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BECOMING BETTER READERS: THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTING READING STRATEGIES WHICH MATCH STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES.

TESIS
QUE PARA OBTENER EL GRADO DE
LICENCIADO EN
ENSEÑANZA DE LA LENGUA INGLESA

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It has never been my object to record my dreams, just to realize them
Man Ray, O Magazine, September 2002

To my three shining stars...

thanks for everything!

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CHAPTER I

THE STUDY

This chapter presents the background of the study followed by its purpose and significance. The main and subsidiary research questions along with the hypotheses follow. A subsequent section states the limitations of the study. Finally, the definitions of the main terms are presented.

1.1. Background of the study

Since the early seventies, research concerns in the field of second language learning and teaching have shifted from the methods of teaching to learner characteristics and their possible influence on the process of acquiring a second language (Wenden, 1987). Gardner and Lambert's (1972) in their seminal research on attitude and motivation, point out the importance of affective factors. Other writers, notably Schumann (1978), have pointed to the influence of social factors which determine the extent to which a non-speaker group may remain "socially distant" from the culture of the target language group and the importance of the learners' cognitive abilities have also been stressed (Richards, Kennedy, Macnamara and Oller, 1973).

However, despite all these efforts there has been a growing concern that learners have not progressed as much as it was anticipated. There are considerable individual differences in language learning, as Willing (1988) points out this has to do with certain personality and social factors such as gender, age, social status,

motivation, attitude, aptitude, culture, among others and what works for one learner might not work for another. Therefore, none of the methods and techniques has proved that they can work all the time, in all classes, with all students.

Teachers and researchers have then come to realize that no single research finding and no single method of language teaching will guide teachers in an era of universal success in teaching a second language. Certain learners seem to be successful regardless of methods or techniques or teaching, and researchers have begun to see the importance of individual variation in language learning. As some learners appear to be endowed with abilities to succeed; others lack those abilities. This observation led Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) to describe *good language learners* in terms of personal characteristics, styles and strategies.

Reading is considered by Byrnes (1998) as an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports learning in multiple ways. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is. For these reasons, *reading strategies* have been one of the most popular aspects researchers have focused on, due to the fact that they have always been studied in relation to other variables; such as gender, achievement, motivation, career orientation, national origin, aptitude, learning styles, etc. Also, this has been taken into consideration while doing research in order to reveal whether there is any relationship between the *reading strategies* choice and variables. Oxford (1989) offers a synthesis of the studies carried out regarding the strategies and the

variables that affect strategy choice. She presents the results of studies carried out with respect to *strategies* choice and language being learned, duration, degree of awareness, age, and sex, affective variables such as attitudes, motivational level, personality characteristics, and general personality type. *Learning styles* is another variable that relates to *reading strategies* but Oxford asserts that "little research had been dedicated to the relationship between strategy use and learning style" (p. 241). Furthermore, among the numerous recommendations resulting from the survey Willing (1988) conducted with respect to the learning styles in adult migrant education, in which a similar recommendation is proposed.

In more recent research, with the increasing interest in social constructivist analysis of language acquisition, researchers find a shift of focus away from merely searching for universal cognitive and affective characteristics for becoming successful language learners (Brown, 2007). Also, research has been centered on how better language learners use strategies according to their own style of learning, personality, age and purpose for learning the language (Macaro, 2001).

Though limited in number, the studies conducted with respect to the topic under discussion in the current study show that these three issues are closely related, because they keep a narrow relationship with the process of learning a second language and learner autonomy (*idem*).

It is known that most teachers tend to teach the way they were taught or the way they prefer to learn; without looking at the learners´ preferences. Also, sometimes conflicts might arise because of a mismatch between the teacher's teaching style

and learner's learning styles, which might have negative consequences both on the part of the learner and teacher. For this reason, as Richards (1994, p.62) asserts, it is useful to try to identify which approaches to learning the students favor and how teaching can accommodate their learning preferences.

Raising learners' awareness regarding their learning styles and reading strategies might make them not only more prepared for learning but also more analytic about their learning styles and the strategies they make use of while reading. Reid (1995) states that developing an understanding of learning environments and styles "will enable learners to take control of their learning and to maximize their potential for learning" (p. xiv).

All that said, the present study is an attempt to contribute to research linking *learning styles and reading strategies* in an EFL setting.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This study aims to investigate if a reading treatment which takes students' learning styles into account as they are trained into using specific reading strategies helps them to become more efficient readers. This study also intends to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between the own preferences of *a good second language reader,* the *learning styles* and *reading strategies.*

1.3. Significance of the study

The main significance of this research project is to shed some light on the importance of teachers becoming aware on their learners' preferences and in using this information when taking important decisions as they select and later implement reading strategies with their groups.

This study might also prove useful curriculum developers and material producers. Teachers need to have enough time in the curriculum dedicated to both the identification of learners' learning styles and reading strategies and learner training activities, curriculum developers will be able to allocate sufficient time for the reading strategy training sessions. Similarly, knowing learners' general preference tendencies might enable material developers to produce materials that match students' learning styles and help them manipulate beneficial strategies to read and comprehend a great variety of materials written in a second language. In other words, teachers may have enough time not only to identify their students' styles and reading strategies, they might become capable of integrating appropriate materials and activities that match the learners' learning styles and they can have better opportunities to assess and guide the learners with respect to reading strategies manipulated in various situations thanks to the curriculum and material developers.

All in all, this study might prove useful to both language teachers and learners because it may raise teachers' awareness concerning their own learning and teaching styles.

1.4. Research questions

Having set the purpose of this study, the main research question is:

What is the impact on students' reading comprehension from using *reading strategies* according to their *predominant learners´ styles*?

Three subsidiary questions emerge:

- What are the participants' learning styles?
- What are the effects of undergoing a reading treatment based on the participants' learning styles on their reading comprehension skills?
- What are the participants' perceived benefits of such treatment?

1.5. Hypotheses

It is important to state possible answers of the previous research questions in order to draw a general view and expectations about what this study aims to look for. Through all this process, it is important to highlight the importance of these hypotheses in order to support or refuse certain beliefs about the main categories.

Also, it is important to mention that these hypotheses were proved or refused with qualitative and quantitative data. The hypotheses were the following:

- Good second language readers are people able to monitor and take decisions by themselves improving their performance and English level inside the classroom.

- Learners comprehend better while reading if there is a match between their predominant *learning styles* and appropriate *reading strategies.*

1.6. Definition of the main terms

This section mainly contains the definitions of some of the main concepts which will be found throughout this paper.

Good second language readers: are able to monitor their comprehension and take action when comprehension falters and that composing strategies are more important than language proficiency in second language writing. (Devine (1993) cited in Uhl, 1999, p.166).

Foreign language: "…any language which does not have immediate social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned; it is employed mostly to communicate elsewhere" (Oxford, 1993, p.6).

Second language: "…it is the learning of any language to any level, provided only that the learning of the second language takes place sometimes later than the acquisition of the first language….any language other than the learners´ native language or mother tongue " (Mitchell, 1998, p.1).

Note: for the present paper, the focus is not on differentiating between second and foreign language learning but on integrating the essence of both definitions, that is to say, that this language (said of English) is both a language which learning takes place later than the mother tongue as that does not have immediate social and communicative functions within the community where is learned. That said, the researcher wishes to state that both terms (ESL and EFL) may be used interchangeably in this paper.

Intermediate-High reading level: the person is able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. The person can get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. (ACTFL, 1999).

Learning styles: "…cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1979, p.4); it is simply defined as "a general predisposition, voluntary or not, toward processing information in a particular way (Skehan, 1991 cited in Brown, 2007, p.120).

Reading strategies: "… they are an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently…" (Lenzs, 2005).

This chapter has presented a general overview of the study as well as its main aims and significance. The following chapters will present the revision of the literature relevant for the study followed by the methodology to conclude with the findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part has to do with the definition and characteristics of who is considered a good second language reader and some features about reading, followed by a brief view about proficiency levels, learner types and individual learners' preferences. The second part starts with the definition of learning styles and it deals with the variety of dimensions and classifications of learning styles; then, its importance in education fields and the kinds of techniques which may be used to find out about one´s own learning style. Finally different definitions of reading strategies, characteristics, importance and various methods for data collection with respect to them are presented.

2.1. The good foreign language reader

Good foreign language readers, as Devine (1993 cited in Uhl, 1999,) states, are "able to monitor their comprehension and take action when comprehension falters and that composing strategies are more important than language proficiency in foreign language writing" (p. 166).

2.1.1. Reading features

Reading is an activity with a purpose. As Byrnes (1998) points out, a person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique

a writer's ideas or their writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose(s) for reading guide the reader's selection of texts. The purpose for reading also determines the approach to reading. As a result, reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is. For these reasons, reading is considered by Byrnes (1998) as an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports learning in multiple ways:

- *Reading to learn the language*: Reading material is language input. By giving students a variety of materials to read, instructors provide multiple opportunities for students to absorb vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and discourse structure as they occur in authentic contexts. Students thus gain a more complete picture of the ways in which the elements of the language work together to convey meaning.

- *Reading for content information*: Students' purpose for reading in their native language is often to obtain information about a subject they are studying, and this purpose can be useful in the language learning classroom as well. Reading for content information in the language classroom gives students both authentic reading material and an authentic purpose for reading.

- *Reading for cultural knowledge and awareness*: Reading everyday materials that are designed for native speakers can give students insight into the

lifestyles and worldviews of the people whose language they are studying. When students have access to newspapers, magazines, and web sites, they are exposed to culture in all its variety, and monolithic cultural stereotypes begin to break down.

Byrnes (1998) also mentions what reader knowledge, skills, and strategies include:

- *Linguistic competence*: the ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences.

- *Discourse competence:* knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another.

- *Sociolinguistic competence*: knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content.

- *Strategic competence*: the ability to use top-down strategies as well as knowledge of the language (a bottom-up strategy).

The purpose(s) for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is more than decoding; it results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

Having looked at the previous facts about reading, it is important to point out Lenz's (2005) definition of what reading comprehension is:

"…the ability to understand a written passage of text. It is what allows the reader to interact with the text in a meaningful way. It is the bridge from passive reading to active reading - from letters and words to characters and contexts. Reading comprehension is the crucial link to effective reading - a strong factor in our educational and professional lives. It is the process of constructing meaning from text" (p.72).

2.1.2. Good foreign language reader's characteristics

Byrnes (1998) suggests that reading research shows that good readers: read extensively, integrate information in the text with existing knowledge having a flexible reading style, depending on what they are reading by relying on different skills interacting: perceptual processing, phonemic processing and recall. Mainly they are motivated to read because they have a purpose.

Hosenfeld (1977 cited in Wenden, 1987) identifies a number of *inference strategies* good foreign language readers make use of:

"...keeping the meaning of a passage in mind while reading, and use it to predict the meaning; maintaining unfamiliar words and guess the meaning from remaining words in a sentence or later sentences, having the ability to circle back in the text to bring to mind previous context to decode an unfamiliar word to identify the grammatical function of an unfamiliar word before guessing its meaning, examining the illustration and use contained information for decoding. Also, reading the title and draw inferences from it, recognizing cognates and use the knowledge of the word to decode an unfamiliar word by skipping words which add relatively little to total meaning" (p.24).

About the steps that good foreign language readers follow, Byrnes (1998) suggest the following four:

1. *Figure out the purpose for reading*. Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate reading strategies.

2. *Attend to the parts of the text that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest*. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory.

3. *Select strategies that are appropriate to the reading task and use them flexibly and interactively*. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up skills simultaneously to construct meaning.

4. *Check comprehension while reading and when the reading task is completed*. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, helping them learn to use alternate strategies

Altogether, it may concluded that good foreign language readers:

"...draw selectively on a range of strategies, which are determined by reader´s purpose, text type and context. Also, they are aware of how to manage a great variety of strategies which, in certain cases, compensate for minimal ability to comprehend the text" (Wallace, 1992, p.5).

However, each foreign language reader keeps individual characteristics which are

very important in the moment of making decisions about the use of appropriate *reading strategies* to work on to improve their reading comprehension levels.

2.1.3 The importance of learners' proficiency reading level.

It is important to take into consideration the different levels of proficiency in order to have a clear idea of what kind of training learners should receive in their reading sessions. For this analysis the ACTFL proficiency guideline (1999) is taken into consideration.

The ACTFL was developed in 1986 by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages. This guideline represents a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion. These guidelines identify stages of proficiency, as opposed to achievement. They do not measure what individuals achieve through specific classroom instruction, but assess what individuals can and cannot do. This is regardless of where, when, or how the language was learned or acquired; thus the words "learned" and "acquired" are used in the broadest sense. These guidelines are not based on a particular linguistic theory or pedagogical method, and are intended for global assessment.

A complete version of all the stages of the ACTFL reading guidelines, which divide readers according to their abilities to comprehend a text, are found in Appendix A.

In the following section, a detailed explanation of the participants` level in order to have a description of their abilities in reading skill is presented.

Intermediate-High

Intermediat-high readers are able to read consistently with full understanding of simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. They can extract some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension. For example, basic grammatical relations may be misinterpreted and temporal references may rely primarily on lexical items. They have some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. While texts do not differ significantly from those at the Advanced level, comprehension is less consistent. They may have to read material several times for understanding.

It is important to consider that "...more *advanced learners* use a great variety of reading strategies. They are able to make effective decisions (perhaps based on knowledge about themselves and their current competence) about the amount of planning needed" (Macaro, 2001, p. 37).

That said, this research, as it has been stated before in this paper, is to find out learners´ improvement in their reading level becoming good foreign language readers when they receive appropriate reading comprehension training considering their individual learning styles.

2.1.4. Learner types and learning preferences

Parallel with the explosion of methodologies in the late 70s and early 80s in which language teachers faced increased options in the selection of methods and materials, there has been a steadily growing interest in considering the task from the learner´s point of view and in changing the focus of classrooms from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered one. In particular, there is growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their own learning and in clarifying how teachers can help students become more autonomous.

Theories of learning, Gagné's "types" of learning, transfer processes, and aptitude and intelligence models are all attempts to describe universal human traits in learning. While we all exhibit inherently human traits of learning "...every individual approaches a problem or learns a set of facts or organizes a combination of feelings from a unique perspective. In this way, everyone has some degree of aptitude for learning a second language that may be described by specified verbal learning processes" (Brown, 1994, p.118).

We must assume then that "...anything learners contribute or withhold from the classroom process is evidence that they are trying to pursue their individual learning goals and also to satisfy certain psychological needs" (Wright, 1987, p.120). On this, the social climate of the classroom depends on "a great extent on the strength of each individual´s contribution; every learner remains an individual. However, each learner develops strategies and techniques which suit his or her individual needs and personality and implements these in different ways" (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989, p.5).

Having in mind learner types, Willing (1988 cited in Nunan, 1992, p.57) carried out a study which looked at the personality factors, socio-cultural variables and educational background of 517 adult second language students. He applied a questionnaire in which learners were categorized according to their responses in a specific type. Each type included its own learning preferences.The learner types are the following:

Type 1 *Concrete*: these learners tend to like games, pictures, films, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs, and practicing English outside class.

Type 2: *Analytical:* they liked studying English books and reading newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes, and working on problems set by the teacher.

Type 3 *Communicative*: they like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English and watching television in English, using English out of class in stories, trains, and learning new words by hearing them, and learning by conversations.

Type 4 *Authority-oriented*: they preferred the teacher to explain everything, liked to have their own textbook, to write everything in a notebook, to study grammar, learn by reading, and learn new words by seeing them (Nunan, 1992).

Another scheme suggested by Wright (1987) considers the individual learners' behavior based on classroom observations rather than psychological theory. The types are as follows:

"1. *Enthusiastic:* this type tends towards the teacher as a point of reference but at the same time is concerned with the goals of the learning group.

2. *Oracular:* again focus on the teacher but this time is much more oriented towards the satisfaction of personal goals.

3. *Participator:* focuses attention both on group goals and on group solidarity.

4. *Rebel:* leans towards the learning group for his or her point of reference but is mainly concerned with the satisfaction of his own goals" (p.120).

It is assumed that there will be several paths to success depending on the individual´s learning style (Wenden, 1987), because as Tudor (1996) highlights "a number of individual differences which are likely to exert an influence on the way learners react to aspects of their language study, and which can shape their preferences with respect to the nature and organization of learning activities" (p.67).

To conclude, it is important to mention that "only when language learners have a good sense of what they are actually doing when engaged in learning, and only in the presence of such awareness, can any shaping or improvement in the approach to language-learning take place . In this way, learner is, in principle, the agent of his or her own learning" (Willing, 1987, p.109).

2.2. Learning styles

The individual differences surveyed in the last section are all likely to influence the way in which learners interact with the process of language study, because there are several differences in the way learners develop certain skills to acquire a foreign language. The notion of learning style implies individual differences, as Reid (1995) points out a learning style is a "pervasive quality in the learning strategies or the learning behavior of an individual" (p.6).

2.2.1. Definition of style

First at all, it is important to consider the notion f style in order to have a clear perception of this main topic for the present study.

