Nunan (1991), there are five features to describe communicative language teaching:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the foreign language;

2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situations;

3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself;

4. An enhancement of the learner's personal experience as important contributing elements of classroom learning;

5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

Communicative language teaching requires authentic communication, which includes a believable setting, a normal speed in speaking, a range of lexical items suitable for the students' ages, and an overall promotion of learning.

In the light of this approach, the main goal of teaching a foreign language is that the students become competent users of that language, that they become able to use the foreign language in real communicative situations; in fact, that they form and develop

communicative competence in the language object of study. Consequently, it is necessary to understand what communicative competence is.

Communicative Competence: It is the speaker's ability to put language for a range of communicative use. Canale and Swain (1980) defined communicative competence as "the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use." But this definition reduces this concept to ability; while the authors of this thesis prefer to assume it from a more comprehensive and contextualized perspective.

Communicative skills: Skills in the teaching of a foreign language is an important component of the communicative competence. When the learners perform a communicative act, they are doing it using communicative skills. This term is assumed in this thesis as the language skills to be formed and developed in the teaching-learning process of the foreign language. The communicative skills stated in the more common terms are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the central division into these four main skills might not comprise the best scenario for the comprehension of the learners and may limit a program to offer what students most need. (Sajgalíko & Breeze, 2013).

Furthermore, as this investigation center in reading comprehension as a particular skill within the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language, it is important to assume its definition.

Reading Comprehension: According to the Language and Reading Research Consortium. (2015) reading comprehension "is the product of an individual's ability to read words and to understand texts that are presented aurally." Regarding the comprehension process Sanchez (2010) suggests that comprehension is not an observable process and that there exists a wide range of measurements involved so that understanding can take place.

Following Zhang's (2012) discussion about reading comprehension, he states that it requires a set of linguistic knowledge and skills to obtain valuable textual meaning. Moreover, he also highlights the importance of the knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and reading skills for successful reading comprehension. As a developing skill, reading comprehension also passes through different stages and requires the apprehension of strategies used in different kinds of reading. The effectiveness of this process requires integration with the rest of the communicative skills.

There are different classifications of reading. However, due to the problem dealt with in this research, the definitions will be centered in intensive reading.

Intensive reading: Grammar-translation approach is the typical process for intensive reading in which the instructor works with the learners, he/she uses L1 to explain the meaning of a text, sentence by sentence. (Nation, 2009). As a methodology, intensive reading is a teacher-centered approach, which means that the teachers are in charge of leading most of the process during the class, including the type of reading, the time, vocabulary, grammar, text organization, and comprehension. Miller (n.d.).

"Intensive reading activities inside the classroom include skimming a text for specific information to answer true or false statements or filling gaps in a summary" (Intensive reading. n.d.). It is in general terms, the practice of reading short-to-medium length passages with the aim of focusing on specific text-based elements, such as comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. Consequently, since the process object of this research is under the guidance of the English language teacher, it is important to look at it from that perspective.

The traditional method: For the purpose of this investigation, it is relevant to define what the authors mean when they refer to the traditional method. Therefore, the traditional method refers to the way the area coordination of any particular university designs English

classes. Thus, the traditional method here denotes the English classes' distribution from the public university where the current study was carried out. Which means, with a percentage of reading skill of about 15-20% of the total of the class. It differs from a class exposed to an intensive reading program in the amount of time dedicated to the practice of reading skills. It means that in the traditional methodology reading is part of the process but does not play a relevant role. Because of the nature of the autonomous learning process that university students need to develop an intensive reading program focuses more on how students understand different types of texts, especially to get the main idea, so they can easily choose articles quicker.

3.3 Teaching Reading theories

In the scientific literature in general, and in particular in the one related to the didactic of foreign and second language teaching, reading comprehension as a communicative skill has received special attention. It is true there is a variety of approaches and even controversial theoretical positions, but at this point, one can speak of essential points of coincidence and of important results which can contribute to an effective formation and development of this skill.

Reading comprehension also has to deal with phonological processing, regarding this point, Pasquarella, (2009) states that it exists three main stages of phonological processing which support successful reading acquisition and comprehension, they are phonological awareness, phonological recoding in lexical access, and phonetic recoding in working memory. However, teachers, researchers, pedagogues, and linguists still evince a lack of satisfaction, in particular, about the didactic treatment required by this important skill.

In the particular case of foreign language teaching, the reading comprehension skill is of great importance and use. If the students understand what they read, the more they read, the better they will understand and the more they will systematize and fix the forms and uses

of the language they are studying. Reading also has a very positive effect on vocabulary acquisition, upon writing, and in particular upon the orthography of the new language. Indeed, being effective in a job often means being effective in performing many tasks that involve no spoken language at all (Mcgroarty, 1984).

During the formation and development of the reading comprehension skill, the foreign language teacher can ask his/her learners to focus on particular vocabulary items, as well as in grammar and pronunciation. In the same way, the teacher can use the written texts, during the reading process, to demonstrate how to elaborate sentences, paragraphs, and wider texts correctly.

An important item to consider is the characteristics of written texts, as compared to oral texts. The written text is static. The readers can consume it at their pace. And, they go over it whenever they need. However, there is an important disadvantage; the writer is not present at the moment the reading comprehension process is taking place, so, the readers have to guess all the implicit or intended meaning.

One of the more recent proposals about the Reading comprehension skill is Harmer, (2010):

- Encourage students to respond to the content of a text (and explore their feelings about it), not just concentrate on its constructions

- Prediction is a major factor in reading

- Match the task to the topic when using intensive reading texts

- Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full

3.4 Reading skills and sub-skills

"Skilled reading is subserved by some cognitive processes" (Harrington, & Sawyer, 1992). Regarding the communicative approach, the process of formation and development of the reading comprehension skills is subdivided into three main stages:

Pre-reading: The students get prepared for reading, become familiar with the content of the written text, and mobilize previous schemata related to the topic. They also learn the meaning of new vocabulary items necessary to understand the main ideas of the written text, creating a positive attitude towards the content to be read. And finally, they get a purpose for reading.

While-reading: The students interact with the written text to construct comprehension, understanding the explicit meaning, organizing the content in a logical way, comprehending both main and secondary ideas, answering comprehension questions, and learning the meaning conveyed by new vocabulary and grammatical items, among others.

Post/reading: After the students have read the written text as many times as needed, they make a summary, provide an opinion, and make critical evaluations of the content and the author's positions, from their personal points of view and perspective.

Taking this into account, the authors of this thesis propose the following sub-skills:

Pre-reading:

✓ Select different themes for the written texts to be read according to personal needs and interests

✓ Orient themselves to new themes proposed by the foreign language teacher, thus promoting new necessities and interests

- ✓ Analyze the new element proposed by the foreign language teacher as possible obstacles or problem of scientific or cultural content which might obstruct the comprehension of the main ideas or the written text

- ✓ Determine, at an informative level, crucial lexical and grammatical elements systematized by the teacher

- ✓ Relate the theme of the written text with previous knowledge and personal experiences

- ✓ Activate previous mental scheme

- ✓ Recognize the text potentialities for the development of their comprehensive culture

- ✓ Elaborate a reading purpose

- ✓ Use prediction and anticipation strategies

While - reading:

- ✓ Distinguish, clarify, determine and infer between main and secondary ideas

- ✓ Order ideas into hierarchies, logically and chronologically

- ✓ Infer lexical meaning from context

- ✓ Look up word meaning in the dictionaries

- ✓ Ask and answer questions asked by the teacher and classmates

- ✓ Compare different ideas

- ✓ Paraphrase the written text

- ✓ Distinguish explicit ideas from implicit ones

- ✓ Determine relations among the different elements of the written text

- ✓ Identify communicative function(s) in the written text

- ✓ Look for general and specific information

- ✓ Self-assess their performances

- ✓ Monitor their comprehension

Post - reading:

- ✓ Elaborate summaries

- ✓ Restructure the content of the text from a critical position

- ✓ Infer meaning and information from the subtext

- ✓ Evaluate the content of the written text

- ✓ Judge the author

- ✓ Speculate on the content of the text

- ✓ Share different points of views about the written text with their classmates

- ✓ Value the author's style

- ✓ Tell the same story contained in the written text but from his personal perspective

3.5 Intensive Reading strategies

In the widest sense of the term, a strategy is a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period, the skill of making or carrying out plans to achieve a goal. Regarding the intensive reading strategies, Harmer (2007) proposes a distinction between the teachers' and the students' roles. He highlights the importance of the teachers' roles to encourage students to work enthusiastically. These roles are as an observer, organizer, feedback organizer, and promoter.

Taking this into consideration, what follows is a register of what the authors of this thesis have considered as intensive reading strategies.

- Determine a purpose for reading induced by the teacher

- Determine what language features are important for comprehension

- Infer meaning from context and find meaning of new words in the dictionary

- Use of the mother tongue to explain the meaning of words or sentences when extremely necessary

- Direct attention to elements which are vital for comprehension and are found directly in the text

- Receive useful information about their performance in the different exercises directed to comprehend reading intensively in the written text

- Answer different kinds of comprehension questions: yes/no questions, direct questions

- Answer different kinds of exercises: true/false statements, multiple choice sentences, sentence completion, information transfer, translation

- Learn new vocabulary items using: distinguishing between high-frequency words and thus providing great attention to them; identifying low-frequency words and thus dealing with them quickly; guessing meaning from context; analyzing word parts, and determining which words deserve attention over a long period

- Learn grammatical items using: determining high-frequency grammar items and thus providing them with sustained attention and determining low-frequency grammar features which require less attention

- Apply skimming skills, guided by the teacher's questions go over the text to get a gist, once or twice, then answer the questions

- Scan to look for specific information induced by the teacher

- Provide opinion about the content of the text.

3.6 Developing Skimming

One of the main skills for reading comprehension to be effective is skimming. Previous studies have proved that skimming can also be a successful way of getting the main idea of a text (Duggan & Payne, 2009). Due to its complexity to teach, Bishop, Reyes, & Pflaum (2006) propose to encourage teachers to explain to students how to strategically skim texts. Skimming exercises ought to include texts which are no less than 2000 words in length and which are on subjects that the learners already know about (Nation, 2009). Having the

capacity to skim content is a valuable skill since skimming can be utilized to help choose if content or segment of a content merits cautious examining.

Regarding this skill, Nation (2009) also suggests that "there are two types of efficient reading, skimming, and scanning." He also mentions that for a better skimming of a text it would be an advantage as much knowledge background as possible from the reader. Other authors also have written about the term selective reading which highlights the importance of readers to focus on the most important parts of a text and recognize the sections which deserve less attention. (Cunningham & Shablak, 1975) in (Huddleston, & Lowe, 2014).

3.7 Bottom-Up and Top-Down Skills

One of the factors which determine the effectiveness of skimming in reading comprehension is the individual comprehension model of the learners. The two models recognized are top-down and bottom-up.

Bottom-up procedures incorporate the view of words and letters, activation of semantic portrayals, the encoding of these portrayals into the logically fitting significance, and the encoding of fundamental sentence-level propositions. Top-down procedures include higher request learning structures (schemata) and metacognitive capacities. (Harrington & Sawyer 1992). These two tendencies began in the 1990s, had some development during the 2000s and seem to be still used currently and shortly (Hinkel, 2006).

Such an approach is useful and has its particular implications for the development of the four communicative skills: In the particular case of reading comprehension, in bottom-up processing, readers rely on their knowledge of language to recognize linguistic elements – letters, words, and sentence structure– for the construction of meaning. On the other hand, in top-down processing, readers use their prior knowledge to make predictions about the text.

As with the bottom-up models, there are some variations in this approach, but they all agree that the reader rather than the text is at the heart of the reading process.

3.8 Previous Studies Related to the Topic in Ecuador

Since Ecuador is the country where the present study was carried out, it was important also to find correlated literature from this country. Nevertheless, after a deep search on related studies in this country, just a few data linked to the present study was collected.

The first study, titled *Student reading behaviors and preferences at public and private universities in Ecuador: A comparative study,* was conducted at Universidad of Cuenca and Azuay in Cuenca with a population of undergraduate students. It shows the different reading behaviors presented by the group and some of the more relevant reason why they failed complying with the reading tasks addressed by their teachers. The results of this study demonstrated that the main problem faced by that group of students is that they do not have the culture of reading, so they had many difficulties when dealing with reading tasks. These results also suggested a more active participation from the teachers to encourage students to practice reading more often (Van Hoof et. al 2013).

