Analysis of the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies in the development of language skills aimed at rapid reading and the identification and understanding of the main idea in a text with English students of the Intensive Academic Program of Keizer University Carazo

Lic. Francisco Hodgson Hodgson
Keiser University Carazo
frhod64@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the four key competences of the English language learning process, in particular, as a receiving skill that facilitates the adoption and incorporation of a variety of information that can be found in different ways. Today, the world of technology, specifically the digital world, offers the reader not only access to a greater variety of texts, but also requires the reader to perform more accurately and quickly when reading. This context requires fast reading and reading comprehension skills to discern all available.

The essay focuses on the evaluation and documentation of a pedagogical strategy, which promotes the development of reading competence with the students of the Intensive Academic Program (IAP). The pedagogical strategy raises the development of skills, such as: prediction, where the reader activates his prior knowledge of reading; Skimming through a text quickly to get a general idea of the text; scanning for specific information, since they are considered to be transcendental for the acquisition of reading ability, as well as exploring key words and comprehension questions, elements that contribute to the comprehension of the language and to the broadening of the general culture of the students.

INTRODUCTION

The Language Institute which belongs to Keizer University (KU) is located in San Marcos, Nicaragua. The KU is accredited in Florida, United States and has campuses in Asia and Latin America. The Language Institute offers two intensive programs of English language teaching: the Program of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for a general population that only need the language at a communicative level, serving mostly adolescents and young people between 20 and 22 years; instead, the Intensive Academic Program (IAP) targets high school graduates who are projected as students in KU careers. The institute has the orientation to make the students learn the English language, but more important is that they also develop critical thinking about a new culture and the global aspects that learning a universal language implies.

According to UNESCO's analysis in Latin America, one of the main shortcomings of education systems is to consider reading and writing as techniques or subjects of study without a real communicative function. This discourages and hinders the learning of the written language in those sectors that mostly need the school to develop it. Although, it is assumed that the mastery of written language is the basis of learning that occurs in school, the teaching of reading is done in a disconnected way from these lessons. In other words, until now, learning to read has been emphasized and there has been a lack of emphasis on reading to learn. This explains, in important part, the high repetition rates, the low achievements and the modest levels of reading comprehension.

Consequently, a new approach to reading and writing centered on communication, expression and understanding of meaning with formative and functional purposes is required. This approach must be present from the very first contact between the student and the written language, so that reading and writing become the element that structures all school learning. These changes are essential and do not pretend to ignore the achievements made thanks to the hard work of teachers. It is, however, about updating the practice of teachers so that 'learning to read' is more than acquiring skills to decode words or texts, and learning to write is more than imitate or code words and texts. It is about linking reading and writing to the development of contextualized emotional, affective and social processes.

These difficulties are presented in a basic level of learning in the mother tongue, when this skill is not developed in Spanish, the difficulty persists when learning a new language such as English. Taking the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2002) as a reference, the use and learning of a foreign language requires the development of a series of general competences, common to any discipline: declarative knowledge (knowledge), the skills and abilities (know-how), the "existential" competence (knowing how to be), the ability to learn

(know how to learn); For the purposes of the research, it is necessary to focus on the know-how that implies the implementation of the skills for an effective reading.

The low level of reading comprehension is also understood as the lack of academic vocabulary, lack of analysis, the comprehension of what is read and the speed of reading. The lack of them contributes to academic failure.

There are no previous studies focused on the speed reading of English as a second language in Nicaragua, therefore, to generate evidence that develops the effective principles for the development of reading competence will be an important contribution to the pedagogical proposal of the AIP and useful for those formal programs of teaching English as a second language in our country.

Teaching the reading skill in the English subject it is worked in reference to the speaking and writing that represent the productive ability; On the other hand, listening and reading are receptive skills. In recent years, reading has taken on a more significant role in the students' learning stage. The exposure of a greater amount of reading materials both printed and on the Internet, requires the reader not only to understand but also to read faster in order to cover a considerable amount of material

The types of academic texts that students read at the level of higher education (University) or postgraduate (Masters, Doctorate) are: course books, case studies, reference books, brochures with notes of lectures, academic journals, books text, government and company reports, manuals and guides, collections of edited documents and conference reports. Therefore, the teaching of strategies that help increase reading speed is very important for every student who has the purpose of entering the university.

Several strategies are used in the teaching of reading, among the most used, as Brown (2000) points out, are: identifying the purpose in reading, skimming (quick search of main ideas), scanning (exploring keywords), and the use of semantic maps or conceptual maps, among others. This author argues that efficient reading consists in clearly identifying the purpose of what is read. By recognizing the intent of the text, the reader recognizes what is seek and can discriminate distractors within the reading. In reference to skimming or quick search of main ideas, Brown mentions that, it gives the reader the advantage to be able to predict the purpose of a passage. On the other hand, it expresses that scanning or exploring keywords is important for extracting information without having to read the entire text. When referring to the use of semantic maps, these serve to provide a framework for ordering the main ideas of the text.