Learning styles have been defined "…as cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1979, p.4); as "cognitive and interactional patterns which affect the ways in which students perceive, remember, and think" (Scarcella, 1990, p.114); and as "preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning and dealing with new information" (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990 cited in Reid, 1995, p. 6). Or more simply, Skehan (1991, p.288 cited in Brown, 2007, p.120) defines learning style as "a general predisposition, voluntary or not, toward processing information in a particular way". Finally, Dun (1989 cited in Clenton, 2002, p. 56) asserts that learning styles include variables such as "individual responses to sound, light, temperature, design, perception, intake, chronobiological highs and lows, mobility needs, and persistence, …motivation, responsibility (conformity) and need for structure…".

The definitions provided above vary in terms of scope and depth. The definition provided by Keefe (1979) besides taking into account the difference between learning styles and cognitive styles, also includes the three dimensions of behaviour: cognitive, affective, and physiological. The last definition, particularly, is the broadest one since it seems to be composed of environmental (light, sound, temperature), emotional (motivation, responsibility, persistence) and sociological (pairs, groups) stimuli. The involvement of such a wide repertoire of dimensions

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while defining learning styles leads to confusion because it is difficult to control and focus on all of them at the same time.

In this study, the definition provided by Scarcella (1990) -"cognitive and interactional patterns which affect the ways in which students perceive, remember, and think" (p. 114) – was taken as a basis for the fact that this research project has to do with the learning process applying certain techniques –*reading strategies*- according to personal preferences –*learning styles*- to improve reading comprehension.

2.2.2. Importance for reflecting on one's own style

This section looks at aspects related to the importance of being conscious about how students should be encouraged to reflect on their own learning preferences, to see where their styles reflect choices that they have made and where they might have trapped themselves.

Reid (1995) asserts that learning styles have some fundamental characteristics, on which they are based. These are:

> "every person, student and teacher alike, has a learning style and learning strengths and weaknesses; learning styles exist on wide continums; although they are described as opposites; learning styles are value-neutral; that is, no one style is better than others, students must be encouraged to "stretch" their learning styles so that they will be more empowered in a variety of learning situations; often, students' strategies are linked to their learning styles; teachers should allow their students to become aware of their learning strengths and weaknesses"(p xiii).

On the same issue, Tudor (1996) makes special emphasis on mentioning why learning style differences are important:

> "Importance should be accorded to the phychosocial aspects of both learning and teaching. This involves sensitivity to factors such as shyness/self-confidence, introversion/extroversion, etc. that can influence learners' affective involvement in the process of language study. For that, the teacher should be flexible and responsive to learner preferences, even if this involves the use of teaching methods she may personally consider to be *old-fashioned*"(p. 99).

Altogether, *learning style* may be defined as

> "the combined result of variance of the range of psychological and cognitive factors falling under the heading of individual differences insofar as they influence learners´ preferences for different study modes and activity types: *learning style* will thus be taken to be the tangible manifestation of individual differences" (Brown 1994, p.192).

2.2.3. Different learning styles

The concept of *learning styles* considers a huge variety of factors. There are different lists which provide us with specific characteristics about how people prefer to develop particular tasks in also particular ways in order to learn something.

Oxford and Ehrman (1979 cited in Tudor, 1996, p.113) list three categories these being *sensory preference*: visual, auditory, and hands-on.

- *"Visual* learners prefer to read and to obtain information by means of visual stimulus provided by films, posters, charts, etc; such learners may find lectures, discussions or oral directions without any visual back-up to be difficult to follow or

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anxiety-producing.

- *Auditory* learners can develop any task without visual support quite easily, and therefore tend to enjoy lectures and conversations; they react well to class activities such role play or discussion, but may experience a difficulties with written work.

- *Hands-on* learners, as the term implies, enjoy a lot of movement and activity within their learning environment, and they react well to working with tangible objects, such learners may react negatively to long periods behind a desk and may seem dependent on a lot of variety and direct stimulus".

However, Kinsella (1993 cited in Reid, 1995, p.172) makes a special distinction between two close related terms, which are *tactile and kinesthetic* in order to distinguish particular facts each one implies:

- *"Tactile* suggests learning with one´s hands through manipulation of resources, such as writing, drawing, building a model, or conducting a lab experiment.

- *Kinesthetic* implies total physical involvement with a learning environment such as taking a field trip, dramatizing, pantomiming, or interviewing".

It is important to highlight the difference between both terms because most of the people tend to use both for the same purpose; it is clear that each term implies movement but *tactile* is just for the hands and *kinesthetic* applies for the whole body.

Differences in people's cognitive styles reflect the different ways people respond to learning situations. Knowles (1982 cited in Richards, 1994, p.59) suggests that differences of this kind reflect the *cognitive styles* of four different types of learners; who are characterized by the following learning styles:

- *"Concrete learning style:* they use active and direct means of taking in and

processing information. They are interested in information that has immediate value. They are curious, spontaneous, and willing to take risks. They are variety and a constant change in pace. They dislike routine learning and written work, and prefer verbal or visual experiences. They like to be entertained, and like to be physically involved in learning.

- *Analytical learning style:* they are independent, like to solve problems, and enjoy tracking down ideas and developing principles on their own. They prefer a logical, systematic presentation of new learning material with opportunities for learners to follow up on their own. They are serious, push themselves hard, and are vulnerable to failure.

- *Communicative learning style:* they prefer a social approach to learning. They need personal feedback and interaction, and learn well from discussion and group activities. They thrive in a democratically run class.

- *Authority-oriented learning style:* they are responsible and dependable. They like and need structure and sequential progression. They relate well to a traditional classroom. They prefer the teacher as an authority figure. They like to have clear instructions and to know exactly what they are doing; they are not comfortable with consensus-building discussion".

Wilkin (1981 cited in Ray, 1997) argues that these different styles were also evident in personality and social behavior.

"People with articulated field style *(field independent)* have a greater sense of differentiation between themselves and other people. They tend to keep their feelings and cognitions separate. They are more autonomous and less dependent on other people and they can be demanding, inconsiderate, and manipulative.

On the other hand, those who are *field dependent* and adopt a global field

approach are warm, affectionate and tactful; they are effective in personal relationships" (p.10).

Also, there is a list provided by Reid (1995, p.xi-xii) which includes a great variety of learning styles considering different factors such as environment, temperament, tolerance of ambiguity and brain sides. Regarding *environment*, he suggests two *learning styles:*

- *"Physical learner:* learns more effectively when such variables as temperature, sound, light, food, mobility, time, and classroom/study arrangement are considered.

- *Sociological learner:* learns more effectively when such variables as group, individual, pair and team work, or level of teacher authority are considered".

Following with *temperament*, Reid (1995) divides *learning styles* into four groups in order to contrast them to have a clear view about each one.

- <u>Group 1:</u> Extroversion-introversion

Extroverted learner: learns more effectively through concrete experience, contacts with the outside word, and relationships with others.

Introverted learner: learns more effectively in individual, independent situations that are more involved with ideas and concepts.

- <u>Group 2</u>: Sensing-Perception

Sensing learner: learns more effectively from reports of observable facts and happenings; prefers physical, sense-based input.

Perception learner: learns more effectively from meaningful experiences and from relationships with others.

- <u>Group 3</u>: Thinking-feeling

Thinking learner: learns more effectively from impersonal circumstances and

logical consequences

Feeling learner: learns more effectively from personalized circumstances and social values.

- Group 4: Judging-Perceiving

Judging learner: learns more effectively by reflection, analysis, and processes that involve closure

Perceiving learner: learns more effectively through negotiation, feeling, and inductive processes that postpone closure.

Taking *tolerance of ambiguity* into consideration, Reid (1995) reflects on two styles:

- *Ambiguity-Tolerant learner:* learns more effectively when opportunities for experiment and risk, as well as interaction, are present.

- *Ambiguity-Intolerant learner:* learns more effectively when in less flexible, less risky, more structured situations.

Reid (1995) also explains the styles according to *brain sides:*

- *Left-Brained learners:* tend toward visual, analytic, reflective, self-reliant learning

- *Right-Brained learners:* tend toward auditory, global/relational, impulsive, interactive learning.

There is an interesting classification of different kinds of learning styles found according to the *temperament* and with psychological aspects and side-brain considerations. It is important to mention that for this study it is crucial to know these classifications to have the basis to support the participants' personal preferences for planning plan a suitable treatment to get a good reading

comprehension level.

In order to complement and have a clear idea of this *brain* classification, a table is included which contrasts the two *brain hemisphere information processing styles.* This is provided by KInsella and Esquerre (1993 cited in Reid, 1995, pp. 176-177).

Table 1. **The Two Brain Hemisphere Information Styles**

LEFT HEMISPHERE	RIGHT HEMISPHERE
Interested in component parts; detects discrete	Interested in wholes; integrates component parts and organizes them into a whole
Analytical: figures things out step by step and part by part	Relational: constructional and pattern seeking global, simultaneous integration of input
Linear, sequential processing of input	Concrete: relates to things as they are at the present moment
Abstract: takes out a small bit of information and uses it to represent the whole thing	
Logical: drawing conclusions based on reasons and facts	Intuitive: making leaps of insight, often based on hunches, feelings, or visual images
Temporal: sequencing one thing after another	Spatial: seeing where things are in relation to other things, and how parts go together to form a whole
Verbal: encoding and decoding speech, using words to name, describe, and define	Nonverbal: visual-spatial, minimal connection with words
Mathematics, musical notion	Musical lyrics and melodies

The table shows how each part of our brain works and contributes to develop certain activities. It is important to mention that it represents the internal processes of each person has looking at individual abilities to do particular tasks in a special way.

For this study it was relevant to take into account mainly the categories mentioned before looking at certain factors which have special importance in the learners' development and behavior inside the classroom because English teachers can help their students to understand their own learning styles and to experiment with other ways of learning; especially in the processes which contribute to improve their reading comprehension skills.

2.2.4. Identifying one's own learning style

Learning-styles instruments are "...used to raise students' awareness about their own styles, these instruments are designed to distinguish one kind of learner from another" (Reid, 1995, p.6).

In order to help learners to develop the self-awareness necessary to work toward successful learning styles, Brown (1994) provides a useful list of resources to know learners´ own learning style.

> *"Informal self- check lists:* these are lists that students fill out and then discuss. Such check-lists are usually not formally scored or tallied; rather, they serve as focal points for discussion and enlightenment.
>
> Other, is the *formal personality and cognitive style tests* which are a product of a test taker's own self-image. Using them, students can become aware of their possible style tendencies, consider the relationship between such styles and success in their language learning goals, and take positive steps to capitalize on their assets and to overcome any liabilities" (pp 193-199).

Differently to the other tests mentioned so far, Brown (1994) suggests *readings,*

lectures, and discussions. Yet, another way for encouraging self-awareness of styles in the classrooms is through occasional readings, or "lecturettes" delivered by others, followed by discussions about successful learning styles.

The last is i*mpromptu teacher-initiated advice,* which has to do with frequent impromptu reminders of "rules" for good language learning and encouragement of discussion or clarification. Sometimes the little comments second language teachers make here and there have the effect of subtly urging students to take charge of their own destiny by understanding their own styles of learning and capitalizing on their abilities.

For this study, the use of *formal personality and cognitive style tests* based on Oxford (1990) and Willing (1989) were very useful to support the investigation since both instruments best match with the participants' preferences.

As a conclusion, it can be said that giving learners the chance to identify their strengths through a special learning-style instrument, and instructing them on how to capitalize those strengths and compensate for weaknesses with appropriate study approaches, students will be equipped with both the self-knowledge and the tools to learn within a wider variety of educational contexts.

That said, students "…should be encouraged to reflect on their *learning styles* to see where their styles reflect choices that they have made and where they might have trapped themselves" (Ray, 1997, p.9), or more simply, as Brown (2007) suggests "…as learners invest in their learning process, they create avenues for success" (p. 133).

All together, a broad understanding of learning environments and *learning styles*

will enable students to take control of their learning and to maximize their potential for learning.

2.3. Reading strategies

Reading strategy research has focused on studying how learners use *reading strategies* and what the differences are between the *reading strategies* used by successful and unsuccessful learners (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). For example, in one study (Hosenfeld, 1977 cited in Richards, 1994) some of the differences between learners with high and low scores on a reading proficiency test were:

> "...high scores tended to keep the meaning of the passage in mind, read in broad phrases, skip unessential words, and guess meanings of unknown words from context; low scores tended to lose the meaning of sentences as soon as they decoded them, read word by word or in short phrases, rarely skip words, and turn to the glossary when they encountered new words" (p. 65).

Although individual readers have their own preferred strategies for understanding a written text, it is in the number of frequency, deployment and combination of strategies that success is to be found. Basically, as Macaro (2001) considers, good foreign readers "...attack the text as a holistic problem to be solved by coming at it from different angles" (p. 37).

2.3.1. Features

Research on learner strategies in the domain of *foreign language learning* may be viewed as a part of the general area of research on mental processes and

structures that constitute the field of cognitive science (Wenden, 1987).

At the early beginning and as a preliminary point, *strategies* are defined as: "techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, cognitive abilities, problem solving procedures and language learning behaviours" (Wenden, 1991, p.18).

Brown (1994, p.192) sees *strategies* as "…specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, or planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information".

Moreover, *strategies* are considered as "…specific attacks that we make on a given problem, and that vary considerably within each individual. They are the moment-by-moment techniques that we employ to solve problems posed by second language input and output" (Brown, 2007, p.132).

Other authors in strategies (Lenz's, 2005) state that a *reading strategy*

> "…is an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill, which is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention" (p. 158).

On not only knowing strategies but choosing which to use, Richards (1994) mentions that

> "a choice of using a particular set of *reading strategies* offers particular advantages or disadvantages, and the use of an appropriate *reading strategy* can enhance

success with the learning task. An important aspect of teaching is to promote learners' awareness and control of effective *reading strategies* and discourage the use of ineffective ones" (p. 63).

That is why, Rubin (1985 cited by Richards, 1994) suggests that through better understanding and managing of their *reading strategies,* learners can expect to:

"gain insights into their own approach to learning in order to learn to choose strategies appropriate to a task and learning purpose, using these strategies in a classroom, self-study, or job situation accordingly for a specific purpose, being able to define strategies for improving memory for language learning and learning how to effectively transfer knowledge about language and communication from one language to another, and using resources cleverly to be able to deal more effectively with errors"(p. 66).

Considering the previous information, Brown (2007, p.145) proposes a list which includes a great variety of purposes that highlight the importance of using and promoting *reading strategies* inside the classroom:

"...first, they can break down inhibitions and encourage risk taking in order to build students' self-confidence, and in this way help students to develop intrinsic motivation promoting cooperative learning and ambiguity tolerance. Also, they are used to encourage students for using right-brain processing to help students use their intuition in order to get their mistakes work *for* them, and set their own goals".

Oxford (1990 cited in Nunan, 1992, p.172) argues that *reading strategies* are important for two reasons. First, *reading strategies* are "...tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Secondly, learners who have developed appropriate *reading*

strategies have greater self-confidence and learn more effectively".

In her introduction, Oxford (1990, p.9 cited in Richards, 1994) identifies twelve key features of *reading strategies*, which can be summarized as follows: they contribute to the main goal, communicative competence, and they allow learners to become more self-directed because they can expand the role of teachers considering as not always observable, but they are conscious actions taken by the learner.

In addition, they are problem-oriented because they involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive supporting learning both directly and indirectly. They are so flexible, for this reason they can be taught but they are influenced by a variety of contextual and personal factors.

Wenden (1991) complements these features, adding some others*:*

> "Some *reading strategies* can be observed: there is an observable behavior that accompanies the mental act as when learners ask a question to clarify something they do not understand. Therefore, *reading strategies* are amenable to change, they are a part of our cognitive software, acquired in the same way as we acquire language. Ineffective ones can be changed or rejected, new strategies can be learned and well-functioning strategies can be adapted to new situations" (p. 18).

Consequently, *reading strategies* could be seen as "...offering a tool for analyzing the learning processes implicit in different pedagogical options, in a parallel manner to that in which activities are currently analyzed in their intended linguistic or functional outcomes" (Tudor, 1996, p.201).

2.3.2. Types

For most foreign language readers who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies reading strategies such as

> "...bottom-up (thinking about the context of the text and the student's own "world knowledge") and top-down processing (individual words and short phrases, analyzing both for meaning and for clues in the syntax), predicting, guessing from context, brainstorming, and summarizing, have been shown in other studies to be effectively taught..." (Pressley, 2000 cited in Brown, 2007, p. 136).

Brown (1994) points out ten different reading comprehension strategies:

- *Identify the purpose in reading*: efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, you know what you are looking for and can weed out potential distracting information.

- *Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding:* one of the difficulties some students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. They may need to be given hints and explanations about certain English orthographic rules and peculiarities. While in many cases you can assume that one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondences will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult.

- *Use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension:* teachers can help students to increase efficiency by teaching a few silent rules: (1) you do not need to "pronounce" each word to yourself, (2) try to

visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases, (3) unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning through its context.

- *Skimming:* this strategy consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text to get the gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas.

- *Scanning:* it is considered as quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details.

- *Semantic mapping or clustering:* this strategy helps the reader to provide some order to the chaos. Making such semantic maps can be done individually, but they make for a productive group work technique as students collectively induce order and hierarchy to a passage.