The second study, titled *The use of Graphic Organizers to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills with students of I-II intensive courses at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Semester September 2010 – February 2011*. This investigation was conducted at an Ecuadorian private university as its title shows, with students from the first and second level of intensive courses. Its intent is to illustrate that one of the most serious problems for the students in the English area was the reading comprehension. Therefore, to solve the problem, they implemented the use of graphic organizers. The results of this study suggest that the students from the experimental group shown a significant improvement in the control group

after the intervention. After analyzing the obtained results, the authors of the study recommend the use of graphic organizers due to the positive effects got the study afterward.

3.9 Conclusion

As a result of the theoretical analysis carried out by the authors of this thesis regarding reading comprehension skills, in general, they concluded that these skills had received a wide, varied, and profound treatment at international level in Latin American countries and, to a lesser degree, in the Republic of Ecuador.

Referring specifically to the skimming skill, it has also received special attention from many authors and researchers around the world. Most of the studies taking as a reference in this literature review agree that skimming skill is one of the most relevant when developing reading comprehension. In addition to that, most of them also agree with the fact that the regular practice of intensive reading may cause a positive effect on students to develop reading skills.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

4.1.1 Definition and Rationale

At the ontological level, which Cohen et al. (2007) explain as "assumptions which concern the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated," our perception of the problem addressed aligned to the objectivist position. This decision indicates that the individual does not influence the reality, in fact, it is just there to be studied and understood. In this particular case, we will analyze from an outside perspective in which percentage an intensive reading program helps students to develop skimming skills.

The epistemological position considered is positivism which is closely related to the objectivist view. Evident data was needed to confirm the hypothesis that relates the variables under to prove the validity of the facts is real.

It was necessary to develop the quantitative methodology to obtain clear data to test the hypothesis declared. As Bell (2005) explained, "quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another." It implies deductive approach which allowed the researchers to find specific data derived from general realities.

4.1.2 Methodological Stances

In the theoretical part, the researchers' role in the present study is first to observe the environment to identify a problematic towards which they will propose a solution. Besides that, from their ontological positioning, the researchers had to design a methodology to propose a solution to the problem. In practice, one of the main roles of the researchers is to carry out the intervention with the students and then tabulate and analyze the obtained results.

On the other hand, the participants' role is to actively take part of the process inside the classroom, working on the activities proposed by the instructor and collaborating enthusiastically with their partner. Their questions during the process were also an important part of the development of the intervention.

To establish the pragmatism of the research, the researchers must follow a series of steps according to the nature of the research design, in this case, it is an evaluative research. In these types of studies, the researchers are going to observe the outcomes of treatments applied to solve social phenomenon (Miller, Salkind, & Miller 2002). In other words, it evaluates the effects caused by the independent variable on the dependent variable.

With the methodological stances established, it is also significant to set up the nature of the data and research methods. According to Bryman & Cramer (2001) in the case of quantitative studies, the data analysis increases in a significant way the ability to recognize faulty conclusions. Thus, three tests were designed and applied at the beginning, at the middle and the end of the intervention. The first step was to pilot these tests with a group of non-participating students from other classes from the same level. In the light of those results, it was necessary to simplify some vocabulary in the instructions so that the students could have a better understanding.

The diagnostic test applied at the beginning provided the first data with the aim of getting information of the starting point of the proficiency level of the participants from both groups. It also helped to have a clearer panorama of their strengths and weaknesses regarding the reading skill involved in the intervention. Furthermore, the researchers applied the second test to know more specifically the progress the students had made. In the end, the last test was applied, from this one we obtained the most valuable information which was to what extent

the students had improved in regards the skill of the treatment. Finally, a survey was applied to know the level of satisfaction of the participants regarding the process.

The researchers used an inductive process to analysis the data, which means that we started with the specific information from the results of each student obtained from the tests. Then, once we had all the information, we could start making general judgments and comparisons between the first and final tests from the same group, and also comparisons between both groups. Some of the calculations used to establish judgments are the standard deviations and the t-tests. These measurements helped to have a more accurate perspective of whether there exists a significant statistical difference between the results gotten.

4.2 Research tradition

4.2.1 Definition and rationale

As this research was intended to identify a relationship between variables, the methodological design that shaped the process was a correlational approach. This approach helped to evaluate the degree of connection among the variables (Mackey and Gass, 2005). The researchers did not manipulate any part of the hypothesis, they just observed and analyzed.

This observation was done through the implementation of an intensive reading program to a group during their classes of the second level of English. Also, there was a control group which did not receive any specific reading instruction. Participants from the intensive reading program group worked on several exercises in every class focused on the development of skimming skills, using materials selected by the researchers. They read and answered questions about the articles.

The Pearson Test of English General reading sections two and three were applied in different stages of the process to monitor the participants' improvement in all the groups.

These sections were specially designed to test students' understanding of main ideas in short and long texts. The tests used were samples taken from the "PTE General, Skills boosters." All this information has been carefully analyzed to find the most accurate results.

The control group received normal practice of the reading skills as proposed in the syllabus of the university. The exposure to intensive reading is just about 20% of the class hour. At the end of the intervention, the authors applied a survey with the main purpose of collecting data about the students' perceptions regarding the process. The survey also helped the authors to have a clearer perspective of the results obtained in the tests.

4.2.2 Type

The current study was following the principle of experimental research. Recognizing that under-graduated students from the university have problems when understanding the main idea of reading selections, it was decided to experiment with a different program to verify if there is a benefit as it stayed in the hypothesis. It was better explained by Kothary (2004):

> "In such research, it is necessary to get at facts firsthand, at their source, and actively to go about doing certain things to stimulate the production of desired information. In such research, the researcher must first provide himself with a working hypothesis or guess as to the probable results. He then works to get enough facts (data) to prove or disprove his hypothesis. (Kothary, 2004)

4.2.3 Ascertaining the Warrant for the Study

Validity

Several considerations have been taken based on Mackey and Gass (2005) explanations to conduct a valid research experiment. First, the variables were clear and

simple to have control over them. Convenience sampling was the method used to choose the participants. This sampling method responds to the fact that the researchers conducted the experimental methods with their students, which were randomly selected for them to teach by an authority of the institution.

The material used during the process, books, activities, and tests, was carefully selected, considering students' level of English and their preferences. Focused exercises chosen from different textbooks complemented the intensive reading program. The tests selected were from the reading section (part two and three) of Pearson Test of English that evaluates skimming skills.

Reliability

Reliability is "The extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions" (Bell, 2005). The participants were divided into two different groups and the data gathered was analyzed separately to make this research reliable. All the results were contrasted and compared. The researchers evaluated the improvement to the level of English in different stages of the process using the same test to add reliability to the experiment.

4.2.4 Ethical Considerations

When developing research which involves the participation of human beings, some ethical consideration must be taken into account as some public international documents from the US government establish (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Consequently, the authors of the present study have strictly applied all the necessary steps so that the participants do not feel under pressure or damage at any moment, respecting their privacy and identity and in contrast trying as much as possible that they get positive outcomes from their participation in the process.

Strike (1990) in Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) proposes two broad principles as the basis of ethical considerations in research; those are the principle of benefit maximization and the principle of equal respect. These, are used in the present investigation as a means to guarantee helpful effects on the participants. Some of the aspects taken into consideration were first that all the students were 18 years old or older, so we did not need the permission of their parents. Besides that, as stated by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) informed consent must be required from all participants, honoring all arrangements reached this stage. Therefore, to set up a clear agreement, the informed consent form was designed, socialized and signed by all the participants. Also, it is relevant to highlight the fact that all the material used during the process was deeply analyzed, so it perfectly fit the level and needs of the participants, this as a mean to ensure that all of them could benefit even more from the process. Finally, it is worth mentioning that as part of the ethical procedures, at the end of the intervention in the experimental group, the same treatment was applied to the control group so they could also benefit from the procedure.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Definition and Characteristics

Once the methodology for the research has been set up, it is also necessary to establish the methods. "Methods are the techniques used to collect and analyze data to provide evidence for the posited knowledge that the research constructs," (Jackson, 2013). The method must be closely related to the methodology chosen. Therefore, taking into consideration the ontological positioning and the epistemological perspective of the authors in this investigation it was used the quantitative method to convert numbers into statistical data, and also the correlational approach to determine the relation between variables.

4.3.2 Methods of Data Collection

The data collection method focused on three tests that were applied to the participants to provide a clear idea of their improvement in different stages. A test is a reliable form of evaluating students' improvement, and it is practical and clear to describe in graphs. (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Then, an individual statistical chart for each student was done as well as a chart with the overall results of every class to reach conclusions. In this way we used the inductive method, going from the specific results of each student and then making generalizations and judgments. At the end of the study, a survey was applied to know the participants' perceptions regarding the study.

4.3.3 Selection and Handling of Data

The process to handle all the data gathered was done keeping its integrity and confidentiality under the best circumstances. Researchers gathered data from both electronic and non-electronic sources. Most of the data collected belong to recent years (2000-2017) and were taken from highly qualified journals from the first quartile; guaranteeing in this way that the information included in this research is the most updated and reliable possible. On the other side, few sources cited belong to many years ago, this, because some of the concepts in this study are not new. However, it was important to clarify them. Another important fact in this section is that from time to time an electronic backup of all the information was done to avoid losing it as the cause of any mechanical damage.

4.3.4 Participants

A total of 60 students, 30 from the experimental and 30 from the control group participated in the current study. They were a mixed group of males and females who ranged between 18 and 24 years old. This group of students belonged to different majors, and all of them were at the second level of English.

Almost half of these students had an accurate proficiency level of reading in English according to the class they were enrolled. However, approximately 60% did not have the basis of reading proficiency to that level. Thus they found it quite harder to comprehend and assimilate most of the texts in the classes. One theory to explain this phenomenon might be that the students who enroll in this public university come from a wide range of backgrounds: different social status, different neighborhoods and mostly important from different types of primary and secondary institutions.

Regarding the previous instruction that these students received in the English language, the academic establishments where they studied before can make a significant difference. While some of them have studied in some institutions where the teaching of the English language has a high relevance, another important group of them have received a very poor English instruction in primary and secondary education.

4.3.5 Sampling

Taking into consideration the nature of the research it was considered necessary to choose two different groups to work with, one for the experimental and one for the control respectively. The type of sampling applied to select these two groups was the nonrandom sampling or also called convenience sampling. According to Mackey & Gass (2015) "Convenience sampling is the selection of individuals who happen to be available for study." This type of sampling might appear as not completely representing the population. Nonetheless, they are very useful in second language research (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Consequently, two groups of 30 students each from the second level of English from a public university in Ecuador were selected to be part of the current investigation.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The results of the tests (PTE reading section 4 and 5) taken in three stages of the research (diagnostic, half of the process and final) are presented in Tables 6 to 11 and represented in figures 6 to 17, for the experimental and control group to make comparisons. A deep analysis of these results has been conducted determining the range of grades and the percentage of each parameter. Another interpretation of the data allows the researchers to identify the percentage of improvement comparing the diagnostic test with the final test after four weeks of instruction in the experimental group and the control group.

Another source of data was a short quiz about the experience during the process and the individual perception of the progress of each participant of the experimental group. The researchers carefully analysed of each subject´s answers was carefully, and the data is presented in charts and represented visually in graphics for an easier understanding of the final results.

5.1 Presentation of the Results

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1: Do you believe that being able to understand the main idea of a text helps you to develop your reading skills?