When we start a reading function, it is very important not only to know the purpose of the reading but also how much is known about the topic prior to the meeting. It is important to

note that, generally, institutions and teachers, as well as academic programs, impose themselves on the selection of reading material. Despite the aforementioned, there are four types of purposes for the comprehension of texts: 1) reading to find information (specific and general); 2) read to act (follow instructions, perform procedures); 3) read to show that a content has been understood (for evaluation activities); and 4) reading understanding to learn (Díaz, 2010). Within the third purpose presented by Díaz, for a better performance in reading, reading speed plays an important role.

Reading in English for many students is a slow task. One of the biggest difficulties for students of English as a foreign language is the identification of both the structures and the topic. Also, if the topic is outside of your experience or knowledge base, they tend to experience a shipwrecked feeling in a sea of letters. This leads students to use the reading time to read more slowly and very few dare to compensate for trying to get it right (Kiran, 2013).

The development of reading speed is an essential skill for all candidates to continue their higher education, and more particularly, students of English as a foreign language. The incidence of reading speed among readers of the English language as a mother tongue (L1) and students of English as a foreign language (L2) present a significant margin of difference, as cited in Anderson (1999).

Segalowitz, Poulsen, and Komoda (1991: 15) indicate that the reading scales of high-level language of bilingual foreign students (L2) are "30%" or slower than the scales of English language readers as a mother tongue (L1) ". This information is also supported by Weber (1991), who points out that highly bilingual students typically demonstrate a lower rate of speed in a second language. Jensen (1986:106) notes that, "at the end of a reading course, students of English as a Foreign Language (ESL) only achieve 100 words per minute.

There are different criteria about what is the optimal or adequate speed of a student. "Some authorities stipulate that 180 words per minute is only a threshold between an immature reader and a mature one, and that any speed below this would be very slow both for an efficient understanding and for the enjoyment of a text (Higgins and Wallace 1989). : 392). On the other hand, according to Dubin and Bycina (1986: 106), a speed of 200 words per minute would be a minimum to read with complete comprehension. Jensen recommends that readers of a second language aspire to "approach the level of speed and reading comprehension of native English readers (L1) to be able to deal with their classes". He advises that the optimal speed is 300 words per minute. This rhythm of reading is supported by Nuttal (as cited in Anderson, 1999, p.2) who cites "for a native of the language (English) with an average education and intelligence [...] the reading speed is 300 words per minute".

Metacognitive strategies are general learning strategies that allow you to reflect on your own thinking. Once we have begun to think about learning, it is possible to notice how it is being learned and how this can be enhanced to do it more efficiently.

The more general metacognitive strategies allow organizing and planning the way of learning in order to be better trained. They also allow you to establish your own rhythm of learning, since they help determine how you learn in a better way and allow you to look for opportunities to practice and concentrate on the task avoiding distraction. Another function of metacognitive strategies is to verify progress, these points to reflect on the way in which a task is being worked on. Ask yourself about, Do I understand what I read? Or Does it make sense what I'm doing? .Reflect on this aspect. Finally, the possibility of evaluating the process allows appreciating how well the task has been developed, how effectively the learning strategies have been applied and how effective they were.

The concept of strategy is often used in different disciplines, for that reason, it becomes a complex term since it can be used with different meanings. The first meaning that is found in dictionaries is usually that of the military field, "A set of coordinated actions, the maneuvers for a victory" (Le Petit Robert, cited by Cyr, 1998: 4). From this first meaning, it is passed to a general meaning as "coordinated actions of all, skillful operations, maneuvers to achieve a specific objective" (Le Trésor de la Langue Française, 2004).

In the pedagogical field, the strategy must be linked to the competences. The strategies are considered resources that the student must use in the process of acquisition of competences. Bégin (2008) presents the questions of both the definition and classification of learning strategies, as confounding factors. In the case of the definition of the concept, Bégin (2008: 49) points out the different approaches that are assigned to this term: action groups, procedures, techniques or particular behaviors, the objective pursued through that strategy, the context in which that the strategy is used.

Despite the confusion referred to by the author, you need to have a definition that can be used as a point of reference. The one that Bégin considers most accepted and cited by the pedagogues is that of Weinstein and Mayer (1986, cited by Bégin, 2008: 48)) for whom learning strategies in the school context are "[...] those that the student uses to acquire, integrate and remember the knowledge that is taught. "

About the learning strategies of a foreign language, specialists such as Cyr (1998: 4), have described them as: [...] behaviors, techniques, tactics, plans, mental operations, conscious, unconscious abilities , or potentially conscious, cognitive or functional, as well as the problem solving techniques observable in the individual who is in a situation of apprentices - wise.