- *Guessing:* learners can use guessing to their advantage to guess the meaning of a word, guess a grammatical relationship, guess a discourse relationship, infer implied meaning ("between lines"), guess about a cultural reference, and guess content messages. The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably accurate. Teachers can help students to become accurate guessers by encouraging them to use effective *compensation strategies* in which they fill gaps in their competence by intelligent attempts to use whatever clues are available to them.

- *Vocabulary analysis:* one way for learners to make guessing pay off when

they do not immediately recognize a word is to analyze it in terms of what they know about it. Several techniques are useful here: look for prefixes, suffixes, roots that are familiar, grammatical contexts that may signal information and look at the semantic context (topic) for clues.

- *Distinguish between literal and implied meanings:* this requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skills. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing pragmatic information.

- *Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships:* there are many discourse markers in English that signal relationships among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners' reading efficiency.

Byrnes (1998) points out some other strategies that can help students read more quickly and effectively:

- *Previewing*: reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection

- *Predicting*: using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension, to use knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; and use knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content.

- *Guessing from context*: the use of prior knowledge about the subject and the

ideas in the text as clues to guess the meaning of unknown words, instead of making pauses to look them up.

- *Paraphrasing*: stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text.

Reading strategies are seen as ways of reading which are employed flexibly and selectively and which vary depending on the text type, and the contexts and purpose of reading. As Wallace (1992) states "a reading strategy approach to teach, reading is concerned with the ways in which the reader processes the text" (p. 147).

2.3.3. Data collection techniques

All students come into strategies instruction with preferred techniques for learning, whether for languages or other subjects, and appreciate acknowledgment of their prior experiences (Uhl, 1999).

Thus, it is important to take a look at the different ways of getting information on students' learning processes. Wenden (1991, pp. 81-84) mentions some of them:

"Observation: some limited information on students' learning processes may be gained by observing them in the classroom as they perform a range of language learning or communication tasks. Teachers may assign a task to the whole class and observe the students as they complete it. Learners can be observed while one is teaching them- in a less systematic manner or by video-taping the lesson and

analyzing it.

Introspective self-reports: is when you assign a task and have them tell you what they are thinking while completing the task. That is, students can be asked to *think aloud* or *introspect,* orally reporting to a listener or into a tape recorder or writing down what they are thinking while doing a task.

Retrospective self-reports: language learners can also be asked to *think back or retrospect* on their language learning and write about it. Retrospective self-reports vary in the extent to which they limit what a student may say. It is divided into three:

Open-ended reports: students are asked to complete fairly open-ended statements. Teachers simply provide a question or statement that points to the topic in a very general way and students are allowed to respond as they wish. Questions can be asked to help students to clarify and expand their ideas, but in each case the focus remains on what the student was saying.

Semi-structured interviews: the interview may focus on a specific skill or on one or several social settings in which students typically use English with the questions based in general areas the interviewer wishes to find out about. Questions can focus on (1) students' feelings towards the particular skill/setting, (2) the learning or language problems encountered, (3) techniques used to cope with these problems, (4) views on how to best approach the skill/learning task under discussion, and (5) the utility of the task as a means of improving/learning the language.

Structured questionnaires: techniques devised to collect information on students' learning processes in this way are explicit and specific about the kind of information they seek, and students are asked (1) to agree or disagree, (2) to write true or false, and (3) to answer yes or no to a series of statements or questions".

Ulh (1999, pp. 64-75) states a great variety of preparation activities that teachers can use for getting information about *reading strategies* students

have used to activate their awareness.

- *Class discussion about reading strategies:* before beginning a class discussion, give students a few minutes to reflect individually on the strategies that they use. Begin by discussing what students do to help them understand and produce language. Ask students to brainstorm some *reading strategies* they use for various language tasks, and let them discuss why different *reading strategies* have been helpful to them.

- *Group discussions:* students can form small group discussions (3-5 students). Working in small groups increases students' involvement in the discussion. Students are also likely to be more open with classmates in small groups than in a large discussion led by the teacher.

- *Think-alouds*: a think aloud is a technique in which a person verbalizes his or her thought processes while working on a task. It reveals how a person processes language. Because it is in real time, students are not likely to forget their thoughts or make up false ones; thus the technique has a high degree of validity in connection with the task. The process itself helps students become more aware of how they are learning. The teacher can take notes during the interviews to record student's *reading strategies,* or audio or video tape the interview for a more in-depth analysis later.

- *Dairy/ dialogue journals*: having students report on their *reading strategies* use through this instrument enables the teacher and the students themselves to discover their existing *reading strategies* use and, to track *reading strategies* use over time. Students can be given set times in class or at home to record their use of *reading strategies* in their journals".

Preparing students for *reading strategies* training requires planning and an initial investment of time for both teacher and students. Nevertheless, "...identifying students' current strategies use also helps the teacher decide which strategies to focus on in the instruction. Teachers will have in-depth knowledge of their students' learning abilities and will be able to choose appropriate *reading strategies* for instruction" (Uhl, 1999, p.75).

Considering the number of participants and the available time to develop this study, just one data collection technique was used: group discussion, which is explained in detail in Chapter III.

2.3.4. Reading comprehension training

To help learners develop reading skills in a foreign language, the teacher must aid learners in developing strategies that will enable them to use their knowledge of the world and their familiarity with communication situations and topics in their maternal language to compensate the lack of knowledge of the foreign language. The learner can transfer reading strategies in their first language to the foreign language to understand reading materials in English. The emphasis is on reading for meaning.

The reader must have a purpose for reading. Subsequently, the reader uses a variety of strategies. Before reading occurs, a source of information must be identified and located. The reader then uses previous experience with this type of text to anticipate the content. Other strategies employed to anticipate content

include using the headline and attending to visual clues.

The first reading will be a scanning of the text to verify anticipations. If the text meets the reader's needs, a subsequent reading for further details follows. After the reading, the reader uses the new information to satisfy the purpose (make a decision whether or not to go skiing). In teaching a foreign language, we want learners to use reading strategies previously developed in their native language and to transfer them to reading in a foreign language.

Learners, in order to be trained, should: be exposed to a variety of text types and given an opportunity to choose ones that satisfy their purposes, providing a context that gives them a purpose for reading in order to encourage to use their previous experiences both in the real world and with reading various text types to anticipate content, developing skills in using headlines, titles and visual clues to anticipate content. It is important to consider that they should be given an opportunity to do global comprehension activities that allow them to verify their anticipations to develop the ability to look for details within a text without understanding every word. Finally, students showed in given opportunities the way they apply the new information to satisfy their purposes.

Byrnes (1998) considers that instruction in reading strategies is not an add-on, but rather an integral part of the use of reading activities in the language classroom. Instructors can help their students become effective readers by teaching them how to use strategies before, during, and after reading.

- *Before reading*: Plan for the reading task

Set a purpose or decide in advance what to read for, decide if more linguistic or background knowledge is needed, and, determine whether to enter the text from the top down (attend to the overall meaning) or from the bottom up (focus on the words and phrases).

- *During and after reading*: Monitor comprehension

Verify predictions and check for inaccurate guesses, decide what is and is not important to understand, reread to check comprehension, and seek for help

- *After reading*: Evaluate comprehension and strategy use

Evaluate comprehension in a particular task or area, evaluate overall progress in reading and in particular types of reading tasks, decide if the strategies used were appropriate for the purpose and for the task, and modify strategies if it is necessary.

Byrnes (1998) also mentions that instructors can help students learn when and how to use reading strategies in several ways by modeling the strategies aloud, talking through the processes of previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, and paraphrasing. This shows students how the strategies work and how much they can know about a text before they begin to read word by word.

Furthermore, by allowing time in class for group and individual previewing and predicting activities as preparation for in-class or out-of-class reading, allocating class time to these activities indicates their importance and value. And, by using

cloze exercises (fill in the blanks) to review vocabulary items, this helps students learn to guess meaning from context. Finally, by encouraging students to talk about what strategies they think will help them approach a reading assignment, and then talking after reading about what strategies they actually used; this helps students develop flexibility in their choice of strategies.

Taking into account the previous information, it is important to consider Lenz's (2005) point of view about the stages of instruction which are most often cited as being effective in helping a student learn a strategy, and that emphasizes the importance of

- orienting students to key concepts,

- assessing, and asking students to make a commitment to learn,

- describing the purpose of the strategy, the potential benefits, and the steps of the strategy,

- modeling (thinking aloud) the behavioral and cognitive steps/actions involved in using the strategy,

- leading verbal practice and elaboration of the key information and steps related to the strategy,

- providing for guided and controlled practice of the strategy with detailed feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers.

- moving (gradually) to more independent and advanced practice of the strategy with feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers, and post-test application of the strategy, and

- helping students make commitments to generalize its use. Once the strategy is learned, the teacher must then ensure that students begin to transfer or generalize the strategy to new and different situations.

The eighth stage, *generalization*, includes four distinct phases:

- Orientation and awareness of situations in which the strategy can be used

- Activation by preparing for and practicing strategies in content-area classes

- Adaptation of the strategy steps for use in other tasks, and

- Maintenance of the strategy for continued application in a variety of real-life learning and work place settings.

As for the key principles of reading instruction, Byrnes (1998) suggests the following:

- *Teach reading comprehension skills and strategies at all levels of reading development.* Teachers at every grade level and every subject area should always be planning how reading assignments will help students develop and practice skills and strategies. Students need teachers to teach and draw attention to appropriate strategy use in textbooks, especially in content

areas where there are many reading demands (e.g., language, social studies, and often science). Most planning for comprehension instruction is targeted at teaching comprehension strategies and then developing practice activities that help the student become skilled in the use of the strategy so that it is unconsciously selected and used in a variety of situations.

- *Reading comprehension instruction must be responsive*. Continually assess progress in learning, make specific instructional accommodations to meet individual student's needs, and provided individualized and elaborated feedback.

- *Reading comprehension instruction must be systematic*. Systematic reading instruction is structured, connected, scaffolded, and informative.

  - Structured instruction is characterized by lessons that organize and group new knowledge and skills into segments that can be sequentially presented in a clear manner.

  - Connected instruction is characterized by lessons that show the learner connections between the segments and what is already known.

  - Scaffolded lessons are characterized by instruction in which the teacher provides to students, early in the learning process, a significant amount of support in the form of modeling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions. Then as students begin to

acquire the targeted objective, direct teacher supports are reduced, and the major responsibilities for learning are transferred to the student.

- Informative instruction is characterized by lessons in which the teacher explains the purposes and expected outcomes and requirements for learning and when and how that newly learned information will be useful.

- *Reading comprehension instruction must be intensive.* Intensive reading instruction means that sufficient time is provided direct instruction for students to master the reading skills and strategies they need.

- *Reading comprehension instruction should involve authentic reading at all stages.* Authentic reading involves incorporating a variety of "real" reading materials, such as books, magazines, and newspapers into the instructional process.

- *Reading comprehension instruction involves providing opportunities to read for pleasure.* Reading for enjoyment should be modeled and encouraged at all grade levels. This requires providing ample materials to read at their independent reading level.

- *Reading comprehension instruction requires collaboration with other professionals and shared responsibility for student success.* Studies have shown that one of the most damaging practices affecting struggling readers

is the lack of coordination among educators that are responsible for literacy development. All staff must work together to plan and implement effective instruction in reading comprehension.

In the case of reading, instructors want to produce students who can use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of text, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension. Effective language instructors show students how they can adjust their reading behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and reading purposes. They help students develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading situation.

And, by raising students' awareness of reading as a skill that requires active engagement, and by explicitly teaching reading strategies, instructors help their students develop both the ability and the confidence to handle communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way they give their students the foundation for communicative competence in the new language (Byrnes, 1998).

Considering this study looks at how reading strategies could be used according to learning styles and how this has an impact on reading comprehension, it is important to know the main features of individual preferences, learning styles and reading strategies to have a general idea of how to use each aspect to contribute in the development of implementing a suitable reading treatment and to decide about the most adequate research instruments to give the data needed to support

the study.

In the following chapter the methodology used is explained in detail, giving reasons about the selection of particular research instruments as well as providing information of the participants involved.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter first focuses on the overall design of the study. Then it presents some information about the participants and the setting. The data collection instruments along with the data collection procedures are also explained.

3.1. Design of the study

This study is based on action research since one of the main goals is to look at some problems inside the classroom, in this case participants reading comprehension weaknesses, which allows the researcher to "...collect and analyze this data, and implement changes based on the findings..." (Creswell, 2005, p.550). This study aims at finding out participants' predominant preferences in learning a foreign language, their own learning styles, the reading strategies they have used, and to apply an appropriate treatment to match students' predominant learning styles and reading strategies to improve their reading comprehension level.

This research is also experimental since there were "...two similar groups and the researcher tested a procedure to determine whether it influences an outcome or dependent variable" (Cresswell, 2005, p.283). That is, this study looked for evidence to determine whether those students who experienced the reading treatment performed better in their reading comprehension post-test than those who did not experience it.

Each group had a particular role in the study. Group A, being the *control* or

traditional one followed with their course planning, which is based mainly in their book and workbook lessons (Broukal, 2009). On the other hand, group B being the *experimental* or *innovation* one followed their book lessons, but also a special reading treatment was designed, based on their learning preferences and styles.

The selection of both groups was based on the use of a *pre-post reading* test which had as a main goal to "equate" the characteristics of the groups. This way it group B was identified as the one which needed more tools to improve their reading comprehension level, and therefore received the reading treatment to attempt to compensate their weaknesses.

As in many experimental situations in education, this study made use of intact groups because of the availability of the institution that prohibits forming special groups, thus selecting the population. The development of the experimental part of this study was a *quasi-experiment* in which the researcher cannot artificially create groups for the experiment. The researcher administered "...a *pre reading test,* conducted reading treatment activities with the experimental group only, and finally administered a *post reading test* to assess the differences between the two groups" (Creswell, 2000, p.297).

Both qualitative and qualitative data were collected. The former were collected through questionnaires, one of which aimed at identifying students' predominant preferences in learning a foreign language; another one aimed at discovering particular learning styles, and, the last one at finding what reading strategies were actually made use of while reading texts.

The qualitative data was collected through the group discussion, in which students had the opportunity to express and share information and feelings about their

progress through the sessions in which the treatment was applied to the *experimental* group (B).

3.2. Participants

The data sources in this study were two similar groups of Intermediate-High students (ACTFL, 1999) in their third English course at Realistica de Mexico Secondary. In order to identify the level of reading proficiency of the participants, they were given a P*re-post Reading Test* (Appendix A) which allowed the researcher to classify them as Intermediate-High level students.

Between March and July, the researcher conducted the study at Realistica de Mexico secondary school (the researcher taught at this school during the time). This school is private and it offers a bilingual program. There were five groups: two for first grade, one for second, and two for third. The methodology used was based on their English books.

The researcher decided to take the two third grade groups to conduct the study because they were the ones who had more similarities regarding the number of students. There were a total of 47 intermediate-High level students, 23 from group A and 24 from group B. Their ages ranged between 14 and 16. The proportion of male and female students in their classes was almost equal.

The majority of the students had a positive attitude towards learning the language; they were motivated to improve their level. However, they did not like reading because they had a bad perception; they considered it is a boring and useless activity.

All of the pre-intermediate level students took part in the study. However, since six of the students, four males and two females, were absent during the administration of the third questionnaire, their responses to the first and second questionnaire were left out. That said, non-attendance was one of the main obstacles to obtain all students' responses in each stage of the research instruments application. That said, for this study the predominant and major percentages of students' answers are considered as basis.

3.3. Data collection instruments

The data for the present study was collected via both quantitative and qualitative instruments. The following section describes them and their purpose.

Four quantitative instruments were used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. The first one was the P*re-Post Reading Test* which had the purpose of categorizing students' reading comprehension level. Secondly*,* t*he Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language questionnaire* was used to identify the way students prefer to learn and what kind of activities they enjoy to develop in order to acquire the language.

The following instrument was *the Styles Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing your own learning and working style,* which had the purpose of finding out the students' main learning styles, including sensorial styles and their abilities to deal with others, handle possibilities, approach a task and deal with ideas.

The last quantitative instrument, *Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire*

was used to identify what kind of reading strategies students actually made use of while reading any kind of text. Based on the findings, a reading treatment was designed to be implemented with the *experimental group* (B) to help them to increase their reading comprehension level making use of their own learning styles.

As for the qualitative instrument, data was obtained through the *group discussion*, which was designed to find out about the students' perceived improvements for comprehending their reading comprehension skills after taking the treatment.

3.3.1. Pre-Post Reading Test

The first research instrument was a P*re-Post Reading Test,* and it was used to measure the reading proficiency level of the participants (see Appendix B).

The test was designed based on the current English book students used (Broukal, 2009). The sample reading was chosen considering the context of the previous readings from the book. They were using readings of Sherlock Holmes, and in order to complement them, the researcher decided for a reader which contained a similar story. The reader chosen was written by Cohan (2008) based on the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and its title was *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. A chapter was adapted to 44 lines considering the length of the readings students are used to work with.