TABLE 1: Survey results: Question 1

1. Do you believe that being able to understand the main idea of a text helps you to develop your reading skills?		
OPTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
YES	23	77
NO	7	23
TOTAL	30	100

FIGURE 1: Survey results - Question 1
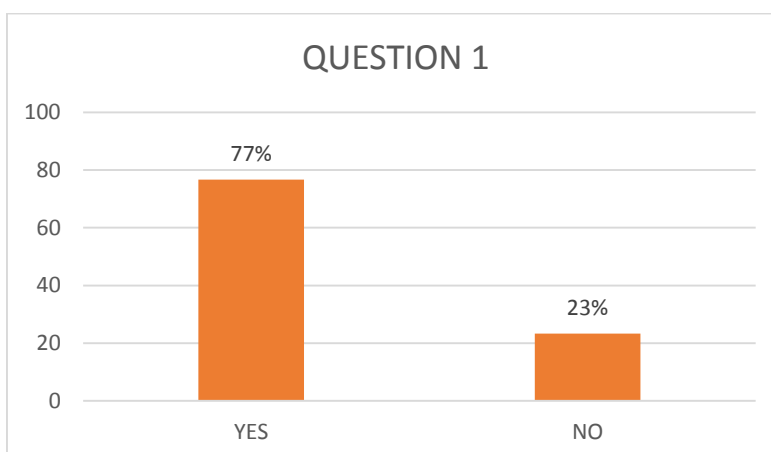
Produced by: Authors

According to the data, seventy-seven percent (77%) of the students involved in the study which corresponds to twenty-three individuals, believe that it is important for the development of reading skills to have a clear idea of the central topic of a reading selection. The other twenty-three percent (seven students) did not find it important to understand the main idea of texts. This finding indicates the motivation and awareness of the relevance of the skill for the academic life of the group of university students.

Question 2: Which of the following reading techniques do you consider to have improved or learned to use during the time of the current study?

TABLE 2: Survey results: Question 2

2. Which of the following reading techniques do you consider to have improved or learned to use during the time of the current study?		
OPTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Understanding the main idea (Skimming)	22	73
Synthesis	0	0
Speed	8	27
Accuracy	0	0
Other ____	0	0
TOTAL	30	100

FIGURE 2: Survey results - Question 2
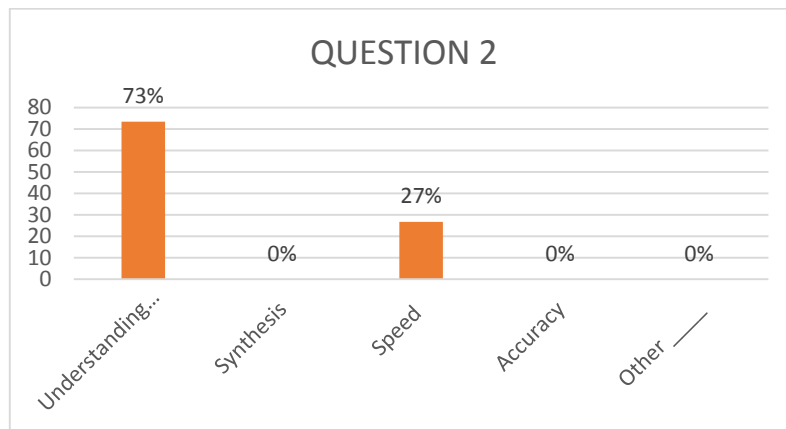
Produced by: Authors

The data shows that a seventy-three percent of the individuals who were part of the experimental group consider that they have improved and learned skimming skills during the process. Twenty-seven percent agree on the fact that they have developed speed when reading. Any individual did not choose the other options. It is clear that the whole experimental group has identified advantages and benefits from the process for their daily life. They have recognized an improvement in reading skills, and it is interesting that through the development of skimming skills they have also developed fluency.

Question 3: Do you think you have improved your skimming skills after being part of the present study? In what percentage?

TABLE 3: Survey results: Question 3

3. Do you think you have improved your skimming skills after being part of the present study? In what percentage?		
OPTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
NO	1	3
1-10%	3	10
10-25%	17	57
25-50%	6	20
50-75%	2	7
75-100%	1	3
TOTAL	30	100

FIGURE 3: Survey results: Question 3
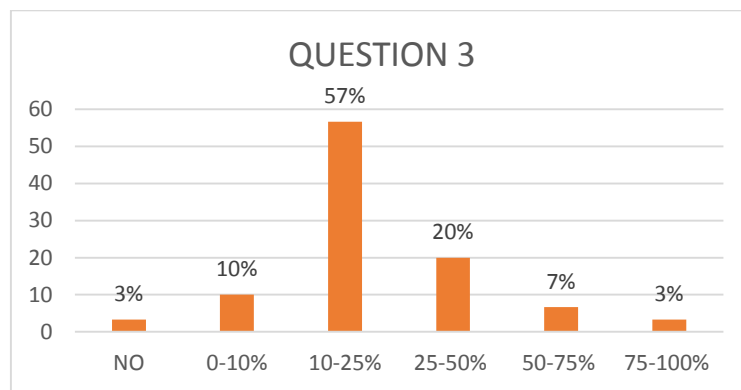
Produced by: Authors

The data collected shows that ninety-seven percent of the individuals involved in the process recognize an improvement in their skill to understand the main idea in texts compared with their skills at the beginning of the process, and just three percent did not recognize any improvement. Most of the students, a fifty-seven percent, said they have improved in a 10 to 25 percentage. A twenty percent said they have improved by 25 to 50 percentage. Ten percent said they had improved one to ten percent. Seven percent agree on an improvement of the 50 to 75 percent, and just a three percent of the individuals think they have improved in a 75 to 100 percent since they have participated in the process.

Question 4: On a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) how satisfied did you feel during the study time?

TABLE 4: Survey results: Question 4

4. On a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum), how satisfied did you feel during the study time?		
OPTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	7	23
4	7	23
5	16	53
TOTAL	30	100

FIGURE 4: Survey results - Question 4
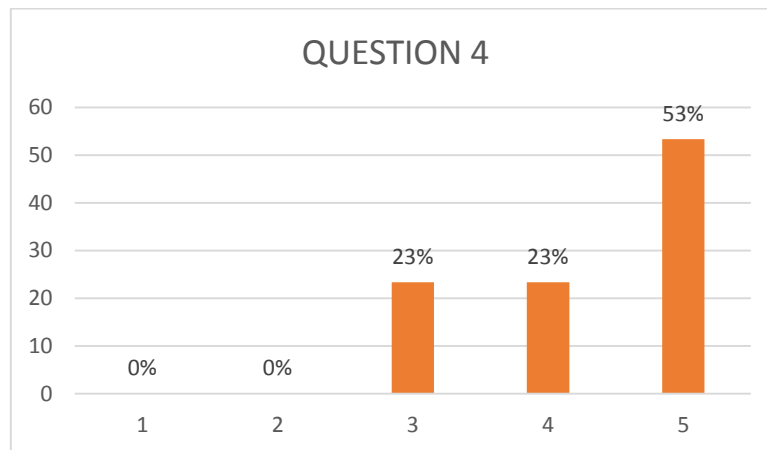
Produced by: Authors

According to the data, all of the students have felt satisfied during the study time. In a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is the minimum and five the maximum, twenty-three percent chose the middle option 3. Another twenty-three percent chose option number 4, but most of the students, a total of fifty-three percent chose number 5, the maximum score. Any individual did not choose option 1 and two. The result indicates that the process resulted positive and friendly for the group of students.

Question 5: Which of the following methods do you consider to be most helpful to your English language learning?

TABLE 5: Survey results: Question 5

5. Which of the following methods do you consider to be most helpful to your English language learning?		
OPTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
The traditional method*	9	30
The application of more reading during classes	21	70
TOTAL	30	100

FIGURE 5: Survey results - Question 5
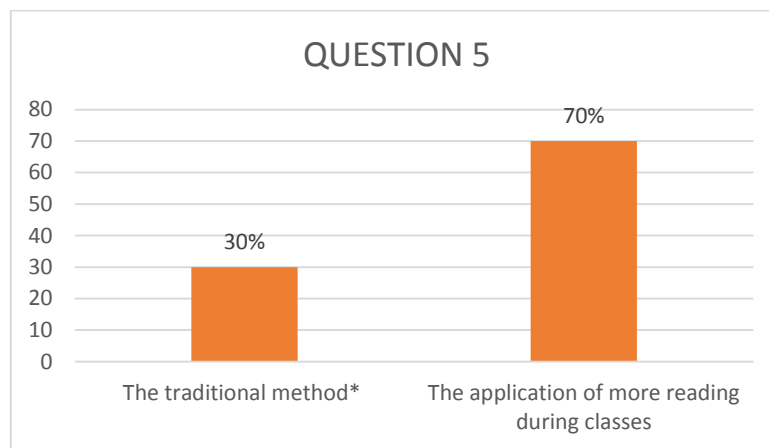
Most of the participants agree that the application of more reading activities during the normal process of the class is more helpful than the application of traditional methods. Seventy percent of the individuals chose the options that support the application of more reading practice activities during classes, and a thirty percent wanted to continue with the same traditional methods. The result indicates that most of the students recognize the importance of the development of the skill for their learning processes.

TESTS RESULTS

TABLE 6: Experimental Group – Test 1

Student code	Grades - Test 1	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	5	4,13	5,99	2,28
2	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
3	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
4	2	4,13	5,99	2,28
5	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
6	6	4,13	5,99	2,28
7	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
8	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
9	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
10	6	4,13	5,99	2,28
11	2	4,13	5,99	2,28
12	1	4,13	5,99	2,28
13	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
14	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
15	5	4,13	5,99	2,28
16	2	4,13	5,99	2,28
17	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
18	5	4,13	5,99	2,28
19	5	4,13	5,99	2,28
20	6	4,13	5,99	2,28
21	7	4,13	5,99	2,28
22	10	4,13	5,99	2,28
23	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
24	5	4,13	5,99	2,28
25	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
26	4	4,13	5,99	2,28
27	6	4,13	5,99	2,28
28	1	4,13	5,99	2,28
29	3	4,13	5,99	2,28
30	5	4,13	5,99	2,28

FIGURE 6: Standard Deviation Data – Experimental Group – Test 1

Standard Deviation Data

	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Upper	Lower
■ Series1	4.13	3.45	1.86	10	1
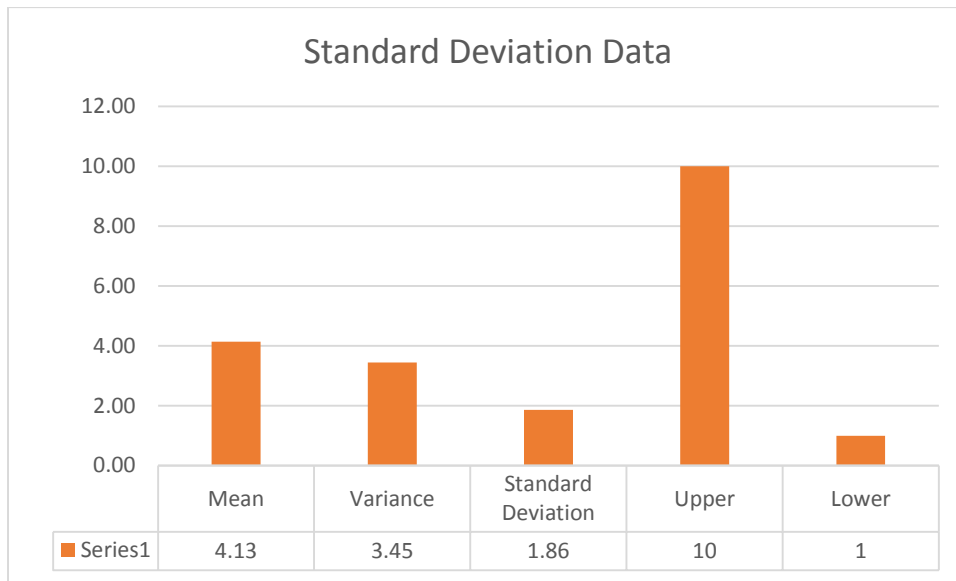
Produced by: Authors