The definition of strategy is not something monolithic but plural, that is, it is a set of operations. These varieties of techniques and behaviors always have an intentionality that is to achieve an objective effectively.

Regarding the strategy of learning a second language, Cyr (1998: 5) defines it as "a set of operations carried out by students to acquire, integrate and reuse the target language". For MCERL4 (2002: 10), it is "any line of action organized, intentional and regulated, chosen by any individual to perform a task that is proposed to himself or to which he has to face."

The CEFR4 (2002) establishes a series of dimensions that are part of any teaching-learning process of a language: strategies, tasks, texts, the general competences of an individual, communicative competence, language activities, processes, contexts and areas. Any act of teaching-learning of a language is related to each of these dimensions. As you can see, strategies are a fundamental part of this learning.

To perform the necessary tasks in order to advance in learning, the students need to use certain strategies that depend on their abilities, their circumstances and their context. With the same task, each person can use different strategies.

Many of our students do not take charge of their own learning and simply follow guidelines set by the teacher and the manuals. However, when a student leaves the classroom, the teaching process ends and the learning phase begins this phase must be independently and responsibly done by the student. The students must assess what are their objectives and what are the materials and working methods that are best suited to their motivations, needs, characteristics and material resources that can be available (dictionaries, grammars, possibility of access to exercises on the Internet, among others). This task is also the object of this study, it is intended to know how they face personal work which will allow them to advance in their language learning, in this case, English.

CONCLUSIONS

The ability of reading from its beginnings has given guidelines for the development of the human being in its different social, cultural and political stages. Today, despite all available technology, reading is a receptive element of all information and communication - traditional or digital. Within this perspective, university education is closely linked to reading, and more particularly to speed reading. This is fundamental in the teaching-learning context of English language both for the students and for the aspiring teachers in the field of basic, superior and technical studies.

The expectations of this proposal are, first, that the use of prediction and the increase of reading speed as a reading strategy, the tool used and the information collected, are of benefit

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Section

primarily to the students of the Language Institute of University Keizer San Marcos, Carazo, by increasing their reading speed, contributes to their comprehension, increases the quantity and variety of texts and serves not only as a stimulus for the development of academic reading but as a pastime. And second, that this work serves the Language Institute of University of Keizer San Marcos and Managua in the development of skills and in the teaching-learning process of the other students in the different programs offered. It is expected that this proposal and its results will serve to establish future studies and the implementation of strategies in order to promote not only the improvement of reading, but all the necessary skills for learning English as a foreign language in Nicaragua.

REFERENCES

Anderson; N. J. (1999). *Exploring second language reading: Issues and strategies.* Boston; MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Bégin (2008). *La lectura rápida.* Available in: http://metodoparaestudiar.blogspot.com/2008/02/lectura-rpida.html

Brown; H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains; NY: Longman.

Cyr; P. y Claude; G. (1998). *Les stratégies d'apprentissage*. Cle International. París; Francia.

Díaz; B. A. & Hernández; R. G. (2010). *Estrategias docentes para un aprendizaje significativo: Una interpretación constructivista*. Tercera edición. México; D.F: McGraw Hill.

Dubin; F. & Bycina; D. (1991). *Academic reading and the ESL/EFL teacher.* In M. CelceMurcia (Ed.); Teaching English as a second or foreign language (Segunda edición; pp. 195–215). Boston.

Higgins; E.T. (1989). *Self-Discrepancy Theory: What Patterns of Self-Beliefs Cause People to Suffer? Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 22; 93-136.

Jensen; Michael. (1986). *Agency Costs of Free Cash Flow; Corporate Finance; and Takeovers; American Economic Review.* 76; (2).

Le Trésor de la langue française (TLF). (2004).

Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas. (2002). *Aprendizaje; enseñanza y evaluación*.

Segalowitz; N.; Poulsen; C. & Komoda; M. (1991). *Lower level components of reading skill in higher level bilinguals: Implications for reading instruction*. AILA Review; 8(1); 15-30.

Unesco. (2017). *La mayoría de latinoamericanos culminan la secundaria sin saber leer bien.* Disponible en: http://www.semana.com/educacion/articulo/unesco-niveles-de-lectura-en-america-latina/541971

Weber; M. (1991). *La técnica que marca la diferencia en la Lectura Rápida.* Available in: https://lecturaagil.com/tecnica-que-marca-la-diferencia/