The test consisted of ten questions divided into four parts. The first two questions, in part A, were multiple choice; each one had four options. The following two, in part B, had to do with reference words in the text; students had to look for a word in

an indicated paragraph and write what this word referred to. The next five questions, in part C, were true or false and students, reading in detail, chose between T for true and F for false. Finally, in part D there was an inference question in which students had four options to choose the one which beest reflected the character's attitude.

The test was administered twice, at the beginning of the course and after *experimental group (B)* received the reading treatment. It is important to mention that *control group* (A) answered it during one of the sessions in which the *experimental* one was receiving the reading treatment. The results of both tests are explained in detail in Chapter IV.

3.3.2. The Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire

The second instrument that was used in the current study is the Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language developed by Willing in 1989 (see Appendix C). The questionnaire aimed to look for students' individual preferences in learning a foreign language, the way they prefer to learn and what kind of activities they enjoy to develop in order to acquire the language.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 different questions. In the first set of questions (1-5), participants were asked about the interactions they prefer to have with others while learning the language; from be *with the whole class, in groups, in pairs or*

alone up to *be in real contexts learning from others.* The second one (6-8), was about *their learning styles,* looking at their individual sensorial preferences for learning the language *(see words, hear words and do something with hands.*

Also, in the third one (9-12), participants considered the *four skills* (*listening, speaking, reading and writing*) looking at their preferences to develop activities according to a particular skill. Finally, the last set of questions (13-15) was based on their likes to learn *new vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation.*

While answering the statements in the questionnaire the participants of both groups, A and B, were asked to decide between the three choices: *yes*, *no* or *sometimes*, and marked the item that best applied to their study of English. The participants were also asked to respond each statement quickly, without thinking about the statements too long and they were asked not to change their responses after they had marked them. Finally, after choosing each option, participants were asked to write briefly about their reasons for choosing one option or the other.

The total number of participants who took the questionnaire from group A was 17, and in group B 22. Both groups had 15 minutes to answer. Some of the questionnaires were given back to some participants who were asked to complete the questionnaire writing their reasons for some missing questions; this with the purpose of having evidence to support their beliefs, giving reliability to the study.

3.3.3. The Styles Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing your own learning and

working style

The third quantitative instrument (see Appendix D) used in this study was the Styles Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing your own learning and working style developed by Oxford (1993 cited in Reid, 1998, pp.208-215). It was adapted from the original version and three representative questions were chosen in each set to learn about the predominant learning styles for each student; this selection was based on the researcher's criteria for gathering the essential information in each category.

The SAS had the purpose of discovering the predominant participants' learning and working styles from both groups, A and B, and, in this way taking into account the results, plan an appropriate treatment for group B, which best matched with their learning styles.

The survey consisted of 33 different questions, and it was divided into five categories. The first three set of questions (1-9) considered the three sensorial styles (visual, auditory and kinesthetic), the following two sets (10-15) with how they deal with others (introverted, introverted), the next two (16-21) concerned with how they handle possibilities (intuitive, concrete-sequential), and the last two sets, one (22-27) was used to know how they approach a task (closure-oriented, open), and the other (28-33) could give the idea of the way they deal with ideas (global, analytic).

While answering the statements of the SAS participants of both groups, A and B,

were asked to decide between four choices: never (0), sometimes (1), very often (2) and always (3) and they had to mark the item that best applied to their study of English. Each option had a particular number which represented the frequency in which they make use of specific actions to develop their work.

At the same time, the sets were divided with totals and a line. Participants were asked to sum and write the total for each set. As soon as they finished, they focused their attention on the set in which they had the highest mark, and they circled it.

The total number of participants who took the questionnaire from group A was 18, and in group B 22. Both groups had 20 minutes to answer.

3.3.4. The Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire

The last quantitative research instrument (see Appendix C) was the Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire adapted from Rubin (1994) and Uhl (1999). It was adapted considering the main reading strategies which best match with the previous information about learning and working styles obtained from the SAS.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain information about the current participants' reading strategies use and the frequency in which they made use of specific reading strategies to better comprehend different kinds of texts.

The questionnaire consisted of ten different questions and each one was about a particular reading strategy: *using previous knowledge to infer unknown sentences, considering contexts for unknown words, scanning, monitoring progress, using contextual clues, skimming, predicting, creating mental images, summarizing and*

rating understanding.

Again, participants from both groups, A and B, were asked to decide between four choices: never (0), sometimes (1), very often (2) and always (3). However, this time they just chose one option without focusing their attention on the highest score.

The total number of participants who took the questionnaire from group A was 16, and in group B 20. Both groups were given 10 minutes to answer.

3.3.5. Reading treatment

A reading treatment was designed using the data gathered from the previous research instruments.

The reading treatment aimed to help the *experimental group* improving the use of reading comprehension strategies. The main goal of implementing this treatment was to maximize their comprehension of text, identifying relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension (Byrnes, 1998).

The treatment consisted of five steps:

4. First, students needed to have a purpose for reading. The teacher chose an article based on their age and interests which she considered would motivate the students to read.

5. Secondly, as the majority of them have a kinesthetic learning style (see Results in the next chapter), they tried to draw predictions about the content of the text through manipulating objects which the teacher brought. These objects were related with the content of the reading.

6. Afterwards, using suggested rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, 1994), students made a quick reading (skimming). Then, they orally shared different ideas from the text with their partners. This was decided upon the fact that a large number of the participants are extroverted.

7. As for the next step, students read, looking for certain asked details (scanning). They used specially two reading strategies which best matched with their predominant learning styles: *guessing from context* (intuitive). A second reading strategy was *creating mental images* (analytic). The choices for strategies were again based on results from the instruments described above.

8. Finally, to rate their comprehension, students practiced paraphrasing presenting the information of the text. They created the context as they were tourist guides.

The detailed procedure is explained in Appendix F. The material used in each step is explained and presented in detail in Appendices G and H.

3.3.6. Group discussion

The group discussion was used to gather qualitative data with respect to the students' progress while taking the treatment and their beliefs and perceptions of improvements in reading comprehension. Uhl (1999) suggests this technique as useful when gathering information about reading strategies; students' beliefs,

feelings and perceptions can be shared in small groups creating a confident and comfortable involvement for second language learners, making it easier to gather reliable data from participants.

The group discussion was developed only in group B after they had received the treatment. In the last session of the treatment, the teacher-researcher asked students to form teams of four people. Each team had a brief discussion about the progress and how they felt at the beginning and at the end of the treatment; especially on perceived improvements in their reading comprehension. They were asked to write down those perceptions. After ten minutes, the researcher guided a general discussion in which participants had the opportunity to share their points of view and personal perceptions about their reading comprehension reading improvements.

Mainly, each research instrument provided information about each group to contrast both, A and B, and, in order to have the general picture about the impact of applying a particular reading treatment, which matches with predominant students' learning styles, to develop better reading comprehension strategies. Some of the instruments were adapted for the conditions of this study, including factors which represented limitations, such as time.

The following chapter presents the results obtained from each one of the instruments.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results and the analysis of the data obtained. It looks at both views quantitative and qualitative. As for the discussion, this focuses on those findings related with the effect that learning-style-targeted strategies used for reading texts had on students' reading comprehension abilities. This is relation with the main purpose of this study as to how a special treatment for improving reading may increase comprehension of texts when this – said of the treatment- takes learners' styles into account.

4.1. The Pre-Post Reading Test

The Pre-Post Reading Test was the first quantitative instrument. It was applied on the second week of March to both groups. The test included ten questions which had the purpose of assessing participants' comprehension reading level.

The Pre Reading Test was useful for making the decision of the group which would receive the tools to improve their reading comprehension level thus helping in selecting the *control group* and the *experimental one.*

As for the Post Reading Test, this aided the researcher in obtaining information about the improvements the experimental group had once they went through the reading treatment.

A contrast related to the scores revealing if the reading treatment worked to increase their reading comprehension level and to what extent is looked at later on in this chapter.

The results of the P*re Reading Test* showed that participants from group A obtained an average of 5.75. The total number of participants who took this test was 20. The highest score was 7, this achieved by 4 participants; the lowest score of five was achieved by ten of the participants. The rest of the students got 6 as score.

This Pre-Reading Test revealed the students' reading weaknesses regarding *word references* and *inferences of ideas,* given that in these two parts the majority of the students failed to answer correctly. Participants from group A took 20 minutes to solve the complete reading test.

The results for group B were quite different. The group was made up of 18 students who achieved an average of 5.11. The highest score was 7 (achieved by five participants), and the lowest was 1 (2 participants); 7 of them scored 6, one 5, and two had 4 as their score.

For this group, the test revealed their reading weaknesses in *reading for details and* in the True-False questions. On the part of *word inference* the majority of the participants made many mistakes*.* Participants from group B took 35 minutes to solve the complete reading test.

Based on these findings, group A was selected as the *control group* because of their higher scores and less time for solving the test*, w*hile group B, which had lower scores and took significantly more time to solve the test, was selected as the *experimental group.* This choice derived mainly from the intention of "equating" the conditions of both groups as they improved on their reading comprehension level or, in the opposite case, did not.

The *post-reading test* was used mainly to find out if the reading treatment implemented with the *experimental group* was useful or not. It was applied first to

group A on the last week of May. The participants obtained a similar score that in *pre-reading* test, having an average of 6.21 with improvements in the section of *inference* and *word substitution*. However, they took 25 minutes to answer the test, thus improving the time invested for answering the test.

The *experimental group* took the test after they finished the reading treatment which was on the first week of June. That time the students obtained a better score with an average of 6.52. On this test, the students stated that they could obtain better scores but that they still had problems with the *word substitution* section. However, they had the ability to express the content of the reading and were surprised as they improved in understanding the reading, opposite to the Pre-Test results. Regarding time, the students took 15 minutes to answer the complete test.

The results of both tests helped in illustrating the participants' weaknesses but also in serving of evidence of the improvements in reading comprehension, which in the case of the experimental group were noticeable.

4.2. The Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire

The second quantitative instrument had to do with *learning styles and individual preferences (*Willing, 1989), and it was administered on the third week of March (*see appendix C).

Participants of both groups, A and B, answered the questionnaire choosing an option: yes, no or sometimes; they also gave some reasons of their choice for answering next to each question.

This instrument was divided into four sets (as was previously explained in Chapter III). The major percentages found in each set are highlighted as to point out the

participants' preferences. A detailed explanation of participants' responses from group A is found in Appendix I.

The following table shows the results of group A in the first set of questions:

Table 2: Interactions With Others - Group A

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
1. Whole class	6%	-----	94%
2. Go out and learn	24%	53%	23%
3. In groups	**59%**	29%	12%
4. In pairs	**53%**	6%	41%
5. alone	29%	42%	29%

As a conclusion of the first set of questions, it was found that participants like to learn in *small groups or in pairs*; their reasons for answering this way is that it allows them to create a good and confident environment in which they can do all the activities more easily and practice the language much better as stated by the participants themselves.

The next table shows participants' preferences for the second set of questions:

Table 3: Learning Styles – Group A

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
6. Seeing words	**70%**	6%	24%
7. Hearing words	35%	41%	24%
8. Doing something	59%	29%	12%

Considering all the previous information, it seems that the participants like to learn by *seeing words (visual),* making special emphasis on the fact that they remember and learn new words more easily looking at their notes.

In the following set, *participants' preferences* to develop a single skill, the results were as follows:

Table 4: Participants' Preferences in a Single Skill - Group A

	YES	**NO**	**SOMETIMES**
9. To listen	18%	17%	65%
10. To speak	30%	29%	41%
11. To read	24%	47%	29%
12. To write	**41%**	24%	35%

From this set, it is important to point out two particular aspects. The first one is that participants prefer to learn by *writing,* matching with their predominant *learning style (visual)*; in their given reasons they mention the importance of looking at how things (words, structures) are written. The second aspect is their preference to read different written materials.

Half of the group does not like it because of difficulties with the content of the reading and their low level of comprehension.

In the last set of questions, participants were asked about their preferences for learning vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation. The table below displays the results:

Table 5: Preferences in Learning - Group A

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
13. New words	53%	6%	41%
14. Grammar	18%	47%	35%
15. Pronunciation	**82%**	12%	6%

It is noticeable that participants like to learn *pronunciation* in order to acquire a good accent and to deal with other people without communication obstacles. Also, it is important to look at the fact that they dislike learning *grammar* because of boring teachers` explanations or the way it is taught (deductive or inductive approaches); this as stated by the participants in this study.

It is convenient to take a look at the results of group B, considering each set of questions. (Appendix J includes a detailed explanation of the results of this group).

The next table shows the results for the first set of questions:

Table 6: Interactions With Others While Learning - Group B

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
1. Whole class	50%	-------	50%
2. Go out and learn	5%	36%	59%
3. In groups	45%	19%	36%
5. In pairs	**50%**	23%	27%
6. Alone	23%	50%	27%

The results show participants like to learn *in pairs* given that they can practice the

language with other person who helped each other to improve their weaknesses; as stated by the participants for their reasons on selecting one answer or the other. The table bellow displays the results for the following set of questions- the students' own learning styles:

Table 7: Learning Styles- Group B

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
7. Seeing words	**73%**	5%	22%
8. Hearing words	36%	28%	36%
8.Doing something	32%	32%	36%

It was noticeable that participants really like to learn by *seeing words (visual)* making special emphasis on the fact that they remember and learn new words faster.

The next set of questions dealt with the participants' preferences for developing a single skill; the table below shows the results:

Table 8: Participants' Preferences in a Single Skill - Group B

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
9. To listen	**68%**	------	32%
10. To speak	50%	5%	45%
11. To read	36%	36%	28%
12. To write	40%	45%	15%

It is important to mention the participants' preferences to learn by practicing *listening* using different types of recordings in order to improve their pronunciation and learn new vocabulary which is related (according with the participants' stated reasons) with the fun way provided by listening to songs.

In the last set of questions, participants were asked about their preferences for learning *vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation*, and the next table presents the results:

Table 9: Preferences in Learning- Group B

	YES	**NO**	**SOMETIMES**
13. New words	50%	18%	32%
14. Grammar	36%	28%	36%
15. Pronunciation	**73%**	9%	18%

It is noticeable that participants like to learn *pronunciation* in order to acquire a good accent making improvements in their speaking skill development.

There were certain similarities in both groups, such as: in the first set of questions which take into account *the interactions with others,* both groups preferred to learn by doing *pair* work activities because they could learn and be helped by others (in the words of the participants).

Another coincidence is that both groups were predominantly visual (*seeing words*); they preferred to write down notes to remember vocabulary in an easy way to later use the acquired knowledge at any time they need it.

 Finally, both groups prefer to *learn pronunciation* to acquire a correct accent and

fluency to deal with other people.

Based on this general overview of the participants' particular ways to perceive information a second questionnaire was applied in order to complement this information obtained first and have the specific learning styles to work on them. This to help plan a suitable reading treatment based on the results for *the experimental group.*

4.3. The Styles Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing your own learning and working style

The third quantitative research instrument was administered on the four week of March. It was made with the intention of finding out about the main participants' learning style preferences. (Styles Analysis Survey (SAS) - see Appendix D).

This instrument served the purpose of complementing the previous survey (*individual preferences*) to have an overall view about participants' preferences while learning a second language, and support the planning of an appropriate reading comprehension treatment for *the experimental group* (B).

This questionnaire is divided into five categories, as it is explained in Chapter III. Participants from both groups answered this questionnaire there being were certain similarities.

The next table includes the majority (+) and the minority (-) with the percentages each group had. The major percentages of each category to make emphasis on those which were the ones taken into account to plan the reading treatment for the *experimental group.*

The table below shows the results each group had for each set of questions.

Table 10: Learning Styles Preferences

CATEGORIES	GROUP A	GROUP B
Sensorial	**Auditory (+)= 55%** Kinesthetic= 39% Visual (-)= 6%	**Kinesthetic (+)= 45%** Auditory= 30% Visual (-)= 25%
Dealing with others	**Introverted (+)= 61%** Extroverted (-)=39%	**Extroverted (+)= 75%** Introverted (-)= 25%
Handling possibilities	**Intuitive (+)=61%** Concrete-sequential (-)=39%	**Intuitive (+)= 55%** Concrete-sequential (-)= 45%
Approaching tasks	**Open (+)= 61%** Closure-oriented (-)= 39%	**Open (+)= 60%** Closure-oriented (-)=40%
Dealing with ideas	**Global (+)= 67%** Analytic (-)= 33%	**Analytic (+)= 60%** Global (-)= 40%

There are categories in which both groups had the same learning styles (handling possibilities and approaching tasks), and a minority of preference for seeing something (visual).

Regarding the sensorial category for group A, the majority of them (55%) prefer to listen to recordings; they remember something better if they discuss it out loud and they really enjoy listening to music while they study.

In group B, the larger number of students (45%) really likes to manipulate objects,

to be involved in physical activities and they tend to move their lips while they read silently.

In relation to the category dealing with others, a great amount of participants from group A (61%) are introverted and they tend to be nervous with new people, keeping in silence to themselves.

On the other hand, the majority of participants from group B (75%) are extroverted, for them having conversations with strangers, taking an active part in debates or studying in groups is not a problem and they prefer learning with others.

Regarding the category for handling possibilities, both groups coincide in that they are mostly intuitive; that is to say, they consider themselves as ingenious people and prefer to discover things (e.g. grammatical structures/rules) rather than having somebody explaining it to them; they also really enjoy teachers presenting different options in changing something she/he had already planned for class.