FIGURE 7: Standard Deviation – Experimental Group – Test 1
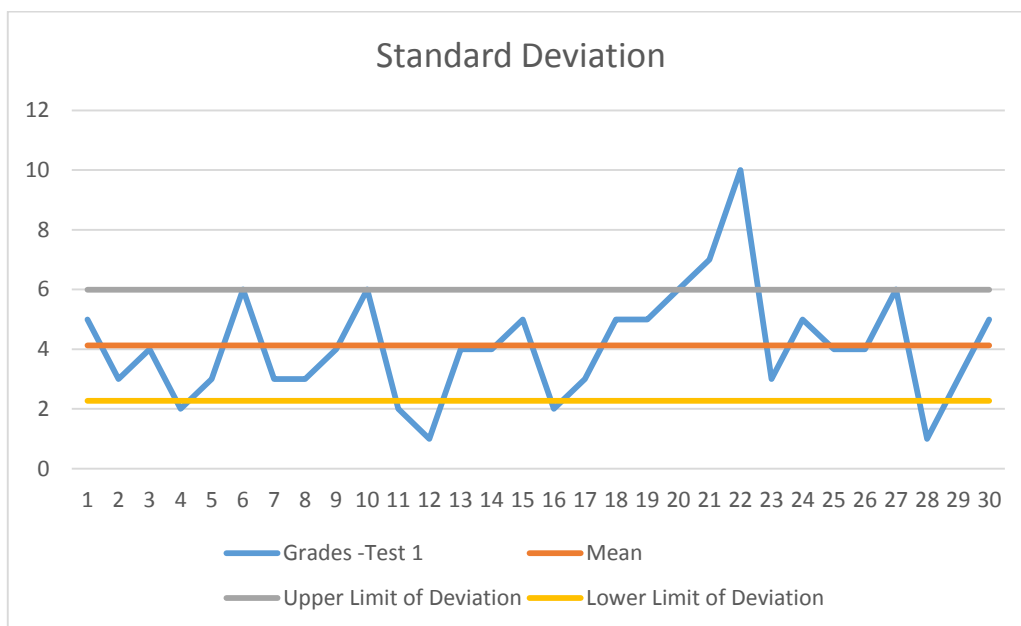
Standard Deviation

Legend: — Grades -Test 1   — Mean   — Upper Limit of Deviation   — Lower Limit of Deviation

Produced by: Authors

According to the results of the diagnostic test, the mean of the group is 4.13. The variance is 3.45, and the standard deviation is 1.86. The highest grade is 10, and the lowest grade is 1.

TABLE 7: Control Group – Test 1

Student code	Grades -Test 1	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
2	3	4,23	5,54	2,92
3	2	4,23	5,54	2,92
4	6	4,23	5,54	2,92
5	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
6	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
7	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
8	3	4,23	5,54	2,92
9	2	4,23	5,54	2,92
10	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
11	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
12	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
13	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
14	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
15	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
16	3	4,23	5,54	2,92
17	6	4,23	5,54	2,92
18	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
19	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
20	2	4,23	5,54	2,92
21	2	4,23	5,54	2,92
22	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
23	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
24	4	4,23	5,54	2,92
25	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
26	6	4,23	5,54	2,92
27	7	4,23	5,54	2,92
28	3	4,23	5,54	2,92
29	5	4,23	5,54	2,92
30	6	4,23	5,54	2,92

FIGURE 8: Standard Deviation Data – Control Group – Test 1

Series1	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Upper	Lower
	4.23	1.71	1.31	7	2
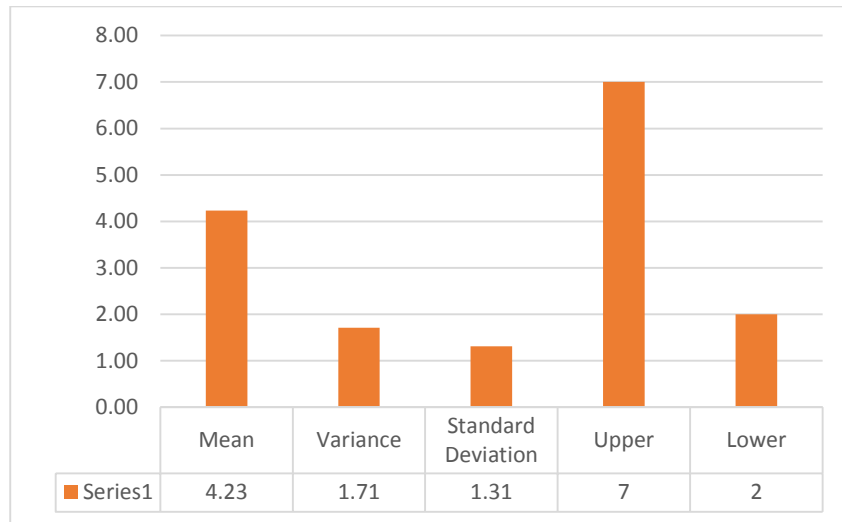
FIGURE 9: Standard Deviation – Control Group – Test 1
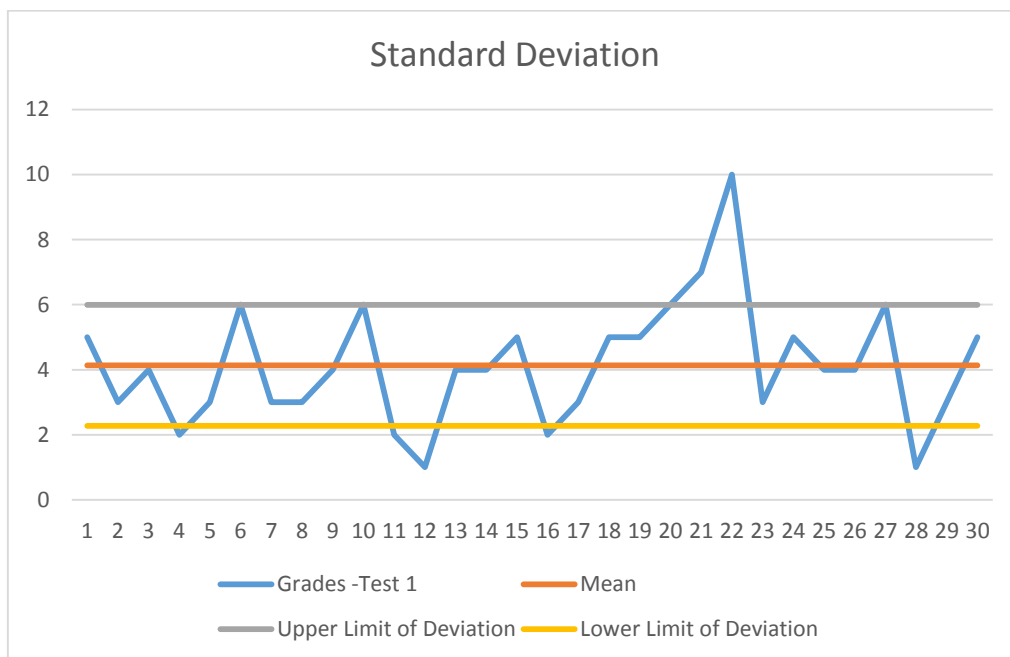
Produced by: Authors

According to the results of the diagnostic test in the control group, the mean of the group is 4.23. The variance is 1.71, and the standard deviation is 1.31. The Upper grade is 7, and the lower grade is 2. The results of the T-test from the diagnostic tests provide evidence of no significant difference between the experimental and control group, which also supports the validity and reliability of the research.

T-TEST

TABLE 8: Test 1 (diagnostic): Comparison between control and experimental group

Data	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	4.23	4.13
Standard Deviation	1.33	1.89
Statistical Error Mean	0.24	0.34
Number	30	30
T-Test		0.2370
Degrees Of Freedom		58
Standard Error Of Difference		0.422
P value		0.8135
Significance Difference		No

According to the data gathered from the T-test, it shows that there was not statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group at the beginning of the intervention with a 95% confidence level.

TABLE 9: Experimental Group – Test 2

Student code	Grades - Test 2	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
2	4	6,73	8,34	5,12
3	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
4	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
5	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
6	9	6,73	8,34	5,12
7	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
8	6	6,73	8,34	5,12
9	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
10	9	6,73	8,34	5,12
11	6	6,73	8,34	5,12
12	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
13	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
14	10	6,73	8,34	5,12
15	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
16	6	6,73	8,34	5,12
17	6	6,73	8,34	5,12
18	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
19	6	6,73	8,34	5,12
20	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
21	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
22	10	6,73	8,34	5,12
23	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
24	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
25	7	6,73	8,34	5,12
26	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
27	8	6,73	8,34	5,12
28	4	6,73	8,34	5,12
29	5	6,73	8,34	5,12
30	6	6,73	8,34	5,12

FIGURE 10: Standard Deviation Data – Experimental Group – Test 2

	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Upper	Lower
■ Series1	4.23	1.71	1.31	7	2
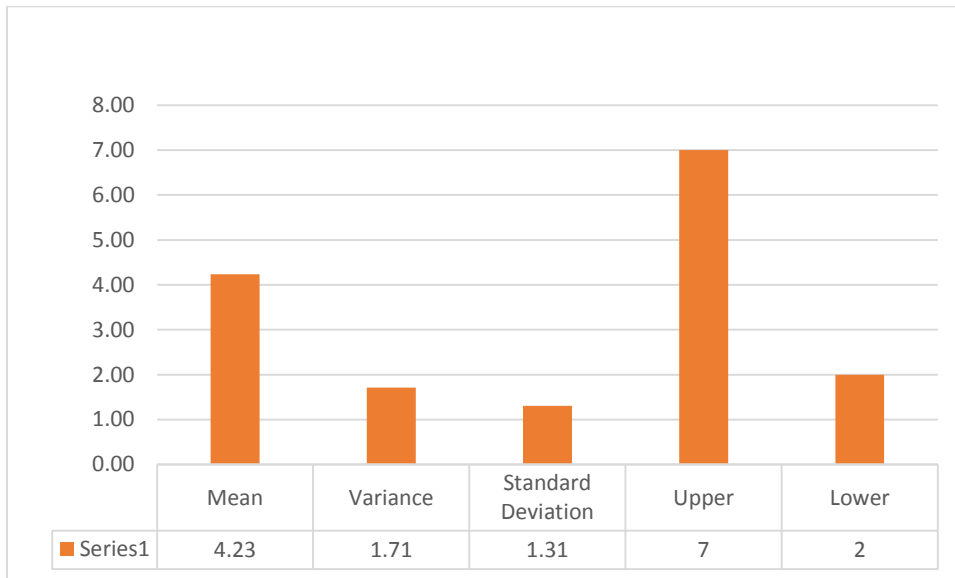
Produced by: Authors

FIGURE 11: Standard Deviation – Experimental Group – Test 2
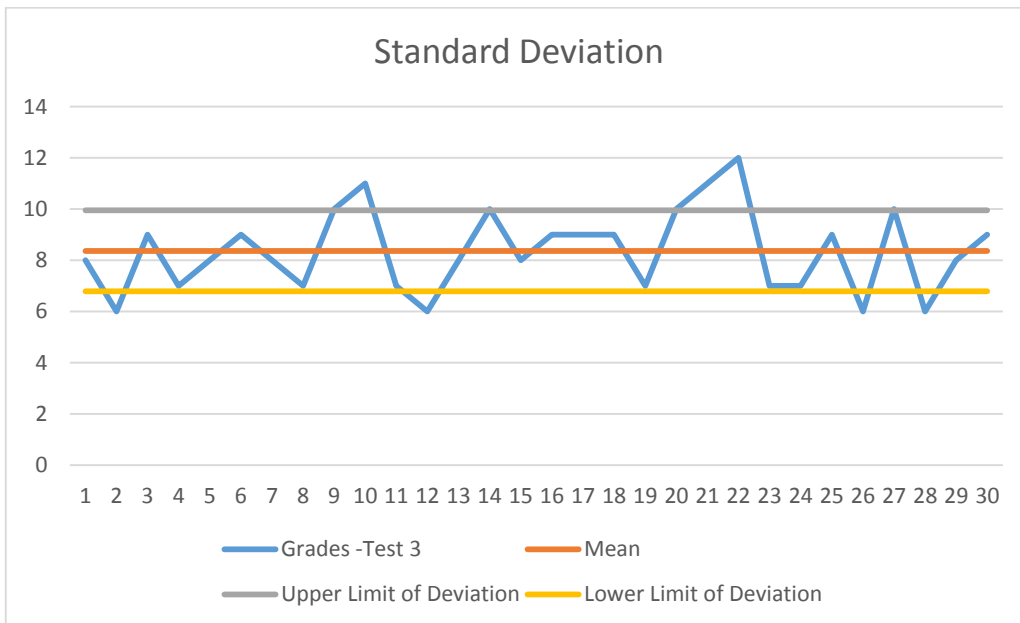
Produced by: Authors

The results of the second test, the mean of the group is 6.73. The variance is 2.60, and the standard deviation is 1.61. The Upper grade is 10, and the lower grade is 4.

TABLE 10: Control Group – Test 2

Student code	Grades -Test 2	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
2	4	5,00	5,89	4,11
3	4	5,00	5,89	4,11
4	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
5	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
6	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
7	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
8	4	5,00	5,89	4,11
9	3	5,00	5,89	4,11
10	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
11	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
12	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
13	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
14	4	5,00	5,89	4,11
15	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
16	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
17	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
18	7	5,00	5,89	4,11
19	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
20	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
21	3	5,00	5,89	4,11
22	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
23	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
24	4	5,00	5,89	4,11
25	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
26	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
27	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
28	5	5,00	5,89	4,11
29	6	5,00	5,89	4,11
30	6	5,00	5,89	4,11

FIGURE 12: Standard Deviation Data – Control Group – Test 2

Series1	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Upper	Lower
	5.00	0.80	0.89	7	3
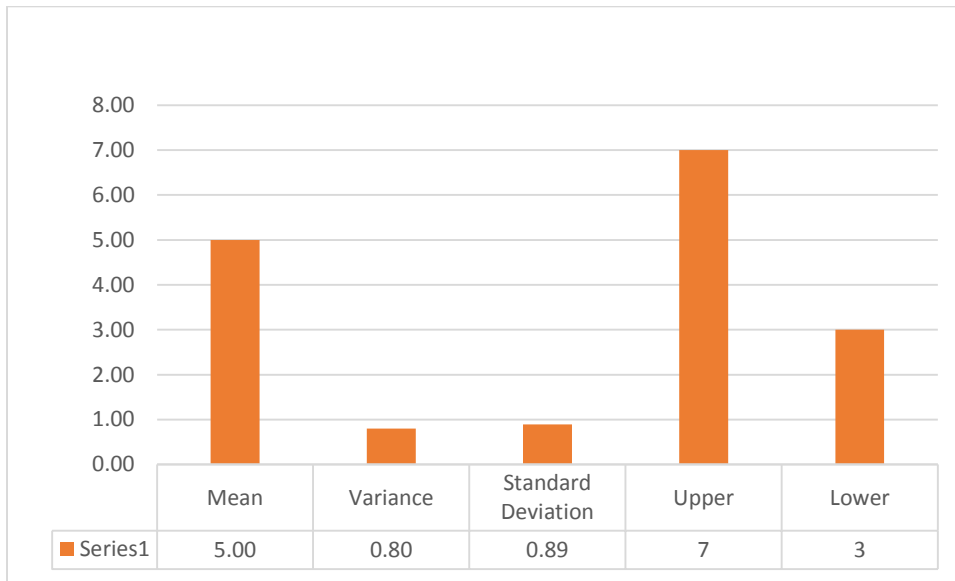
Produced by: Authors

FIGURE 13: Standard Deviation – Control Group – Test 2
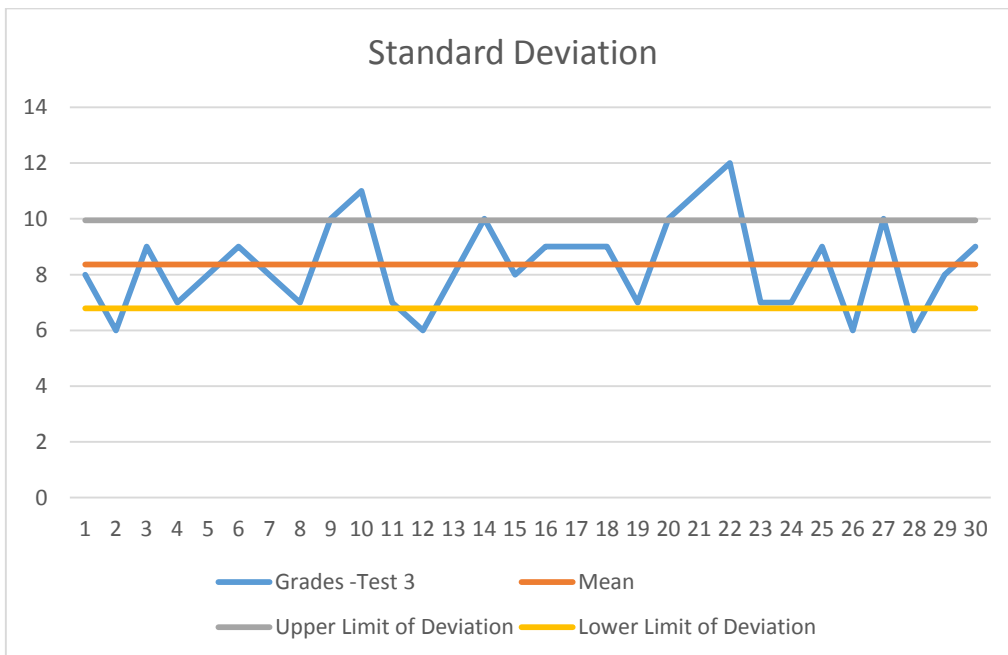
Produced by: Authors

According to the results of the diagnostic test, the mean of the group is 5.00. The variance is 0.80, and the standard deviation is 0.89. The Upper grade is 7, and the lower grade is 3. This first test shows a slow difference reflected in the improvement of the results of the experimental group.

TABLE 11: Experimental Group – Final Test

Student code	Grades - Test 3	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
2	6	8,37	9,95	6,79
3	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
4	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
5	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
6	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
7	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
8	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
9	10	8,37	9,95	6,79
10	11	8,37	9,95	6,79
11	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
12	6	8,37	9,95	6,79
13	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
14	10	8,37	9,95	6,79
15	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
16	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
17	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
18	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
19	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
20	10	8,37	9,95	6,79
21	11	8,37	9,95	6,79
22	12	8,37	9,95	6,79
23	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
24	7	8,37	9,95	6,79
25	9	8,37	9,95	6,79
26	6	8,37	9,95	6,79
27	10	8,37	9,95	6,79
28	6	8,37	9,95	6,79
29	8	8,37	9,95	6,79
30	9	8,37	9,95	6,79

FIGURE 14: Standard Deviation Data – Experimental Group – Final Test

	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Upper	Lower
■ Series1	8.37	2.50	1.58	12	6

Produced by: Authors

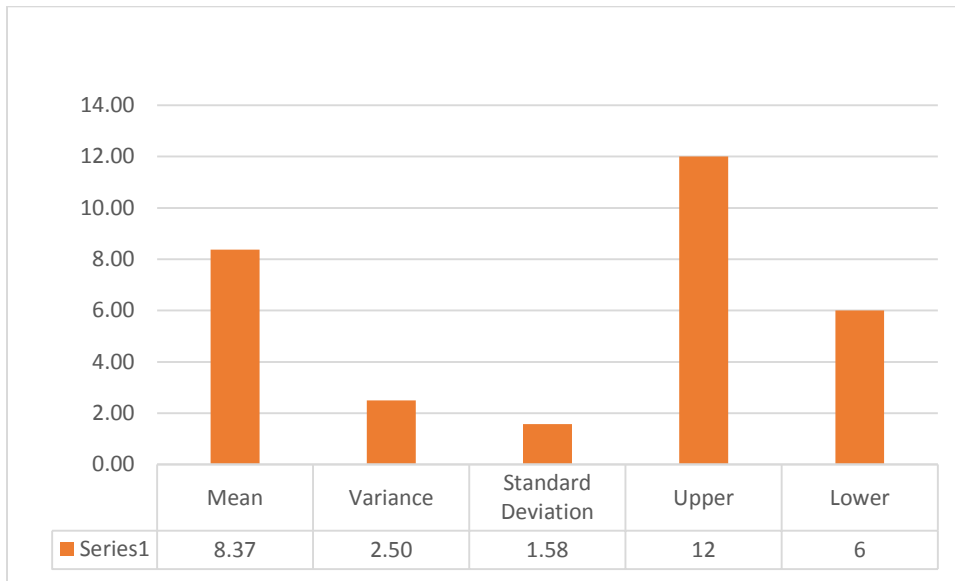**FIGURE 15:** Standard Deviation – Experimental Group – Final Test
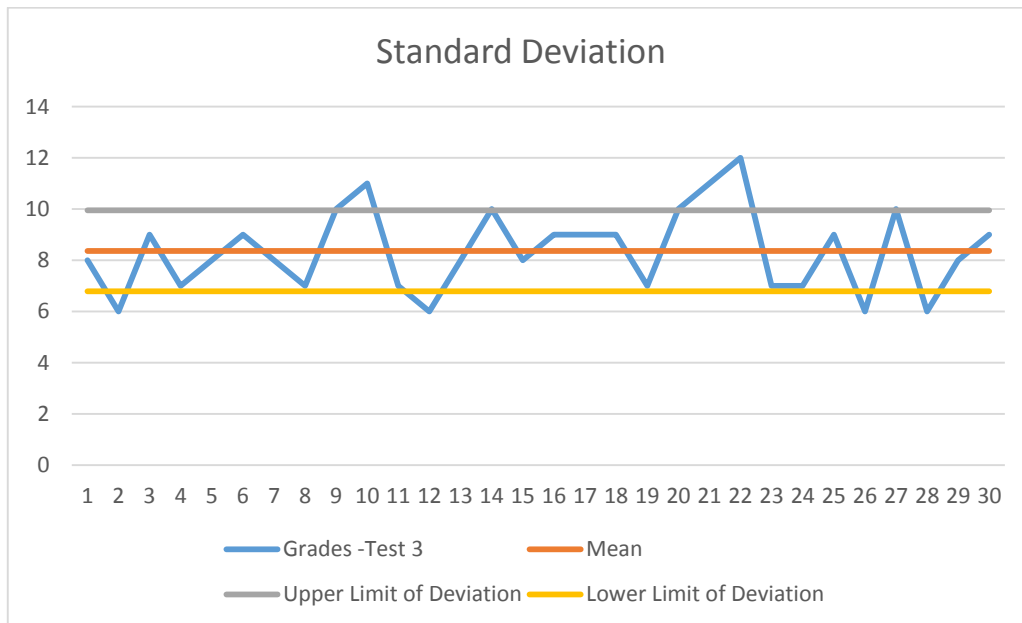
Produced by: Authors

According to the results of the diagnostic test, the mean of the group is 8.37. The variance is 2.50, and the standard deviation is 1.58. The Upper grade is 12, and the lower grade is 6.