As for the case of approaching tasks, both groups predominate in the category for the open learning style. They like to postpone things to be done at the last moment, being spontaneous making quick decisions, and they did not have a list of tasks because they felt tired or upset.

The latter has certain connections with the previous category (handling possibilities) because in both cases the participants consider themselves very flexible to changes.

The last category which has to do with dealing with ideas, a good number of participants from group A (67%) had a global view, meaning they can synthesize ideas; it seems that without many problems, they can look at general pictures or overall plans preferring a short and simple explanation over a big and complex

one. Nevertheless, the majority of participants from group B (60%) enjoy breaking general ideas down into smaller pieces, thus focusing their attention on details, long and specific explanations.

These findings make the differences and preferences in learning evident and bring us to the importance of taking such things into account thus directing teachers in the direction for allowing students to learn about themselves as learners as they "…should be encouraged to reflect on their *learning styles* to see where their styles reflect choices that they have made and where they might have trapped themselves" (Ray, 1997, p.9). Or more simply, as Brown (2007) suggests "…as learners invest in their learning process, they create avenues for success" (p. 133). In this study, participants had the opportunity to reflect about themselves in the way they learned.

4.4. The Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire

In order to find out which strategies participants use, a questionnaire was applied on the first week of April. It was the Reading strategies previous use questionnaire adapted from Rubin and Uhl (1999).See Appendix C.

Adaptation of the instrument was done taking into consideration the main reading strategies which best match the information about learning and working styles obtained from the SAS.

The purpose at this stage was to obtain information about the current participants' reading strategies use and the frequency in which they make use of specific reading strategies to better comprehend different kinds of texts.

The results of both groups are presented next. There are two tables, one per each group and which contain the percentages; once again in **bold,** the highest percentages for each question are presented highlighting the frequency with which participants use a particular reading strategy.

The next table shows the results of participants' responses for group A:

Table 11: reading strategies previous use- Group A

QUESTION	0=NEVER	1=SOMETIMES	2= VERY OFTEN	3=ALWAYS
1.Using previous knowledge to infer unknown sentences	4%	36%	**50%**	10%
2. Considering context for unknown words	14%	**41%**	31%	14%
3. Scanning	14%	**36%**	**36%**	14%
4. Monitoring progress	14%	**36%**	32%	18%
5. Using contextual clues	9%	23%	**36%**	32%
6. Skimming	9%	23%	**50%**	18%
7. Predicting		36%	**41%**	23%
8. Creating mental images		17%	**45%**	38%
9. Summarizing	8%	28%	**50%**	14%
10. Rating understanding	**32%**	27%	**32%**	9%

As it can be seen, half of the participants from group A *very often* use their knowledge of previous knowledge to figure out unclear sentences or parts of sentences, and the majority of them (41%) *sometimes* consider the context when they look up unfamiliar words in dictionary. Also, a great number of them (36%) *sometimes and very often* read the whole text first to get the big picture (skimming).

Considering the category of asking themselves questions in order to check their understanding of the text (monitoring progress), a considerable number of participants from group A (36%) *sometimes* do make use of this. However, in the category of using contextual clues (title, illustrations, layout, etc.), a good number of participants (36%) *very often* make use of this strategy to figure out what the text is about. Half of the group *very often* decides to look for specific aspects of information in advance, and they focus on that information when they read (scanning).

Pointing out how they use predictions, a good number of participants from group A (41%) *very often* try to draw predictions about the content of the text before they read it. And, while they are reading (45%) *very often* create mental images, even pictures or scenes, they also *very often* make use of summarizing strategies (50%).

There was a contrast with rating comprehension by students and their reflections on how much they understand what they read, as an important percentage of the students (32%) *never* check that, while others (36%) *very often* use this strategy to grade their comprehension.

As a conclusion of this group, it could be said that the majority of students make use of a good number of reading strategies which help them to comprehend the content of texts better and faster.

As for the results for the same questionnaire with group B, these can be seen in table 11 below:

Table 12: reading strategies previous use- Group B

QUESTION	0=NEVER	1=SOMETIMES	2= VERY OFTEN	3=ALWAYS
1.Using previous knowledge to infer unknown sentences	19%	**43%**	28%	10%
2. Considering context for unknown words	10%	**38%**	33%	19%
3. Scanning		**62%**	24%	14%
4. Monitoring progress	**33%**	**33%**	24%	10%
5. Using contextual clues		24%	33%	**43%**
6. Skimming	14%	**43%**	24%	19%
7. Predicting	24%	24%	24%	**28%**
8.Creating mental images	10%	24%	**52%**	14%
9. Summarizing	14%	**38%**	24%	24%
10. Rating understanding	**43%**	33%	24%	

To sum up the previous chart, the majority of participants from group B: (43%) *sometimes* used their previous knowledge to infer unknown sentences, (38%) *sometimes* considered the context to look up in the dictionary words they did not know, (62%) *sometimes* read the whole text first to get the big picture, (33%) never/*sometimes* asked themselves questions to monitor their understanding of the text, (43%) *always* used contextual clues (title, illustrations, layout, etc.) in order to figure out what the text is about, (43%) *sometimes* decided in advance specific aspects of information to look for, and they focused on that information when they read, (28%) *always* tried to predict what the text will be about, (52%) *very often* imagined scenes or draw pictures of what they are reading, (38%) *sometimes* summarized important information of the text, and (43%) *never* rated their comprehension by reflecting on how much they understood what they read.

It is noticeable that participants from group B used the indicated reading strategies less frequently, just three of them the participants use them very often and always: *using contextual clues, predicting and creating mental images.* At the same time, and taking into consideration their preferences, the reading strategies they unconsciously used were the ones which matched with some features of their own learning styles.

This result can be considered similar to the study conducted by Hosenfeld (Hosenfeld, 1977 cited in Richards, 1994) which shows some of the differences between learners with high and low scores on a reading proficiency test:

> "...high scores tended to keep the meaning of the passage in mind, read in broad phrases, skip unessential words, and guess meanings of unknown words from

context; low scores tended to lose the meaning of sentences as soon as they decoded them, read word by word or in short phrases, rarely skip words, and turn to the glossary when they encountered new words" (p 65).

The results show up to this point that there was a lack of a correct use of reading strategies, because in group B participants were using just a few, as *using contextual clues* and *predicting,* while group A used the majority of the strategies indicated in the questionnaire.

Although individual readers have their own preferred strategies for understanding a written text, it is in the number of frequency, deployment and combination of strategies that success is to be found. Basically, as Macaro (2001) considers, good foreign readers "...attack the text as a holistic problem to be solved by coming at it from different angles" (p.37).

For this study, it was important to have previous information about the use of reading strategies both groups made use of in order to plan the reading treatment to help participants from group B to become better foreign language readers highlighting the importance of reading strategies which "..*are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence,* and that learning such strategies is o crucial importance since *learners who have developed appropriate reading strategies have greater self-confidence and learn more effectively*" (Oxford 1990 cited in Nunan, 1992, p.172).

It is important to mention that both groups had a clear idea about the use of reading strategies, and that at least they use some to support their understanding when reading. However, in the case of participants from group A, they tend to use a greater variety of reading strategies in comparison to participants from group B.

This was another point to rescue when designing the treatment to help participants from group B (*the experimental group*) improve their reading comprehension strategies.

4.5. Reading treatment

Considering the previous information of what kind of reading strategies each group used, a treatment was planned to help the experimental group improve the use of reading comprehension strategies. The main goal of applying this treatment was to maximize their comprehension of texts, identifying relevant and non-relevant information, tolerating less than word-by-word comprehension (Byrnes, 1998).

As it is mentioned in chapter III, it consisted of five steps in which the participants were trained to use the reading strategies best matched with their learning styles preferences (kinesthetic and extroverted). This- said of the treatment- was applied to *experimental group* (B) in five sessions (last week of May and the first of June) and this consisted of a progressive use of different reading strategies.

One of the reading strategies were drawing predictions through manipulating representative objects teacher brought to the classroom and using a true/false exercise. Another one was skimming by making a quick reading of the text and getting the main idea of each paragraph. Also scanning was used to look for specific details in the text, answering some exercises such as multiple-choice and making drawings. The last one was paraphrasing to check and rate their reading comprehension. On this, the participants made an oral presentation to their partners of the city they considered was the most attractive.

A detailed explanation about the results and participants' attitudes was included in Appendix K. The following section presents the main results and improvements step by step:

Step number one: *raising awareness to have a purpose for reading:* participants manipulated some objects which corresponded to specific cities (Las Vegas, Orlando, New York and Los Angeles) they read about. Participants were motivated to discover about the relation of each object deciding which city was the most interesting, having a purpose for reading. As Brown (1994) mentions efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, participants knew what they were looking for and can weed out potential distracting information.

Step number two: *making predictions:* participants were able to make predictions through the manipulation of some paper bills and coins to guess the city (Las Vegas). They were very motivated and interested in this city because of its casinos and the famous buildings. At the beginning they related money with other cities such as New York and Los Angeles. However, they guessed after Teacher refused their answers. In the second activity, participants increased their interests to read because they begun to predict about the content of the reading using a true/false exercise (see Appendix G.1). They were familiar with this kind of exercise and for them it was easy to answer; they just had one mistake in question number 4 about the main attraction of Las Vegas because they believed casinos were the unique attraction. Participants were surprised when they read about other attractions in Las Vegas. The majority of them liked this city.

Byrnes' view (1998) is important to mention at this point when in relation with *predicting strategies* in which participants use knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension, to use knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; and to use knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content. As it is seen above (step for predicting), participants could predict the content of the text, and this tool was very helpful because it helped them to create expectations about the reading, making interesting predictions about each city. Also, participants were motivated to investigate if their predictions were right or wrong.

Step number three: *skimming:* Participants repeated all the previous procedure but using oranges as manipulated objects which had to do with Orlando. For participants it appeared to be easier because of the weather conditions of missing cities. In the True/False questions (see Appendix G.2) they made more mistakes failing to answer the questions about general information such as how people considered the city and its main attractions. When participants were asked to answer a exercise which contained the main ideas of each paragraph (see Appendix G.2 *skimming strategy*) they got worried because they were not familiar with this kind of task; however, when the teacher introduced the three rapid comprehension silent reading strategies they did the activity and felt more secure about the content of the reading. Students were worried about the time, but the majority of them completed the exercise having just one mistake in the question about *the factors which are taken into account in ranking a city.* This reading

strategy was useful for them because they started to comprehend main ideas with just a quick reading.

After having a purpose for reading and making predictions, participants were motivated to read the text, and they wanted to know about the content of the reading and a quick reading was very useful to discover the main content of the text. As Lenz's points out (Lenz's, 2005), skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas in less time participants used to read before.

Step number four: *guessing words from context, scanning and creating mental images:* Participants, following the procedure: manipulation of objects (paper flags and seals), predicting the name of the city (New York), answering a true/false exercise –see Appendix G.3- (having wrong two answers which were related to the year of foundation and location) and doing the skimming activity looking at main ideas of the paragraph –see Appendix G.3 *skimming strategy-* (one mistake in the first question related to the foundation of the city), they were acquiring the ability to use each reading strategy having a specific purpose. They were motivated to continue the readings about the missing cities and as they were having improvements in their reading comprehension levels they begun to ask about other reading strategies. To complement their training an exercise in which they had to guess the meaning of some words through the use of a multiple choice exercise (see Appendix G.3 *guessing from context*) and without using dictionaries. They committed three mistakes in words considered in numbers 1,4 and 5 (see Appendix G.3 *guessing from context*), they expressed they were not familiar with

the kind of vocabulary indicated in those questions and, even with its context, they really got confused with its meaning. Next of this exercise was looking for specific details (see Appendix G.3 *scanning*). Participants did not commit any mistakes could summarize the main information of a reading or solved exercises. And, in the last activity, related to creating mental images (see Appendix G.3 *creating mental images*), participants were motivated and encouraged to draw the city as apparently they had enough information to produce satisfactory drawings about its main attractions.

According to Richards (1994), by using *guessing* participants have the chance to infer implied meaning ("between the lines"), guess about a cultural reference, and guess content messages. The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably accurate. In this case, the researcher helped participants to become accurate guessers by encouraging them to use effective *compensation strategies* in which they fill gaps in their competence by intelligent attempts to use whatever clues are available to them. About *scanning* strategy, participants made a quick search for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text (Brown, 1994). These exercises helped participants to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. In this way, participants located important information through a text without spending much time. Finally, the *creating mental images* strategy was used to check the whole comprehension of the reading; using drawings participants had the opportunity to demonstrate the reading comprehension level they reached.

Step number five: *paraphrasing strategy:* the same previous procedure was followed but here the teacher asked participants to remember the order of the

reading strategies. Participants were enthusiastic about it and they got involved in the reading treatment. For this step participants manipulated boxes of movies guessing the place "Hollywood" and Los Angeles. In the True/False questions (see Appendix G.4) they had just one mistake in the last question about the weather conditions of the city. For the *skimming strategy* (see Appendix G.4 *skimming strategy*) they did this part well without having any error. It was one of the reading strategies they really liked because they learned to look for main ideas. In *guessing from context (*see Appendix G.4 *guessing from context)* they had two errors and they mentioned those words did not play an important role in understanding the whole reading and they could skip over following the three suggested rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, 1994). Participants answered the exercise for *specific details* (see Appendix G.4 *scanning)* they did not make any mistake in their answers. Their drawings, which were considering the description of the city (see Appendix G.4 *creating mental images*), those were about the big letters of Hollywood, some buildings and people walking around. In the last part of this lesson, participants were asked to form teams according to the city which was more interesting for them to visit. The majority of them preferred Las Vegas and Orlando because of their attractions and their popularity. They made a short presentation explaining the main features of a particular city. The objects of each city were manipulated by each team and based on those, they supported their speeches and some others made drawings on the board to emphasize on the main attractions of each city. Each team was motivated in making their presentations and they really liked and enjoyed this activity. At this stage, participants were able to *paraphrase* the content of the reading, they, as Byrnes (1994) suggests, stopped

at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text.

At the end of this reading treatment participants were more confident and sure to use specific strategies to improve their reading comprehension levels because they were aware about when they could use a specific reading strategy according to the assessment presented in reading a foreign language.

This reading treatment had the goal to increase participants' reading comprehension level by making use of their preferences all the time. The majority of the participants could notice their improvements in the time they finished their readings in less time than it was at the beginning of the reading treatment. Also, the use of the objects was meaningful for them because they started to link things and information of the cities just by manipulating the objects.

For the participants it was the first time they had a complete reading lesson because the previous English teachers (in the participants' voices) sometimes skipped them. Also, if they had to read, the teacher asked them to read aloud but focusing their attention on the pronunciation of the words, not in the reading comprehension.

4.6. The group discussion

As it is mentioned in Chapter III, the group discussion was used to gather qualitative data with respect to the participants' progress while taking the treatment, their beliefs and perceptions of improvements in reading comprehension. According to Uhl (1999), this technique is useful to get information about reading strategies, particularly regarding participants' beliefs, feelings and perceptions,

which can be shared in small groups creating a confident and comfortable environment in the classroom, making it easier to gather data.

The group discussion was developed only in group B after as they were the ones that received the reading treatment. During this session participants were in groups of four people, they were sharing their point of views, feelings and perceptions about the reading treatment. They reported those in a separated sheet of paper. At this point, the researcher monitored the teams where some of them made comments about the importance of having this kind of preparation and motivation to raise their awareness for reading something. The learners were motivated since the early moment in which the cities were introduced using representative objects. Also, the participants believed it was interesting and they really wanted to continue the preparation to read faster and really understand the content of a particular text.

After ten minutes, students were guided via prompting questions during a whole group discussion where they were able to express their perceptions about the reading treatment.

Among some of the findings from the group discussion, some of the participants felt better about themselves as learners. For example, Jose stated,

> *"I felt so good when I noticed that I could read fast and I improved my level of reading comprehension. I used those reading strategies even to read in Spanish. For me, this reading treatment was very useful and interesting".*

About the results perceived in relation to improving reading, Jose found that he is

not only reading a higher speed but being able to understand more and even transfer his new knowledge to reading in his mother tongue,

Other participants relate the treatment more with grasping ideas and concepts. Such is the case of Mary,

"*With the reading treatment I learnt to make use of different learning processes I was not conscious. After I received the information of these reading strategies I understand better the readings and to look for main ideas and concepts*".

Other participants in the study expressed similar thoughts to those of Jose and Mary as they noticed the differences in their reading skills between the first reading exercises and the ones they did towards the end of this study. They expressed that as the reading strategies were introduced to them, they started to complete the exercises faster and they focused their attention on the main ideas in order to understand the reading in a better way.

After the discussion, the researcher showed the participants the names of five reading strategies (by sticking them on the board) and asked the participants to tell her which of these worked better for them when reading texts.

For the majority of the participants, *making predictions* was the technique that worked out the best as Rebeca mentioned:

"*I consider making predictions was the best, because when I predicted the content*

of the reading using the objects and answering the True/False exercise I got motivated since the early moment to know more about the city. I enjoyed doing those activities and I had the general idea about what the reading was about".