TABLE 12: Control Group – Final Test

Student code	Grades -Test 3	Mean	Upper Limit of Deviation	Lower Limit of Deviation
1	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
2	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
3	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
4	7	5,73	6,66	4,80
5	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
6	7	5,73	6,66	4,80
7	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
8	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
9	4	5,73	6,66	4,80
10	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
11	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
12	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
13	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
14	7	5,73	6,66	4,80
15	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
16	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
17	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
18	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
19	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
20	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
21	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
22	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
23	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
24	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
25	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
26	8	5,73	6,66	4,80
27	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
28	5	5,73	6,66	4,80
29	6	5,73	6,66	4,80
30	8	5,73	6,66	4,80

FIGURE 16: Standard Deviation Data – Control Group – Final Test
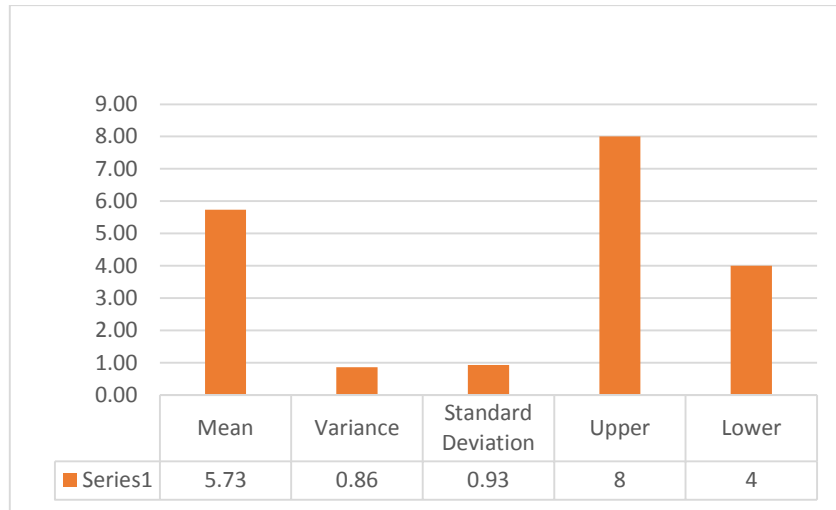
FIGURE 17: Standard Deviation – Control Group – Final Test
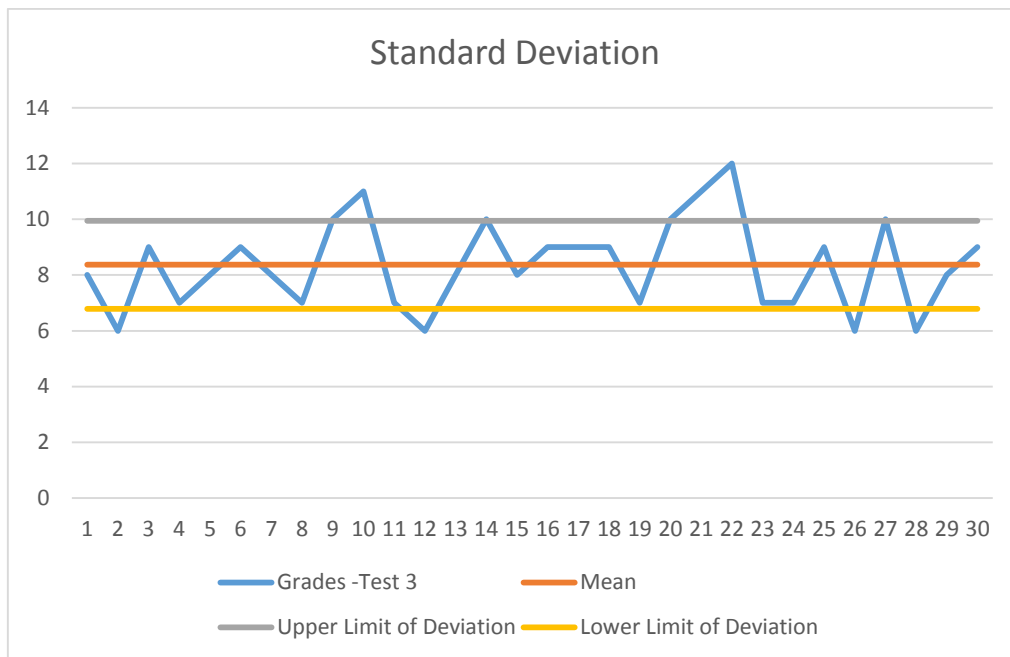
According to the results of the diagnostic test, the mean of the group is 5.73. The variance is 0.86, and the standard deviation is 0.93. The Upper grade is 8, and the lower grade is 4. After the final test, there is the highly significant difference between control and experimental group according to the t-test.

T-TEST

TABLE 13: Test 3 (final): Comparison between control and experimental group

Data	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	5.73	8.37
Standard Deviation	0.94	1.61
Statistical Error Mean	0.17	0.29
Number	30	30
T-Test		7.7351
Degrees Of Freedom		58
Standard Error Of Difference		0.340
P value		less than 0.0001
Significance Difference		Yes

According to the data gather from the T-test, it shows that there was an extremely statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group at the end of the intervention, with 95% of confidence interval.

TABLE 14: Experimental Group – Grades Rate

Grades Rate	TEST 1	%	TEST 2	%	TEST 3	%
1 to 4	18	60,00	2	6,67	0	0,00
5 to 9	11	36,67	26	86,67	23	76,67
10 to 13	1	3,33	2	6,67	7	23,33
TOTAL	30	100,00	30	100,00	30	100,00

FIGURE 18: Experimental Group – Grades Rate
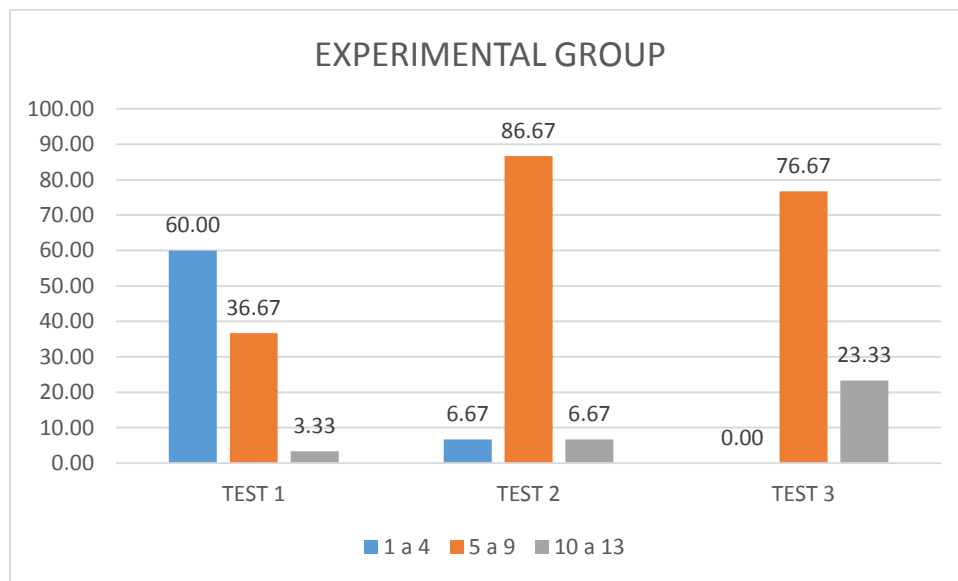
Produced by: Authors

According to this data, the grades rate of the experimental groups varies in the three tests in a positive range. In the first test, 60% of the participants get grades from 1 to 4, in the second test the percentage is 6.67 and the test 3 the percentage is 0. At the rate of 5 to 9, there is a total of 36.67 percent in test 1, 86.67 in test 2 and 76.67 in test three. The best grades receive a percentage completed in test 1 is 3.33 percent, in test 2 is 6.67 and in test 3 is 23.33 percent.

TABLE 15: Control Group - Grades Rate

Grades Rate	TEST 1	%	TEST 2	%	TEST 3	%
1 to 4	17	56,67	7	23,33	1	3,33
5 to 9	13	43,33	23	76,67	29	96,67
10 to 13	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
TOTAL	30	100,00	30	100,00	30	100,00

FIGURE 19: Control Group – Grades Rate
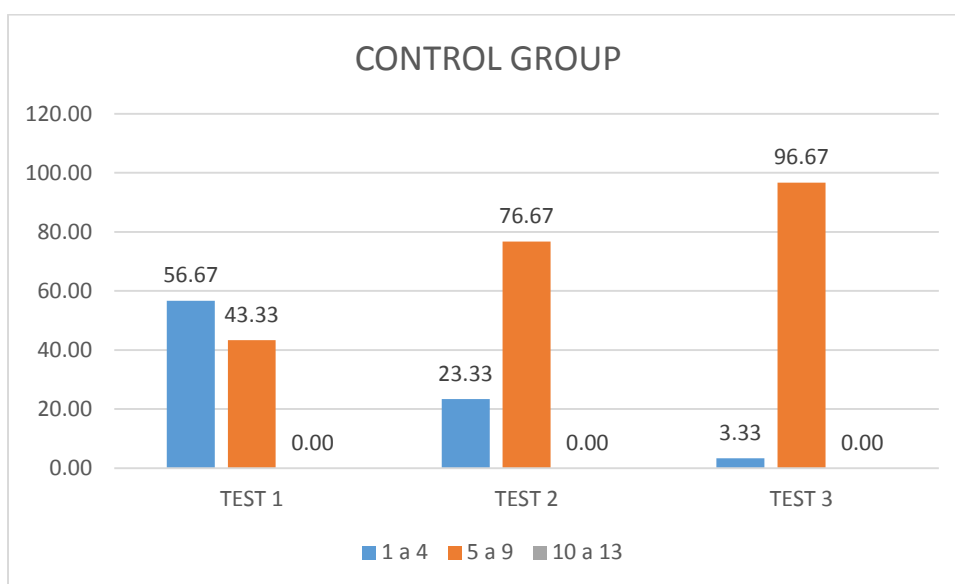
Produced by: Authors

The control group presents the following results. In the low rate, from 1 to 4 there is a 56.67 percent in test 1, in test 2 there is a 23.33 percent, and in test 3 there is a 3.33 percent. In the rate from 5 to 9 in test 1 there is a total of 43.33 percent, in test 2 the percentage is 76.67 and in test 3 the total is 96.67. In the highest rate from 10 to 13, there are no participants included. It represents that the control group, after the normal exposure to reading exercises planned for the level, improve at a lower rate compared with the experimental group.

TABLE 16: Improvement Comparison from Diagnostic to Final Test

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2 or 1 less points	0	0,00	2	6,67
0 or 1 more points	0	0,00	12	40,00
2 or 3 more points	8	26,67	15	50,00
4 or 5 more points	18	60,00	1	3,33
6 or 7 more points	4	13,33	0	0,00
TOTAL	30	100	30	100

FIGURE 20: Improvement Comparison from Diagnostic to Final Test
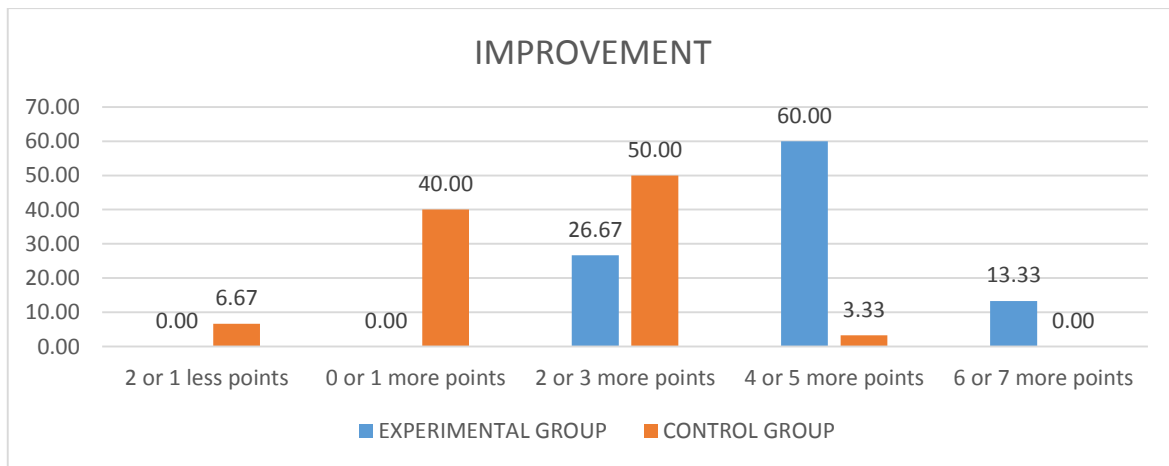
Produced by: Authors

Data was analyzed comparing the results of the diagnostic test and the final test to determine the real improvement in the participants. In the control group, 6.67 percent received 2 to 1 less point in their final test. 40 percent improved just 1 point, or, they have just not improved. In the control group, a total of 50 percent improved from 2 to 3 points, compared with a 26.67 percent of the experimental group. 60 percent of students improved between 4 to 5 points in the experimental group and 3.33 had the same improvement as in the control group. There is also an improvement of 6 to 7 points in the 13.33 percent of the participants in the experimental group, but no one of the students from the control group shown improvement in this range.

T-TEST

TABLE 17: Control Group: Comparison between Test 1 (diagnostic) and Test 3 (final)

Data	Test 1	Test 3
Mean	4.23	5.73
Standard Deviation	1.33	0.94
Statistical Error Mean	0.24	0.17
Number	30	30
T-Test		7.0397
Degrees Of Freedom		29
Standard Error Of Difference		0.213
P value		less than 0.0001
Significance Difference		Yes

According to the data gather from the T-test, it shows that there was an extremely statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group at the end of the intervention with 95% confidence level.

T-TEST

TABLE 18: Experimental Group: Comparison between Test 1 (diagnostic) and Test 3 (final)

Data	Test 1	Test 3
Mean	4.13	8.37
Standard Deviation	1.89	1.61
Statistical Error Mean	0.34	0.29
Number	30	30
T-Test		9.3477
Degrees Of Freedom		58
Standard Error Of Difference		0.453
P value		less than 0.0001
Significance Difference		Yes

According to the data gather from the T-test, it shows that there was an extremely statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group at the end of the intervention, with 95% confidence level.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this work, one general research question was stated as well as three sub-research question to find an answer to a problem that is affecting our students at high educational levels. The research focused on creating ways of reinforcing the development of skimming skills so students can use this ability for self-instruction in different contexts. In this chapter, the authors interpreted data so predictions done at the beginning of the study may be confirmed.

Through the process, there were two ways of collecting data: tests in three different stages, and a final survey to get participants' point of view. The results of these techniques give us enough data to infer the answers to the research questions. The data was presented in the previous chapter through different figures and tables, allowing the researchers to clearly identify the most important features of the research and presenting a summary of the relation with the research questions.

6.2 Discussion

General Research Question: Do groups exposed to intensive Reading practice develop better skimming skills than groups exposed to traditional methods at elementary undergraduate levels at an Ecuadorian public university?

Test Results

The first test serves as diagnostic to confirm the level of the groups at the beginning of the process (Ur, 1991) and that both groups started the process with the similar development of the skimming skill. According to the data obtained, both groups got comparable grades

with a mean of 4.13 in the experimental group and 4.23 in the control group. The second test, in the middle of the process, started showing a difference in the groups. There is an improvement in the control group as a result of the instruction they are receiving as normal part of the curriculum and syllabus provided by the language institute of the University. However, the mean of the experimental group resulted more meaningful than the improvement of the control group. The former got a mean of 5, with represents and improvement of 0.77 points, while the latter got a mean of 6.73, representing 2.6 points more. The final test represents the clearest data for answering the general research question showing a clear differentiation in the results of the participants. The results of the t-test (Table13) support this data which shows a particularly significant statistical difference, having a mean of 8.37 for the experimental group and a mean of 5.73 in the control group. According to this data, the answer to the research question is positive, indicating that the experimental group exposed to an intensive reading program developed better skimming skills than the control group exposed to the regular reading program. This data is presented in tables 6 to 11 and represented in figures 6 to 17.

Participants' opinions (survey)

The perception of the participants of the experimental group in the survey confirmed the results obtained in the tests. Because of the clear variable presented in the research question, it was possible to test it using a survey to support the answers got in the tests. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). According to the answers to question two, 22 out of 30 individuals recognize an improvement in their ability to understand the main idea of texts, representing 73% of the sample population. The opinion of the students involved in the program settle the results of the tests and increase the importance of them as each is self-conscious of his improvement and that may result in more motivation. Another important fact is that only 3% of the group, that is represented by just one individual did not recognize an

improvement in the ability to understand the main idea in the text. It means that 97% felt that they are better trained to read and get an overall idea of the topic, even though they perceive this improvement on a different scale, as represented in question 3.

Students felt satisfied and comfortable with the process, feeling that they can develop faster and more effectively their skimming skills through an intensive reading program rather than attending lessons that follow the regular curriculum and methodology of the language department of the institution. They indicated this in question number five where 70% of the participants in the experimental group chose the intensive reading program as the most helpful way of learning. Question number 4 indicates that the process was not only supportive but also satisfying for the group, increasing not just their language skills, but also, they self-confidence when using the language for academic purposes. All the individual agreed on feeling fulfilled at the end of the program with a 55% which expressed satisfaction.

Sub-research questions:

Question one: Does intensive reading practice help to improve skimming skills?

To support the findings explained in the general research question, the sub-questions were analyzed and interpreted. The first inquiry looks for the influence of the intensive reading program in the improvement of skimming skills in the group of students who were part of the intervention. There were three groups of grade rates for determining the improvement: from 1 to 4, 5 to 9, and 10 to 13 and the results of the different tests were compared. For finding better data, the student took only the specific section of the test that evaluated the explicit skill in which they received training (Harmer, 2001). In the first test, most of the students just answered few correct questions, resulting in 60% students located in the first range presented in figure 18. In the second test, the improvement is visible where 86.67% of the individuals got grades between 5 to 9, which represents that they can answer at

least half of the questions in the test. Finally, the results of the final test provided precise data, showing that no participant got grades below 4; 76.67% achieved 5 to 9 points, and the other 23.33% got grades higher than 9. A t-test (Table 18) was applied making a comparison between the results of test 1 and test 3 in the experimental group, showing that there is a significant difference that supports the hypothesis of improvement through the application of the intensive reading program. After these results, the answer to the research question is that the intensive reading program helped to improve skimming skills in the students. It is interesting to identify that most of the students improved, but no one achieved the highest grades. It can be the result of the short time of the intervention or the low level of the students at the beginning of the process.

Question two: Do skimming skills improve with the practice of traditional methods?

The second sub-research question focuses on the comparison of results in the control group exposed to the normal curriculum and syllabus proposed by the educational institution. This type o syllabus is commonly focused mainly on grammar (Harmer, 2001). This normal curriculum has a component of reading development but it is not intensive and just take a little part of the whole plan. According to the data obtained in the test applied to the group, there was an improvement from the first test to the final one. It also shows a significant statistically difference according to the t-test (Table 17), but the difference in the mean was just 1.5 points, starting with 4.23 and ending with a mean of 5.73. We can infer that the traditional methods suggested by regular curriculums are not completely wrong, helping students to develop reading skills.

The researchers analyzed the grades rate in the control group (figure 19). In the diagnostic test, 43.33% of the participants got grades between 5 to 9 points, and the other 56.67% got grades 1 to 4. In the second test, there was an improvement, where most of the

students were in the second range corresponding to 76.67%. In the final test, most of the students, 96.67%, achieved grades 5 to 9, which confirmed the theory of improvement in the reading skill following the traditional method. There was no student in the final range.

Question three: Does intensive reading practice help to improve skimming skills better than traditional methods?

The final sub-research question emphasizes the difference in the results of the experimental group exposed to an intensive reading program and the control group which did not receive the intervention. Data was analyzed regarding the individual improvement of each student from the first test to the last one. The difference in points they got from those two results was categorized in 5 ranges to have a clear idea of the data. All the participants in the experimental group increased from 2 to 7 points in the final test. 60% of the students get 4 to 5 more points; 26.67% added 2 to 3 points to their scores, and another 13.33% added 6 to 7 points to theirs. The same analysis was done in the control group, finding a different reality, where there was 6.67% of students who got minus 2 or 1 points compared with their results in the diagnostic test. It is a very interesting phenomenon because even though they received regular classes of English their results did not improve, this might be the result of an external factor influencing them at the moment of the test. 40% of participants just added 1 point or received the same score.50% got 2 to 3 more points in their results, represented in the improvement of the control group. 3.33% (1 participant) added 4 to 5 points to his final grade. There is no student who achieved 6 to 7 more points. Comparing both results, it is visible that students improve their skimming skills in a greater scale in the experimental group thanks to the intervention they were a part.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

Based on the results gotten from this research and its connection to the general inquiry and aims established at the beginning, the authors conclude that the intensive reading practice does affect in a positive way the development ok skimming skills. While it is true that the improvement experienced by the participants was after a one-month program, it is enough to state this theory.

The study was conducted in a positive way where each participant felt involved. Although, it has some limitations that may affect somehow the results obtained. The biggest limitation was the time. The study would result in much more improvement of the skill if the student had more hours of English lessons. They only had 4 hours per week.

Another possible limitation was the lack of reading skills in their mother tongue. Some of the students showed a gap in their development of skimming skills in Spanish, which clearly affected their participation in the process.

These limitations were present during the intervention, but it was possible to get important data to find the answers to the inquiries in the present research.

Reading comprehension involves the development of different sub-skills and students can be trained to develop more than one and not only the skimming skill. It would be important for the educational environment to identify other areas to reinforce through the implementation of intensive reading programs.

As it was said before, some students carry the problem of lack of reading skills from the previous stages of their learning process. It will be necessary to repeat the intervention in a lower level of education as high schools, to determine if increasing reading skills from young ages help university students to be more successful in their studies because of the management of this academic tool.

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APPENDIX

TEST 1 (DIAGNOSTIC)

Name: _____

Date:_____

1. **Read the passage and complete the sentences below. Circle the letter of the correct answer, as in the example.**

A British man, Stuart McCoy, has just returned to Britain after cycling over 3500 km for charity. His journey took him from London to Athens via Paris, Munich, Vienna and Belgrade. I interviewed him yesterday.

What made Stuart embark on such a long and arduous journey? "Well, I'm a student," he said. "I had nothing to do in the summer vacation, and badly needed exercise, but I also wanted to do something for others, and that's really what made me do it".

He first thought of raising money for an animal charity. Then after watching a TV programme, he decided half of the money would go to a children's charity. "But half way thought my journey, there was a terrible earthquake in China and I immediately decided it would all go to Chinese earthquake victims."

How much did he raise? "Friends and relatives donated about $1000 in all, and while I was travelling, generous people gave me another $500. But half of my total amount came from my university, which promised to double what I raised myself". So, in total $3000 – not bad for four weeks cycling.

Not bad at all. So, did Stuart cycle back to London too? "Of course I did," he laughed. "No, I gave my bicycle to a children's charity in Greece and came back by train. My dad offered to buy me an air ticket, but I also believe in 'green transport so I decided against flying."

And Stuart's next journey? He smiled, "Well, I supposed it's possible."

Would he get a better bike or do it in a cooler season – spring, for example? "Well, my bike was fantastic and I'm only free in the summer, but I think I'd rather not go on my own next time."

Example: Where did Stuart finish his journey?

    Ⓐ   Athens
    B   Paris
    C   Belgrade

1. What was Stuart's main reason for going on the journey?
       A   He wanted to help people.
       B   He needed exercise.
       C   He had nothing to do.

2. When did Stuart finally decide which charity to give money to?
       A   before the journey
       B   during the journey

C   after the journey

3. Who was the most generous with donations?
    A   Stuart's university
    B   people Stuart met on the journey
    C   Stuart's friends and relatives

4. How did Stuart return home?
    A   by bicycle
    B   by plane
    C   by train

5. What would Stuart do if he did a similar journey in the future?
    A   get a better bike
    B   go with someone else
    C   go in the spring

Read the newspaper feature below and answer the questions.

THE RIVERSIDE VILLAGE OF UPTON is planning its tenth Summer Family Day to take place next month. All the usual activities will be there for families to enjoy and this time there will also be a talent show, 'Upton Has Talent'. Any parents, children or whole families who can sing, dance or generally entertain, are welcome to take part. Interested? Then Mrs. Bickley, the event organizer, would like to hear from you before 21st June on 0322428111.

The Summer Family Day will be alongside the river, where there is going to be a special stage set up for 'Upton has Talent'. Be there!

Example: Where is Upton located?

Beside a river

6. How many Summer Family Days has Upton had so far?

_____

7. What is going to be new this year?

_____

8. How should people contact Mrs. Bickley?

_____

9. What are the talent show participants going to perform on?

_____

Read the newspaper article below and answer the questions.

LUDSDEN SCHOOL, fifty years old last month, is celebrating again. Next Wednesday sees the opening of the new sports pavilion, two years after building began on it. Head teacher, James Grey, has invited eighty guests, mostly former sports captains, to attend. After the head's speech, guests will be able to chat together and reminisce, looking at old photographs of sports teams.

"The Peter Saunders Pavilion" will replace the one hooligans burned down in 1985. "Sporty" Saunders, who retired from teaching through ill health last year, was hoping to attend on Wednesday, but has had to travel abroad unexpectedly.

Example: How old is Ludsden School?

50 / fifty years old

10.   When did work begin on the pavilion?

_____

11.   What is James Grey going to do first?

_____

12.   What happened to the old pavilion?

_____

13.   Why can't Peter Saunders attend the opening?

_____

TEST 2

Name: _____

Date:_____

2. **Read the passage and complete the sentences below. Circle the letter of the correct answer, as in the example.**

A family beach holiday almost turned into a nightmare yesterday when eight-year-old Jason Bligh fell almost four metres from a tree onto rocks not far from Pebble Beach in Australia.