On this, David stated,

"Using this reading technique –making predictions- the reading was not confusing for me because many times I started a reading without any kind of preparation and I consider it is so important to catch our attention and the reading becomes easier and meaningful for us".

However, some of the participants believed that *paraphrasing* was the one that worked best for them because they considered it helped them to achieve a more complete comprehension of the text. Also, they expressed that while using this strategy, they were also practicing their speaking skill which is the main goal of learning a language, to communicate with others.

"The reading strategy best work for me is paraphrasing, because I get the complete idea from the texts and using this strategy I remember some details sharing information with my partners" (Carla)

"Reading different and meaningful texts about the cities I start to become aware of how if I use *paraphrasing* I could comprehend all the readings, because I had a purpose for reading and at the end of my reading I share with my partners the summary of the cities and I felt I read fast and I comprehend better**" (**Alberto**)**

In general, for the participants, the reading treatment was a useful tool as they wanted to be trained to improve their level of reading comprehension. The researcher suggested some books and web pages in which they could complete exercises of each reading strategy. Also, they were interested in taking English courses in which those strategies were taught since the beginning of the courses to support their learning process.

Considering the previous information, it is necessary to mention the importance of choosing the suitable reading strategies. About this, Lenz's (2005) states that a *reading strategy:*"…is an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill, which is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention" (p. 158) .

At the end of this reading treatment and considering participants' points of view, it is clear that they were conscious about the use of reading strategies according to their learning styles, making them aware of the benefits and advantages to use each strategy according to their needs.

The next chapter presents the conclusions of this thesis by summarizing and analyzing the findings of this research.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, a brief summary of the study is presented. Then, the results obtained from the study are reviewed and discussed. Next, the assessment of the study is given. Finally, the implications for further research and for teaching are presented.

5.1. Summary

This was a descriptive and interpretative research based mainly on the participants' responses. The study aimed to investigate the learners' individual learning style preferences, the reading strategies they prefer to use, and how both aspects may contribute in helping the learners become effective second language readers: and most importantly to design a specific training module on reading strategies to contribute to enhance the reading comprehension levels of two similar groups of Intermediate-High learners (ACTFL, 1999) who were taking their third English course at *Realistica de Mexico* Secondary.

Five kinds of instruments were used for data collection. The quantitative data were collected through a test (Pre-Post Reading Test), two questionnaires (the Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire and the Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire) and a survey, The Styles Analysis Survey (SAS). According to all the data gathered from those instruments a reading

treatment was planned. The qualitative data was collected through the group discussion activity.

The Pre-Post Reading Test was used to measure the reading proficiency level of the participants, after and before the application of the reading treatment. The Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire was used to look for participants' individual preferences in learning a foreign language, the way they prefer to learn and what kind of activities they enjoy to develop in order to acquire the language; and the Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire used to obtain information about the current participants' reading strategies use and the frequency in which they made use of those to comprehend in a better way different kinds of texts.

The survey had as a purpose discovering the predominant participants' learning and working styles from both groups. A reading treatment was planned and applied to the *experimental group* to improve the participants' reading comprehension level and to "equate" the conditions of both groups in reading a foreign language material.

In order to gather qualitative data with respect to the participants' progress while taking the treatment and their beliefs and perceptions of improvements in reading comprehension, the researcher conducted a group discussion, which were carried out with the whole *experimental group* once the reading treatment had finished.

Firstly, participants were asked to solve a Pre-Reading Test to discover participants' reading comprehension level. After a week they were asked to complete the individual preferences in learning a foreign language questionnaire to find out the ways they prefer to learn and enjoyments of developing certain tasks.

The following week they answered the SAS, it was made with the intention of discovering the main participants' learning style preferences. And a week later, participants completed the reading previous use questionnaire to discover the frequency in the use of particular reading strategies.

Based on all the data obtained the researcher planned a reading treatment considering mainly the reading strategies which best match with predominant participants' learning styles; this was implemented in the *experimental group* as a progressive procedure, step by step, which lasted two weeks and which had as its main goal to train participants in the use of reading strategies to improve their reading comprehension level based on their learning styles. A group discussion was guided in the end in order to have the participants' impressions after they had gone through the reading treatment.

5.2. General and specific conclusions

This study aimed to highlight the significance of integrating reading strategies according to particular learning styles of each group inside the classrooms to transform their perceptions for becoming better foreign language readers having

the abilities of monitoring their comprehension to take action when comprehension falters using appropriate reading strategies. That said, the main research question was

What is the impact on students' reading comprehension from using *reading strategies* according to their *predominant learners´ styles*?

Three subsidiary questions that the study also intended to answer, were:

- What are the participants' learning styles?
- What are the effects of undergoing a reading treatment based on the participants' learning styles on their reading comprehension skills?
- What are the participants' perceived benefits of such treatment?

The following section summarizes the findings to these questions.

Based on experimental participants' perceptions about reading at the beginning of this study in which the participants avoided to read any foreign language (English) material because they considered it was boring, it was found that yet some other participants believed it was useful for acquiring new vocabulary and making improvements in their writings. At the beginning participants were just focusing on the vocabulary as a main benefit of reading but after they took the reading treatment their minds changed because they started to comprehend whole texts

getting not just new vocabulary, also interesting information about other places to visit and cultural features. In the guided group discussion participants shared positive opinions about reading and their interest to continue reading about other places in their free time.

Participants started to improve as foreign language readers because they made use of the suggested reading strategies and their motivation guided them to look for other strategies to improve their comprehension levels. The participants were also able to work by themselves and make decisions not just in their reading strategies selection, also in their learning process. They were motivated to read different second language materials looking at their own interests and needs.

It is relevant at this point to say that reading plays an important role as an input skill because through it the participants in this study could acquire general and cultural knowledge about anything they need to gain. For this reason, good foreign language readers are the people who are more motivated, encourage and aware of their own process of learning a foreign language.

The researcher believes that from the data obtained, it can be said that the hypothesis stated, namely that

> *Good foreign language readers are people able to monitor and make*

> *decisions by themselves thus improving their performance and English level*

has been demonstrated to be true as far as this study concerns.

Regarding the idea that training students in using reading strategies which match their learning styles, it can be said that almost all the research instruments served

in answering this question.

In the Pre Reading Test both groups got low scores. Also, the majority of them did not find a special reason to read and they were unconcerned about this skill. However, as soon as they began to know more about themselves answering the SAS they were aware of their learning process through discovering why they were good or not in developing certain tasks. Using that data, representative reading strategies were chosen to measure the frequency participants made use of those and in which ones they showed a particular interest. The results were taken into consideration to plan a suitable reading treatment which contained their particular and majority preferences.

With the implementation of the reading treatment, manipulation of some objects, reading meaning material and an adequate training for using certain reading strategies, participants had a clear purpose to complete the reading of the postcards to discover more features about the missing parts.

In the group discussion participants shared their opinions about the usefulness and benefits of using the reading strategies which kept a narrow relation with their preferences. They made comments about the way readings were presented and it caught their attention raising their awareness to read the text.

Highlighting the effects of using *reading strategies* according to *predominant learners´ styles* to become good foreign language readers it could be said there is a clear change in people's attitude about reading, they began to comprehend the content of the text making the information part of their general knowledge and it could be used at the moment they needed.

The aforementioned helps in proving the other hypothesis,

Learners comprehend better while reading if there is a match between

their predominant learning styles and appropriate reading strategies.

Both groups kept differences and similarities. However, the researcher believes that the main goal of this study was achieved with the implementation of a reading treatment based on experimental participants' learning styles and reading strategies previous use in order to make an equivalence in their reading comprehension level with the one that control participants had. Using the participants' preferences and a suitable reading treatment, participants increased their speed in reading, a reason for reading and the most important, developed a good attitude towards foreign/second language reading materials.

Using specific reading strategies is what characterizes a good foreign language reader; however taking into account personal preferences making use of abilities everyone has and complementing those with tools which are helpful to develop better different activities, is of utmost importance and allows for better chances of success.

The participants in this study obtained greater benefits from all the process, since they knew themselves as students of a foreign language, their learning process, the reading strategies they used unconsciously, up to the encouragement to read foreign language materials and achieved a fuller understanding of the reading as the process was based on their learning styles and interests.

5.3. Implications

The findings of this study reveal that a relationship exists between learning styles and reading strategies when the goal is that helping learners to become efficient foreign language readers. There are, of course, implications. First of all, besides being a teacher in the classroom, teachers should take over the responsibility for becoming researcher in order to identify not only students' individual differences, but also to know how to discover the needs of their learners. What is meant here is not administrating questionnaires randomly, but being aware of each step taking and having a rationale for engaging in such discovery work. In other words, teachers should choose the right tools to identify their predominant students' learning styles and reading strategies and then the findings should not be put aside. On the contrary, teachers should make use of such findings to adopt the most appropriate teaching style, planning suitable activities to improve the students' proficiency levels in any skill. If teachers become sensitive to their students learning style and balance their instruction by making use of a wide variety of tasks in the classroom, they will have treated the students equally. Besides using instruments, teachers should constantly observe students very closely so that she/he can diagnose any changes in the reading profiles of the students.

In addition to all these, teachers should be equipped with a plenty of strategies that they will be able to propose to students to help them tackle difficult academic tasks. If, for instance, one strategy does not work, they should be able to suggest an alternative one. What is more, teachers should design activities that will require

the learners to make use of a variety of strategies and after the completion of the task they should encourage discussion sessions with students about the strategies they made use of, of whether these strategies proved to be useful or not, and why, etc. In this way, while the teachers will have the opportunity to see to what extent each of the students is successful in the use of the strategies, the students will be able to hear or see what strategies their peers used. Thus, they will be given the opportunity to make self-evaluations, decide which is better for them, or learn an alternative way of improving their comprehension levels.

Concerning implications related to curriculum, developers and material producers, it can be stated that they should definitely work in cooperation with both teachers and students. Together with teachers, they should decide what aspects of learning styles they need to identify, what learning style instrument will be used to identify students' reading strategies and include appropriate and meaningful readings to encourage students. This process requires continuous evaluation of every single stage or material used. For this reason, curriculum developers and material producers should collect feedback from teachers and students in order to identify the weaknesses and strengths of their products. This will enable them not only to produce better materials but also to develop them.

5.4. Limitations

In this research project there were certain limitations. One was the time, as the investigation work had set deadlines related with not only the collection of data but of the integration of a report.

Another important aspect was that of the absence of some students as not all the participants were constant in attending to the sessions and there were several stops and adaptations to complete the research process. However, the research instruments were administered when most of the participants attended and the results consider the predominant answers and preferences.

Special attention should be given to the fact that the reading treatment was brief as it was not possible to implement from the beginning of the course. As it was mentioned earlier in this paper, the treatment was just implemented only one month due to project-time-limitations which impeded the learners to take better advantage from their reading treatment had they been exposed to it longer.

That said, an important consideration is to conduct this type of research since the early beginning of any course to help students to know themselves and improve their reading comprehension level through all the course, giving them different options they could change according to their necessities.

5.5. Directions for further research

There is something important to highlight and this is the crucial role reading plays in acquiring a foreign language, increasing the use of this skill inside the classroom students are not just acquiring new vocabulary, they are increasing their knowledge about other cultures, traditions, new technology, which is not only motivating but helps in their integral education as human beings.

It is important to consider that this is a particular study conducted and adapted

taking into account participants' learning styles and which results may not be generalized to other studies or population, but still it provides an interesting insight into reading strategy training based on learning styles.

For further research it would be convenient to use as a guide the process suggested in this study, making adaptations according to the participants and their context variables (age, educational background, proficiency level, interests, preferences). Based on those results probably design a suitable plan to follow in order to improve the reading comprehension levels, and could be convenient to start the training since the early beginning of the course.

 This chapter presented the general conclusions of the study, with some comments and analysis about the findings and an invitation to continue researching this topic.

It is significant to know the students' preferences to have a starting point to work on. Having in mind their personal learning styles teachers could plan their lessons accordingly, making both meaningful and easy the learning process for students of a second language.

Something to be added in this part is the importance of promoting the use of strategies inside the classroom. In this case this work emphasized reading strategies, but it is important to work on strategies in general to help students improve as they move towards achieving proficiency in the use of the language.

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Appendix A:

ACTFL guidelines: Reading

Novice

Novice-Low

Able occasionally to identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context.

Novice-Mid

Able to recognize the symbols of an alphabetic and/or syllabic writing system and/or a limited number of characters in a system that uses characters. The reader can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates and borrowed words, where appropriate. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time, and rereading may be required.

Novice-High

Has sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Where vocabulary has been learned, can read for instructional and directional purposes, standardized messages, phrases, or expressions, such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps, and signs

Intermediate

Intermediate-Low

Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts from the simplest connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs. Such texts are linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure, for example, chronological sequencing. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make only minimal suppositions or to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples include messages with social purposes and information for the widest possible audience, such as public announcements and short, straightforward instructions dealing with public life. Some misunderstandings will occur.

Intermediate-Mid

Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple, connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.

Intermediate-High

Able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. Can get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension; for example, basic grammatical relations may be misinterpreted and temporal references may rely primarily on lexical items. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. While texts do not differ significantly from those at the Advanced level, comprehension is less consistent. May have to read material several times for understanding.

<div align="center">Advanced</div>

Advanced

Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, bibliographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters, and simple technical

material written for the general reader.

Advanced Plus

Able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest or knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. An emerging awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literary. Misunderstandings may occur.

Superior

Description

Able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although the reader is not expected to comprehend thoroughly texts which are highly dependent on knowledge of the target culture. Reads easily for pleasure. Superior-level texts feature hypotheses, argumentation, and supported opinions, and include grammatical patterns and vocabulary ordinarily

encountered in academic/professional reading.

At this level, due to the control of general vocabulary and structure, the reader is almost always able to match the meanings derived from extralinguistic knowledge with meanings derived from knowledge of the language, allowing for smooth and efficient reading of diverse texts. Occasional misunderstandings may still occur; for example, the reader may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms.

Distinguished

Description

Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references by processing language from within the cultural framework. Able to understand a writer's use of nuance and subtlety. Can readily follow unpredictable turns of thought and author intent in such materials as sophisticated editorials, specialized journal articles, and literary texts such as novels, plays, poems, as well as in any subject matter area directed to the general reader.

The pre-post reading test

NAME:_____ DATE _____

Instructions: read the following story, then, answer each set of questions.

A mysterious letter

1   Our breakfast table was cleared early, and Holmes waited in his dressing gown for his visitors,
    Dr. Mortimer was followed by a small, eager, dark-eyed man.
    "This is Sir Henry Baskerville," said Dr Mortimer
    "Yes," he said "I know that you think out little mysteries, and I've had one that I cannot solve.
5   It is this letter, if you can call it a letter, which reached me this morning".
    He laid an envelope on the table. The address, "Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel",
    was written roughly in capital letter. The postmark was "Charing Cross", and the date of
    posting was the previous evening. After a moment, Sir Henry Baskerville took out of the
    envelope a sheet of paper. A single sentence had been formed by sticking printed words on it:
10 "If you value your life, keep away from the moor". Only the word moor was written in ink.
    "Have you yesterday´s copy of *The Times,* Watson?" He tooked quickly through them. "Ah,yes-
    an excellent article this, on Free Trade. Allow me to read part of it to you: "You may imagine
    that your own special trade or your own industry would be encouraged by taxes on foreign
    goods, but these taxes would in the long run keep away wealth from the country, reduce the
15 value of the goods we bring in from abroad, and lower the general conditions of life in this
    Island." What do you think of that, Watson?"
    "I confess that I see no connection."
    "But, my dear Watson, there is such a close connection that one is actually taken out of the
    other. "You", "your", "life", "value", "keep away", "from the"… do you not see where these
20 words have been taken from?"
    "Great heavens, you are right!" cried Sir Henry. "So somebody cut out the message with a pair
    of scissors, and stuck it onto the paper. But I want to know why the word "moor" has been
    written by hand".
    "Because he could not find it in print. The other words were all simple, and could be found in
25 any copy of the paper., but "moor" would be less common" answered Holmes. "Sir Henry, has
    anything else of interest happened to you since you have been in London? Have you noticed
    anybody following you or watching you?"
    "I don´t know much about British life yet. I have spent nearly all my time in America and
    Canada. But hope that to lose one of your boots is not a part of everyday life over here"
30 "My dear sir," cried Dr. Mortimer, "you will find it when you return to the hotel. Why trouble Mr
    Holmes with little things of this kind?"
    "Well, he asked me about anything unusual. The worst of it is that I only bought the pair last
    night, and I have never even worn them. So, I am going back to the hotel now. Then we shall
    meet again for lunch. Good morning".
35 We hurried together down the stairs and into Baker St. We could still see Mortimer and
    Baskerville about 200 yards ahead of us. Keeping well behind them, we followed them. At that
    moment we saw a strange cab moving slowly, and inside we could see a bushy beard and a
    pair of sharp eyes. Suddenly, a shout was heard, and the cab went rapidly off down Regent St.
    "We are dealing with a very clever man, Watson. He used a cab so he could move slowly
40 behind them, or pass them, without them noticing. Would you recognize the face of that man
    in the cab?"
    "I would recognize only the black beard".
    "So would I- from which I guess that it was a false one, to hide some of his face. And now,
    Watson, we will fill in our time by looking at some of the pictures in the shops in Bond Street."

A. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. What was the main reason Sir Henry Baskerville visited Holmes?

a) To take breakfast.

b) To invite him to the museum.

c) To ask for help to solve a mystery.

d) To read him a strange newspaper article.

2. How did Dr Mortimer feel about Sir Henry Baskerville´s lost boot?

a) nervous   b) unconcerned   c) surprised   d) upset

B. Find these words on the text and answer the questions.

1. What does *he* in line 24 refer to? _____

2. What does *we* in line 39 refer to? _____

C. Read the story again for *details*. Circle T for *true* and F for *false* for each sentence.

1. The word *moor* was written by hand   T   F

2. Sir Henry noticed someone following him in several occasions   T   F

3. Sir Henry wore his new pair of boots before one disappeared   T   F

4. Holmes and Watson saw a rare cab   T   F

5. Watson could recognize the face of the man in the cab   T   F

D. Read the story again for *inference*. Underline the correct answer.

1. What can we infer about the man in the cab?

   a) He needs Holme´s help

   b) He is looking for a good hotel to stay

   c) He is so friendly and he wants to be Sir Henry´s friend

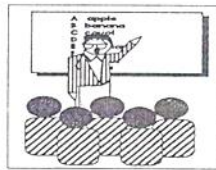   d) He has certain connection with the mysterious letter.

The individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire

6 How I like to learn English

1. Talk about the pictures.

1.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

With the whole class

2.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

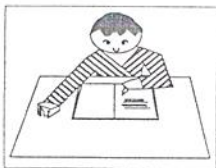fruit and veg

Go out and learn

3.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES
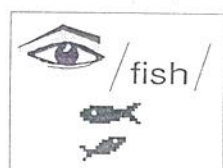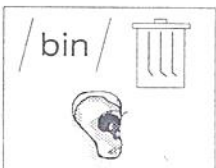
In groups

4.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

In pairs

5.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

Alone

6.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

/fish/

See words

7.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES

/bin/

Hear words

8.
YES
NO
SOMETIMES
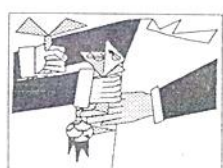
Do something then
talk about it

1:6

Activity Worksheets

Having an understanding of your own language learning 11
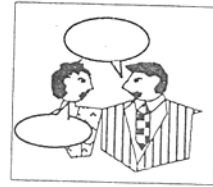
S T R A T E G Y   O N E

9.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES

To listen

10.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES

To speak

11.

1:6

YES
NO
SOMETIMES
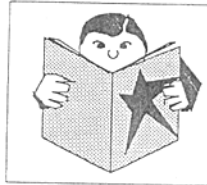
To read

12.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES
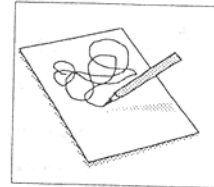
To write

13.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES

apple

book

cup

hat

fish
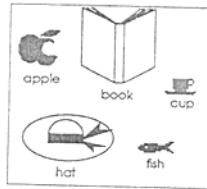
To learn a lot of new words

14.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES

I we me you

grammar book
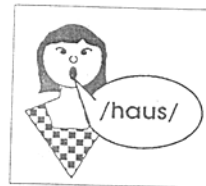
To learn grammar

15.

YES
NO
SOMETIMES

/haus/

To learn sounds and pronunciation

Appendix D:

Styles Analysis Survey (SAS)

NAME: _____ GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item, circle your immediate response:

0= Never   **1=** sometimes   **2=** very often   **3=** always

1. I remember something better if I write it down   0   1   2   3

2. I like to take lots of notes   0   1   2   3

3. I underline or highlight the important parts I read   0   1   2   3

TOTAL= _____

4. I remember things better if I discuss them out loud   0   1   2   3

5. I like to listen to music when I study   0   1   2   3

6. I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture or a tape, rather than by reading 0 1 2 3

TOTAL=_____

7. Manipulating objects help me to remember   0   1   2   3

8. I like a lot of physical activities   0   1   2   3

9. I move my lips when I read silently   0   1   2   3

TOTAL= _____

10. I prefer to study with others   0   1   2   3

11. I like to be in groups of people   0   1   2   3

12. It is easy for me to talk to strangers   0   1   2   3

TOTAL= _____

113

13. I prefer to study alone   0   1   2   3

14. In a large group, I tend to keep silent   0   1   2   3

15. I get nervous when dealing with new people   0   1   2   3

TOTAL=_____

16. I am an ingenious person   0   1   2   3

17. I like to discover things rather than have everything explained 0   1   2   3

18. It feels fine if the teacher changes the plan and give me different options 0 1 2 3

TOTAL=_____

19. I am attracted to sensible people   0   1   2   3

20. Finding hidden meanings is frustrating or irrelevant to me 0   1   2   3

21. I want a class which follows a step-by-step plan   0   1   2   3

TOTAL=_____

22. I am an organized person   0   1   2   3

23. I start tasks on time or early   0   1   2   3

24. I make lists of things I need to do   0   1   2   3

TOTAL= _____

25. I am a spontaneous person   0   1   2   3

26. I put off decisions as long as I can   0   1   2   3

27. Lists of tasks make me feel tired or upset   0   1   2   3

TOTAL=_____

28. I can pull together (synthesize) things easily   0   1   2   3

29. I prefer simple answers rather than a lot of explanations   0   1   2   3

30. It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture   0   1   2   3

TOTAL=_____

31. I enjoy breaking general ideas down into smaller pieces   0   1   2   3

32. I prefer detailed answers instead of short answers   0   1   2   3

33. I focus on the details rather than the big picture   0   1   2   3

TOTAL=_____

Adapted from Oxford (1993 cited in Reid, 1998, pp.208-215)

Appendix E:

The Reading Strategies Previous Use Questionnaire

NAME: _____ GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item, circle your immediate response:

0= Never **1=** sometimes **2=** very often **3=** always

1. Do you use your knowledge of grammar to figure out unclear sentences or parts of sentences?	0 1 2 3
2. Do you consider the context when you look up unfamiliar words in dictionary?	0 1 2 3
3. Do you read the whole text first to get the big picture?	0 1 2 3
4. Do you ask yourself questions in order to monitor your understanding of the text?	0 1 2 3
5. Do you use contextual clues (title, illustrations, layout, etc.) in order to figure out what the text is about?	0 1 2 3
6. Do you decide in advance specific aspects of information to look for, and you focus on that information when you read?	0 1 2 3
7. Do you try to predict what the text will be about?	0 1 2 3
8. Do you imagine scenes or draw pictures of what you are reading?	0 1 2 3
9. Do you summarize important information that you read?	0 1 2 3
10. Do you rate your comprehension by reflecting on how much you understood what you read?	0 1 2 3

Adapted from Rubin (1994) and Uhl (1999)

The Reading treatment procedure

In the following lines, five steps are presented in detail in order to have a general view about the progress through all the lessons.

STEP 1: Teacher raised students' awareness about the content of the readings by showing some objects they manipulated to get familiar with the cities; also, teacher provided the name of the cities (Las Vegas, Orlando, New York and Los Angeles) and she asked students to consider that at the end of the 5 sessions they had to decide individually which one is the most attractive to visit.

Teacher stuck on the board the name of the 5 steps, paying special emphasis on the first one because, at that moment, they had a *purpose for reading.*

STEP 2: Teacher brought some American paper dollars and coins to the classroom. Teacher remembered students the names of the cities (Las Vegas, Orlando, New York and Los Angeles) and students made some predictions about the city (Las Vegas).

Teacher asked some true/false questions about Las Vegas in order to raise their interest to read the information.

1. Las Vegas is considered the largest city for adult entertainment around the world   **TRUE**

2. The city is near Niagara Waterfalls   **FALSE**

3. It was founded in 1990   **FALSE**

4. Its main attraction are the pubs and discotheques   **FALSE**

5. You can see replica of fantastic places around the word   **TRUE**

Students, after their reading, checked their previous answers about the text to check if their predictions were true or not.

Teacher stuck on the board the second step students practiced in this session: *making predictions*

STEP 3: Teacher brought some oranges to the classroom. Teacher remembered students the names of the missing cities (Orlando, New York and Los Angeles) and students made some predictions about the city (Orlando).

Teacher asked some true/false questions about Orlando in order to raise their interest to read the information.

1. Orlando is ranked as the 6th "Most Fun U.S City"   **FALSE**

2. The city is located in South Florida   **FALSE**

3. It was incorporated as a city in 1885   **TRUE**

4. It is considered a citrus city   **TRUE**

5. Its main attractions are Walt Disney World Resort, Universal Orlando Resort, and SeaWorld Orlando.   **TRUE**

Teacher introduced the 3 rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, 1994):

(1) You do not need to "pronounce" each word to yourself,

(2) Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases,

(3) Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning through its context.

Students used the previous strategies to read the text in order to check their previous answers about the text to check if their predictions were true or not.

Students made a quick reading of the text answering some questions:

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:

    a) Introduction of the location of Orlando.

    b) Factors which are taken into account in raking a city.

    c) Main attractions of Orlando.

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:

    a) Benefits that Orlando offers.

b) Reasons why Orlando is considered the major city of Florida

c) Location of Orlando

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:

a) The origins of Orlando

b) Facts about Reconstruction Era

c) The expansion of people living in Orlando during Golden Era

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:

a) The story of Walt Disney

b) Facts about Disney's Hollywood Studios

c) Main attractions in Orlando

Teacher gave students just two minutes to answer the questions, then, teacher handed out the readings and students, working with a pair, checked their answers and main information about the reading. Teacher suggested to talk about the facts which they consider interesting from Orlando.

Teacher stuck on the board the following step students practiced in this session: *skimming.*

STEP 4: Teacher brought some mini paper flags and seals. Teacher remembered students the names of the missing cities (New York and Los Angeles) and students made some predictions about the city (New York).

Teacher asked some true/false questions about New York in order to raise their interest for reading.

1. New York was founded as a commercial trading post by the Dutch in 1660. **FALSE**

2. New York is the most popular city in USA   **FALSE**

3. It is a leading global city   **TRUE**

4. The statue of Liberty is the unique attraction in New York   **FALSE**

5. New York is located on the Atlantic coast of the Northeastern United States **TRUE**

Teacher pointed out the 3 rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, et.al.):

 (1) You do not need to "pronounce" each word to yourself,

(2) Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases,

(3) Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning through its context.

Students used the previous strategies to read the text in order to check their previous answers about the text to check if their predictions were true or not.

Students made a quick reading of the text answering some questions:

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:

   a) Origins of New York

   b) USA beginnings

   c) British control over different USA cities

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:

   a) Benefits that New York offers.

   b) Location of New York

   c) New York in the World

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:

   a) Museum Art beginnings

   b) Places to visit in New York

   c) The Statue of Liberty story

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:

   a) Location of New York

   b) People's opinions about New York

c) Celebrities in New York

Teacher gave students just two minutes to answer the questions, then, teacher hung out the readings and students, working in pairs, checked their answers and main information about the reading. Teacher proposed talking about the facts they consider interesting about New York.

Teacher came back the readings to the students to develop *scanning strategy*. First, teacher delivered each student a handout in which students looked for specific details, without making pauses to look at the dictionary for unknown words. They *guessed* those words by themselves considering the context. Also, they drawn the city according to the description they had read, first by *creating mental images* while they re-read, and then drawing those in a sheet of paper to rate their comprehension.

Guessing from context:

INSTRUCTIONS: considering the context, choose the best option for each word

1. Trading post

   a) Place for doing business

   b) Position

   c) Job

2. Exerting

   a) Applying

b) Making use of

c) Putting into effect

3. Worldwide

   16. Local

   17. International

   18. Foreign

4. Greeted

   a) Met

   b) Spoke to

   c) Welcome

5. Borough

   a) Areas

   b) Locations
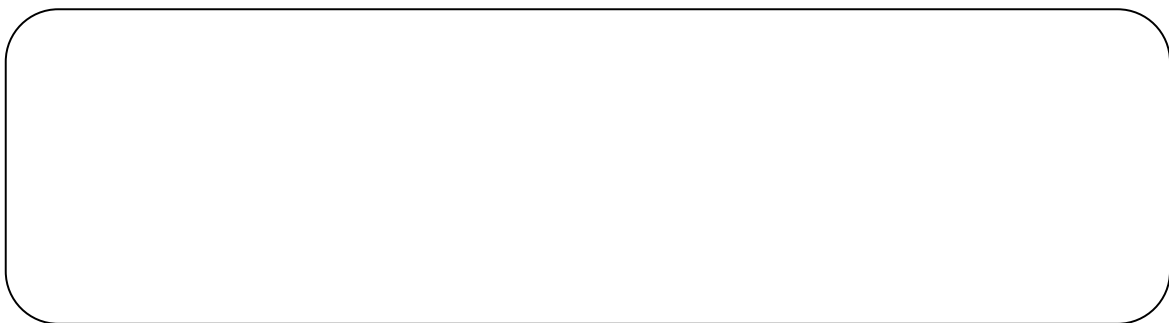
   c) States

Scanning strategy:

INSTRUCTIONS: answer each question according to the information of the text.

1. New York has been the nation's largest city since 1790.

2. New York is a leading global city because it is a powerful influence over worldwide commerce, finance, culture, fashion and entertainment.

3. The major attractions in New York are the Empire State Building, Ellis Island, Broadway theatre productions, museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other tourist attractions including Central Park, Washington Square Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square, the Bronx Zoo, New York Botanical Garden, luxury shopping along Fifth and Madison Avenues.

4. New York has been home to several of the tallest buildings in the world including the Empire State Building and the twin towers of the former World Trade Center.

5. New York is located in the Atlantic coast of the Northeastern United States and it consists of five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Creating mental images

Read again the information presented, and according to the description of the city, draw it in the following space

Teacher stuck on the board the following step students practiced in this session: *scanning* using *guessing from context and creating mental images.*

STEP 5: Teacher brought some movies, and students made some predictions about the city (Los Angeles).

Teacher asked some true/false questions about Los Angeles in order to raise their interest.

1. Los Angeles is the second largest city in USA   **TRUE**

2. Los Angeles is a city of Northern California   **FALSE**

3. Los Angeles was incorporated as a municipality on April 4, 1990   **FALSE**

4. In Los Angeles you can visit Hollywood and Broadway   **FALSE**

5. Los Angeles has subtropical climate with white-sand beaches   **TRUE**

Teacher remembered to the students the 3 rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, 1994):

 (1) You do not need to "pronounce" each word to yourself,

(2) Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases,

(3) Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning through its context.

Students used the previous strategies to read the text in order to check their previous answers about the text to check if their predictions were true or not.

Students made a quick reading of the text answering some questions:

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:

    a) Attractive places to visit in los Angeles

    b) General description about Los Angeles

    c) Global view of Los Angeles

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:

    a) Location of Los Angeles

    b) Bordering cities in Los Angeles

    c) San Gabriel Mountains story

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:

    16. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo features

    17. Mexican territory nowadays

    18. Origins of Los Angeles

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:

   a) Climate in Los Angeles

   b) Main attractions of Los Angeles

   c) Hollywood and Beverly Hills story

Teacher gave students just two minutes to answer the questions, then, teacher hung out the readings and students, working in pairs, checked their answers and main information about the reading. Teacher proposed talking about the facts which they consider interesting about Los Angeles.

Teacher came back the readings to the students to develop *scanning strategy*. First, teacher delivered each student a handout in which Students looked for specific details, without making pauses to look at the dictionary for unknown words. They *guessed* those words by themselves considering the context. Also, they drawn the city according to the description they had read, first by *creating mental images* and then, drawing those in a sheet of paper to rate their comprehension.

Guessing from context:

INSTRUCTIONS: considering the context, choose the best option for each word

1. Nickname

   a) Named

   b) Designed

c) Called

2. War

   a) Conflict

   b) Battle

   c) Debate

3. Purchased

   a) Obtained

   b) Sold

   c) Paid for

4. Thereby

   a) By those influences

   b) Considering the previous situation

   c) In that way

5. Renowned

   a) Celebrated

   b) Well-known

   c) Legendary

Scanning strategy:

INSTRUCTIONS: answer each question according to the information of the text.

1. Los Angeles is the largest city in the state of California

2. Los Angeles is located in between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

3. In 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War, Los Angeles and California were purchased as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, thereby becoming part of the United States.

4. Main places to visit in Los Angeles: Hollywood (moviemakers home) and Beverly Hills (home of movie stars).

5. The importance of Los Angeles around the world: Los Angeles is one of the world's centers of business, international trade, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, science, technology, and education.