Jason's parents were swimming at the time and too far away to see what had happened. Fortunately, Jason's friend, Maggie Young, was with him and she ran to tell her mother. She called the emergency services on her mobile and then ran into the water to tell Jason's parents.

A quarter of an hour later, a helicopter arrived to take Jason to hospital. Jason was still unconscious. So after carefully putting him onto a stretcher, the paramedics lifted him into the helicopter, which flew him to Stanley hospital – a journey of ten minutes. His parents joined him half an hour later after driving to the hospital in their car.

In the helicopter Jason regained consciousness and wondered where he was but he felt OK. When he had an examination at the hospital, the doctor could not believe Jason had no broken bones. As expected, he had cuts and bruises on various parts of his body, but nothing more serious than that.

When Jason's parents arrived at the hospital, they were relieved that he was not badly injured. The doctor told them Jason could go to the beach again after two days in bed. "Yes, but next time at the beach he's going to stay with us all the time," laughed Linda, his mother. "And no more climbing!"

Jason remembers nothing about his fall. And he can't remember much about the helicopter ride. "But I remember hearing Maggie asking me if I was alright," he says, "She was fantastic. She'll be my friend forever."

Example: What was Jason doing when he fell?
   A   rock climbing
   B   climbing a tree
   C   playing on the beach

1. Who saw what happened to Jason?
    A   Jason's parents
    B   Jason's friend Maggie
    C   Maggie's mother

2. How long did it take the helicopter to get to Jason?
    A   10 minutes
    B   15 minutes
    C   30 minutes

3. What surprised the doctor when she examined Jason?
   A   He had bruises on his body
   B   There were cuts on his body
   C   Nothing was broken

4. What advice did the doctor give?
   A   Jason should stay in bed
   B   Jason should not climb
   C   Jason should stay with his parents at the beach

5. What can Jason remember most about the incident?
   A   the helicopter ride
   B   his fall
   C   Maggie's voice

Read the newspaper feature below and answer the questions.

George and Molly Bradford have been married for sixty-five years. Molly remembers their days at Harven primary school, where they first met, with fondness. "It wasn't love at first sight but we always had fun together," she says.

When they were twenty, they did fall in love but the Second World War had just started and they decided to wait to get married. Fifty years later, in 1995, they went on a cruise, paid for by their children, to celebrate. And now, in 2010, they are as happy as ever. "I have no regrets," says George. "I just wish I could do it all again."

Example: How long have George and Molly been married?

(for) 65 years

6. Where did George and Molly get to know each other?

   _____

7. What prevented George and Molly from getting married at twenty?

   _____

8. How did George and Molly spend their fiftieth anniversary?

   _____

9. What would George do if he had the chance?

   _____

Read the newspaper article below and answer the questions.

HILLSIDE MARKET has been in Longley for a hundred years. But all that might change soon. Developers, Smith and Brown, have applied to build a new shopping centre where the market is. If the application is successful, building will begin early next year.

Angry local residents have formed an action group, SOM (Save Our Market), and plan a series of demonstrations before the final decision on the market's future next month.

John Frain, a stallholder for thirty years, says, "they tried this ten years ago and it failed. It's going to fail again."

Example: Where is Hillside Market?

<u>In Longley</u>

10. What might replace the market?

_____

11. What exactly is "Save Our Market"?

_____

12. When will people find out about the market's future?

_____

13. How long ago did John Frain start working at the market?

_____

TEST 3

Name: _____

Date:_____

3. **Read the passage and complete the sentences below. Circle the letter of the correct answer, as in the example.**

Amber Evans left school at eighteen. She was unemployed for six months when she was nineteen, so she went to college at the age of twenty. She studied to be a nursery nurse but later switched to a beauty course. After her graduation, Amber got a job as a beauty therapist at *Highlights*, a local hairdresser, where she was working when she won the lottery prize of two million pounds. Amber talked to Bolton Post journalist Ravi Miandad.

Ravi: Amber, what was it like at *Highlights*?
Amber: Fantastic! There were four of us working there. We all had a lot of laughs.
Ravi: You didn't hate your job?
Amber: Not at all. The customers were friendly and the owner was really nice.
Ravi: Before your win, had you ever won the lottery?
Amber: No! I never had any luck. I used to buy a ticket at a supermarket on my way home. But the Friday I won, I was going to a sale at a shopping centre in Manchester so I asked a friend at work to buy me a lottery ticket. He got one at a post office near his home.
Ravi: How did you feel when you won?
Amber: Shocked, really shocked. When I got over the surprise, I had fun spending the money: I organized a big party. I bought new clothes, I gave some to my parents. But I didn't go mad. More than three quarters of the money is still in the new bank account I opened.
Ravi: And what are your plans for the future?
Amber: I've always dreamed of going on a cruise in the Caribbean so I'm taking my boyfriend there. We're leaving next leaving next week. In the longer term I'm going to buy a flat and then set up my own beauty business.

Example: How old was Amber when she was unemployed?
    A   eighteen
    (B)   nineteen
    C   twenty

1. What was Amber's job when she won the lottery?
    A   nursery nurse
    B   beauty therapist
    C   journalist

2. How did Amber feel about her job?
    A   She thought it was amusing
    B   She disliked it
    C   She liked it

3. Where did Amber's winning ticket come from?

    A   a post office

    B   a supermarket

    C   a shopping centre

4. What happened to most of Amber's money?

    A   She put it in the bank

    B   She gave it to her mum and dad

    C   She spent it on parties

5. What is Amber going to do next?

    A   start her own business

    B   buy a house

    C   go on holiday

Read the newspaper article below and answer the questions.

My Favorite Teacher
By Sheila McLean, financial analyst
"Unusually for the nineteen sixties my mother worked full-time so I started my education early at the Start Club, a local kindergarten. After seven years at Oakhill Primary, I encountered my favourite teacher, Mr. Marsh, in the third-year maths class of my secondary school, Wallford High. Two things impressed me about him: he was exceptionally tall, and more importantly, he was passionate about his subject. Then, unlike today, girls were not really expected to excel at maths. Mr. Marsh, however, demanded high standards from everyone, not just the boys."

Example: What is Sheila McLean's job?

<u>Financial analyst</u>

6. Why did Sheila start her education at an early age?

    _____

7. What was the name of Sheila's second school?

    _____

8. What did Sheila value about Mr. Marsh?

    _____

9. How did Mr. Marsh differ from other maths teachers of that time?

    _____

Read the magazine article below and answer the questions.

> Editorial
>
> This month's feature in *Collecting Coins* completes the series of articles on pre-decimal British coins which began last March. Decimalization is of growing interest to numismatists younger than forty. These coin-collecting enthusiasts have no direct experience of the old British currency which was replaced in 1971. Indeed, fewer and fewer people remember the old names of pre-decimal coins such as a 'bob' or 'shilling' that was worth twelve pennies (five pence now). These old coins are increasing in value at the moment due to the precious metals in them rather than because they are rare.

Example: In Which magazine did this editorial appear?

Collecting Coins

10. What is numismatist?

   _____

11. When did the British change to a decimal system of currency?

   _____

12. How much is a 'bob' worth in decimal British currency?

   _____

13. Why has the value of old British coins increased?

   _____

Skimming Activity #1

Help Reading Comprehension - Applying for a Job

Skim the following job advertisements:

> Needed: Full time secretary position available. Applicants should have at least 2 years' experience and be able to type 60 words a minute. No computer skills required. Apply in person at United Business Ltd., 17 Browning Street.

> Are you looking for a part time job? We require 3 part time shop assistants to work during the evening. No experience required, applicants should between 18 and 26. Call 366 - 76564 for more information.

> Computer trained secretaries: Do you have experience working with computers? Would you like a full time position working in an exciting new company? If your answer is yes, give us a call at 344-5487

> Teacher Needed: Tommy's Kindergarten needs 2 teacher/trainers to help with classes from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Applicants should have appropriate licenses. For more information visit Tommy's Kindergarten in Leicester Square No. 56

> Part time work available: We are looking for retired adults who would like to work part time at the weekend. Responsibilities include answering the telephone and giving customer's information. For more information contact us by calling 6. University positions open: The University of Cumberland is looking for 4 teaching assistants to help with homework correction. Applicants should have a degree in one of the following: Political Science, Religion, Economics or History. Please contact the University of Cumberland for more information.

Comprehension Questions

Which position is best for these people? Now scan the text and choose **only one** position for each person.

a) Jane Madison. Jane recently retired and is looking for a part time position. She would like to work with people and enjoys public relation work.

b) Jack Anderson. Jack graduated from the University of Trent with a degree in Economics two years ago. He would like an academic position.

c) Margaret Lillian. Margaret is 21 years old and would like a part time position to help her pay her university expenses. She can only work in the evenings.

d) Alice Fingelhamm. Alice was trained as a secretary and has six years of experience. She is an excellent typist but does not know how to use a computer. She is looking for a full-time position.

e) Peter Florian. Peter went to business school and studied computer and secretarial skills. He is looking for his first job and would like a full-time position.

f) Vincent San George. Vincent loves working with children and has an education license from the city of Birmingham. He would like to work with young children.

Answer Key:

The best job for Jane is -- 5

The best job for Jack is – 6

The best job for Margaret is – 2

The best job for Alice is -- 1

The best job for Peter is -- 3

The best job for Vincent is -- 4

APPENDIX E

Participant Consent Form

Experimental Study to Determine the Influence of Intensive Reading Practice in the Development of Skimming Skills in Elementary Undergraduate Students at an Ecuadorian Public University.

Please indicate your position, check all that apply
☐ Program Administrator
☐ Student/ Participant
☐ Teacher/ Professor
☐ Parents of participants under 18 years of age
☐ Other, (please explain) _____

The purpose of the present study is to analyze how the implementation of an Intensive reading program would affect the skimming skills in Elementary Undergraduate Students at an Ecuadorian Public University.

This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master´s degree in The Master`s Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral.

I _____, have been invited to participate in this research study, which has been explained to me by Angela Burgos and Monica Loor.

Description of the research study methods
This study will be a quantitative Action Research

Requirements of the participants
The experimental group of this study will be exposed to 8 sessions of intensive reading of one hour each. They are also going to be evaluated at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the study with Person Test of English General, reading section two and three, this to monitor the participants' improvement of the group. The control group will be evaluated with Person Test of English General, reading section two and three. However, they are going to receive their normal classes of English during the same time.

Benefits to the participants
Both groups will benefit from the intensive reading classes.

Risks and Discomforts
Students might feel exhausted with the amount of reading during the sessions.

Contact Person

lilibeth_burgos@hotmail.com
monica.loor.domo@gmail.com

Confidentiality

I am aware that my name and any information I provide to this study will be kept confidential.

Voluntary Participation

By signing the present form, I express my free wish of being part of this study. I also understand that if I decide to withdraw of the same, it, will be affected. However I am aware that I can withdraw at any moment with no academic consequences.

Signature of the participant	Date

Signature of the researcher	Date

The present survey is part of the Experimental Study to Determine the Influence of Intensive Reading Practice in the Development of Skimming Skills in Elementary Undergraduate Students at an Ecuadorian Public University. The objective of the survey is to know the level of satisfaction and profit of the present study by the students who participated in the process.

1. Do you believe that being able to understand the main idea of a text helps you to develop your reading skills?

Yes ( )   No ( )

2. Which of the following reading techniques do you consider to have improved or learned to use during the time of the present study?

Understanding the main idea (Skimming) ( )
Synthesis ( )
Speed ( )
Accuracy ( )
Other _____

3. Do you think you have improved your skimming skills after being part of the present study? In what percentage?

Yes ( )   No ( )

0-10% ( )
10-25% ( )
25-50% ( )
50-75% ( )
75-100% ( )

4. On a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum), how satisfied did you feel during the study time?

1 ( )   2 ( )   3 ( )   4 ( )   5 ( )

5. Which of the following methods do you consider to be most helpful to your English language learning?

The traditional method* ( )
The application of more reading during classes ( )

*The traditional method refers to the way you have received English classes during this semester and the previous one. It means, with a percentage of reading skill of about 15-20% of the total of the class.