Creating mental images

Read again the information presented, and according to the description of the city, draw it in the following space
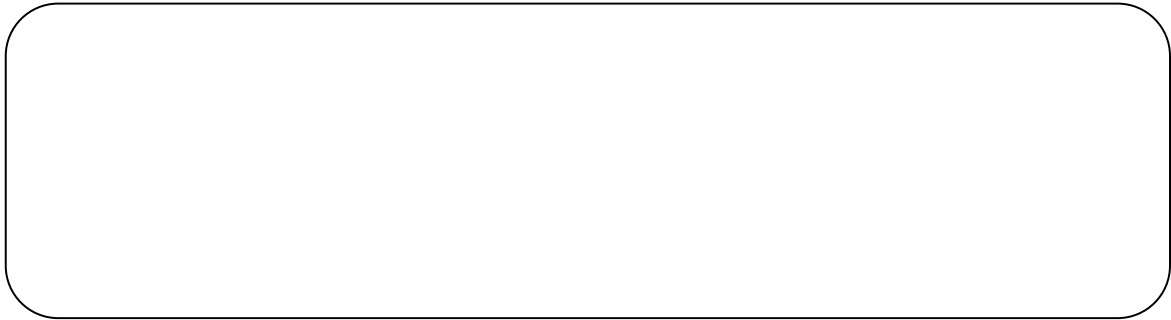
After students finished, teacher asked them to work in teams of 5 people. Teacher wrote on the board the places they had read in the last sessions in order to refresh their minds because each team had a brief discussion deciding which place they consider is the most attractive to visit.

Teacher created the context as if they were tourist guides. Using some objects teacher brought from each place, each team made a short presentation about this place trying to persuade others to visit that city.

Teacher stuck on the board the 5 steps. Students, in the same teams, shared their opinions about each step and, later, teacher conducted a general discussion in which students expressed their point of views and beliefs about each step. Teacher made special emphasis on asking them if those reading strategies were useful for them or not, and if they understood better the texts making improvements in their reading comprehension.

Appendix G:

Material used in the steps of the reading treatment.

G.1. Material used in step 2.

GET THINKING!   Guess if these statements about Las Vegas are true or false

1. Las Vegas is considered the largest city for adult entertainment around the world
                                            TRUE   FALSE
2. The city is near Niagara Waterfalls   **TRUE   FALSE**
3. It was founded in 1990   **TRUE   FALSE**
4.   Its main attraction are
   the pubs and discotheques   **TRUE   FALSE**
5. You can see replica of fantastic places around the word   **TRUE   FALSE**

THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

Las Vegas in Nevada. This is the largest city for adult entertainment around the world. You can gamble, and take a look at its extravagant entertainment and great architecture.

LOCATION: Las Vegas is located near the Grand Canyon Zion and Death Valley.

ORIGINS: Founded in 1905. The name means "the meadows" in Spanish. Incorporated March 16, 1911, Las Vegas covers 84.272 square miles, 219.1 km².

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: The major attractions in Las Vegas are the casinos. The most famous hotel casinos are located on Las Vegas Boulevard. There are many hotel casinos in the city's downtown area as well, which was the original focal point of the city's gaming industry in its early days. You can see replica of fantastic places around the world such as replicas of Eiffel Tower, giant pyramids, multicolored castles, etc.

G.2. Material used in step 3

GET THINKING!   Guess if these statements about Orlando are true or false

1. Orlando is ranked as the 6th "Most Fun U.S City"   **TRUE**   **FALSE**
2. The city is located in South Florida   **TRUE**   **FALSE**
3. It was incorporated as a city in 1885   **TRUE**   **FALSE**
4. It is considered a citrus city   **TRUE**   **FALSE**

"SAY YES TO ORLANDO"

Orlando is ranked as the 36th "Most Fun U.S City". Factors taken into account in the ranking include: the number of sports teams, restaurants, dance performances, toy stores, the amount of a city's budget that is spent on recreation, and other factors.

Orlando is a major city in the U.S. state of Florida. It is the county seat of Orange County, located in Central Florida.

The Reconstruction Era brought a population explosion, which led to Orlando's incorporation as a town on July 31st, 1875, and as a city in 1885. The period from 1875 to 1895 is remembered as Orlando's Golden Era, when it became the hub of Florida's citrus industry.

The Orlando area is home to a wide variety of tourist attractions, including the Walt Disney World Resort, Universal Orlando Resort, and SeaWorld Orlando.

_____
_____
_____

Skimming strategy:

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:
   a) Introduction of the location of Orlando.
   b) Factors which are taken into account in raking a city.
   c) Main attractions of Orlando.

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:
   a) Benefits that Orlando offers.
   b) Reasons why Orlando is considered the major city of Florida
   c) Location of Orlando

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:
   a) The origins of Orlando
   b) Facts about Reconstruction Era
   c) The expansion of people living in Orlando during Golden Era

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:
   a) The story of Walt Disney

b) Facts about Disney's Hollywood Studios,
c) Main attractions in Orlando

G.3. Material used in step 4

GET THINKING!   Guess if these statements about New York are true or false

1. New York was founded as a commercial trading post by the
    Dutch in 1660.   **TRUE   FALSE**
2. New York is the most popular city in USA   **TRUE   FALSE**
3. It is a leading global city   **TRUE   FALSE**
4. The statue of Liberty is the unique attraction in New York   **TRUE   FALSE**
5. New York is located on the Atlantic coast of the
    Northeastern United States   **TRUE   FALSE**

"THE BIG APPLE"

New York was founded as a commercial trading post by the Dutch in 1624. The settlement was called New Amsterdam until 1664 when the colony came under British control. New York served as the capital of the United States from 1785 until 1790, and has been the nation's largest city since 1790.

New York City is the most populous city in the United States. It is a leading global city, exerting a powerful influence over worldwide commerce, finance, culture, fashion and entertainment.

Major destinations include the Empire State Building, Ellis Island, Broadway theatre productions, museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other tourist attractions including Central Park, Washington Square Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square, the Bronx Zoo, New York Botanical Garden, luxury shopping along Fifth and Madison Avenues.. The Statue of Liberty greeted millions of immigrants The city has been home to several of the tallest buildings in the world, including the Empire State Building and the twin towers of the former World Trade Center.

It is located on the Atlantic coast of the Northeastern United States, the city consists of five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Skimming strategy*:*

INSTRUCTIONS: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:
    a) Origins of New York
    b) USA beginnings

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    c) British control over different USA city.

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:
   a) Benefits that New York offers.
   b) Location of New York
   c) New York in the World

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:
   a) Museum Art beginnings
   b) Places to visit in New York
   c) The Statue of Liberty story

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:
   a) Location of New York
   b) People's opinions about New York
   c) Celebrities in New York

Guessing from context:

<u>INSTRUCTIONS:</u> considering the context, choose the best option for each word

1. Trading post
   a) Place for doing business
   b) Position
   c) Job

2. Exerting
   a) Applying
   b) Making use of
   c) Putting into effect

3. Worldwide
   a) Local
   b) International
   c) Foreign

4. Greeted
   a) Met
   b) Spoke to
   c) Welcome

5. Borough
   a) Areas
   b) Locations

c) States

Scanning strategy*:*

INSTRUCTIONS: answer each question according to the information of the text.

1. New York has been the nation's largest city since _____

2. New York is a leading global city because _____

   _____

   _____

3. The major attractions in New York are _____

   _____

   _____

4. New York has been home to several of the _____

   _____

   _____

5. New York is located in _____ and it consists
   of five boroughs: _____

Creating mental images

Read again the information presented, and according to the description of the New York, draw it in the following space:
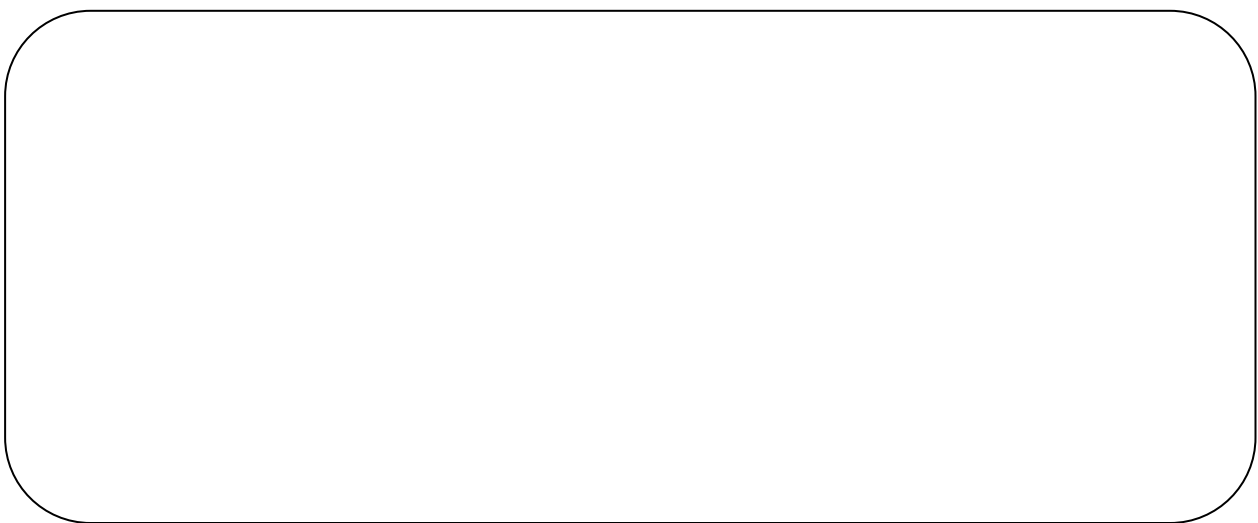
G.4. <u>Material used in step 5</u>

GET THINKING!   Guess if these statements about Los Angeles are true or false

1. Los Angeles is the second largest city in USA   **TRUE   FALSE**
2. Los Angeles is a city of Northern California   **TRUE   FALSE**
3. Los Angeles was incorporated as a municipality on
    April 4, 1990   **TRUE   FALSE**
4. In Los Angeles you can visit Hollywood and Broadway   **TRUE   FALSE**
5. Los Angeles has subtropical climate with white-sand beaches **TRUE   FALSE**

THE CITY OF ANGELS

Los Angeles is the largest city in the state of California and the second largest in the United States. Often abbreviated as L.A. and nicknamed The City of Angels.

it is a city of southern California situated between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. It has subtropical climate with white-sand beaches.

Los Angeles was founded on September 4, 1781, by Spanish governor Felipe de Neve as The Village of Our Lady, the Queen of the Angels of Porziuncola. It became a part of Mexico in 1821. In 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War, Los Angeles and California were purchased as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, thereby becoming part of the United States; Los Angeles was incorporated as a municipality on April 4, 1850.

You can visit Hollywood (moviemakers home) and Beverly Hills (home of movie stars). Los Angeles is one of the world's centers of business, international trade, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, science, technology, and education. It is home to renowned institutions covering a broad range of professional and cultural fields,
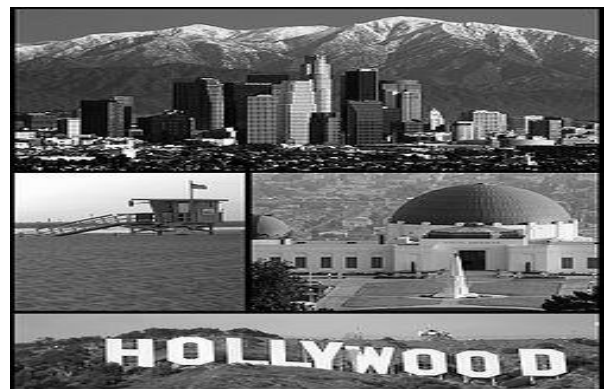
Skimming strategy*:*

<u>INSTRUCTIONS</u>: Select the answer you think is correct.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:
    a) Attractive places to visit in los Angeles
    b) General description about Los Angeles
    c) Global view of Los Angeles

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:
   a) Location of Los Angeles
   b) Bordering cities in Los Angeles
   c) San Gabriel Mountains story

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:
   a) Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo features
   b) Mexican territory nowadays
   c) Origins of Los Angeles

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:
   a) Climate in Los Angeles
   b) Main attractions of Los Angeles
   c) Hollywood and Beverly Hills story

Guessing from context*:*

INSTRUCTIONS: considering the context, choose the best option for each word

1. Nickname
   a) Named
   b) Designed
   c) Called

2. War
   a) Conflict
   b) Battle
   c) Debate

3. Purchased
   a) Obtained
   b) Sold
   c) Paid for

4. Thereby
   a) By those influences
   b) Considering the previous situation
   c) In that way

5. Renowned
   a) Celebrated
   b) Well-known

c) Legendary

Scanning strategy:

<u>INSTRUCTIONS:</u> answer each question according to the information of the text.

1. Los Angeles is the _____California

2. Los Angeles is located in between _____
   _____

3. In 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War, Los Angeles and _____
   _____
   _____

4. Main places to visit in Los Angeles: _____
   _____

5. The importance of Los Angeles around the world: _____
   _____
   _____

Creating mental images

Read again the information presented, and according to the description of the city, draw it in the following space:

Answer key for reading treatment

F.1. Answer key used in step 2.

Get thinking!

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True

F.2. Answer key used in step 3.

Get thinking!

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True

Skimming strategy

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. C

F.3. Answer key used in step 4.

Get thinking!

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True

Skimming strategy

1. A
2. C
3. B

4. A

Guessing from context

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. A

Scanning strategy

1. 1790
2. it is a powerful influence over worldwide commerce, finance, culture, fashion and entertainment.
3. the Empire State Building, Ellis Island, Broadway theatre productions, museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other tourist attractions including Central Park, Washington Square Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square, the Bronx Zoo, New York Botanical Garden, luxury shopping along Fifth and Madison Avenues.
4. tallest buildings in the world including the Empire State Building and the twin towers of the former World Trade Center.
5. the Atlantic coast of the Northeastern United States and it consists of five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Creating mental images

Students should draw in the indicated space the city of New York considering its description.

F.3. Answer key used in step 5.

Get thinking!

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True

Skimming strategy

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. B

Guessing from context

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. B

Scanning strategy

1. largest city in the state of
2. the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.
3. California were purchased as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, thereby becoming part of the United States.
4. Hollywood (moviemakers home) and Beverly Hills (home of movie stars).
5. Los Angeles is one of the world's centers of business, international trade, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, science, technology, and education.

Creating mental images

Students should draw in the indicated space the city of Los Angeles considering its description.

Appendix I:

The Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire

detailed explanation participants' responses from group A.

In question number 1, the majority of the participants *sometimes* preferred to learn with the *whole class* because they considered that the teacher could not solve all of their doubts and there were a lot of distracters which worked as walls to decrease their participation and the explanations became boring for them. However, some of them looked at good aspects of developing this kind of activities, as an example is the fact that they took a look at how others worked. Also, the unique person who chose *yes* considered that it was funny for her.

In question number 2, participants did not liked to *go out and learn* making explanations such as their low level of English

"I do not feel confident using the language"

Even, they did not like using the language because of their pronunciation and their dislikes about the language. In contrast, some who chose yes or sometimes considered that they could learn easily by practicing those activities, but it was depending on the topic and their mood.

Taking about question number 3, the majority of the participants preferred *learning in groups* because they found it funny and they could help each other making corrections. In the other face, some of them who chose *no* believed that it was

difficult to understand some classmates and, for this reason no everybody worked at the same time and some got bored quickly.

In question number 4, participants liked to learn in pairs explaining their choice with almost the same reasons which they gave in the previous question, but here they included information about the fact of developing a confident classroom atmosphere which let them the opportunity to talk to their classmates. Also, they highlighted the importance of the level of English to develop successfully the activities with others.

In question number 5, which was related with their preferences to learn *alone*, they explained they did not liked to be alone because they liked to have the support of someone else to solve their doubts in those aspects they had too many doubts. Nevertheless, some which chose *yes or sometimes* mentioned that in this way they could concentrate more, but they considered the importance of looking at what kind of topic and activity they were developing at that moment.

In question number 6, participants really liked to learn by *seeing words,* and their reasons were that they remember words easily writing them down and it was an interactive activity. But, some of them believed that it was boring and, in many occasions, they did not understand very well.

Taking about question number 7, they did not liked learning by *hearing words,* because they considered it difficult for them because they tended to forget things easily by just hearing once or twice; anyway, some of them believed that they could acquire a good pronunciation improving their listening skill and making easier for them to memorize the new words.

In question number 8 the majority of them liked to learn by *doing something while learning* because they enjoyed developing movement dynamics which were funny and these helped participants develop a meaningful learning. Just some of them, considered that some of these activities were difficult to do or they did not liked.

In question number 9, participants *sometimes* liked to listen to different recordings, they just liked to listen to songs and movies because they felt stressed when they did not understand the content of a recording and they explained that it was because of their level of English. Moreover, some of them liked to learn by this way because they acquired a good pronunciation.

Question number 10, which was related to *speaking skill,* participants highlighted they *sometimes* liked to practice orally the language and the main reason was because they had too many vocabulary lacks. But, some considered that trough practicing speaking activities they could develop better pronunciation by helping each other in an activity and by doing so they increased classroom participation.

Taking about question number 11, participants expressed their dislikes *to read* second language materials, because for them it was too boring and annoying; and in many occasions they could not concentrate or understand the whole content of the text getting confused or bored. In the other hand, there were some participants who considered reading as a good way to acquire new vocabulary and learn more.

There is question number 12 in which participants explained they really liked to learn by *writing* because they believed it was the best way to remember things (among

others vocabulary) and their meanings. But, there were some others who considered that writing was too boring and they easily got tired.

In question number 13, participants expressed they liked to learn *new words* and their reasons were they liked to acquire new vocabulary and they learned better in this way. However, there were others who believed they tended to have lots of doubts and they felt stressed in many occasions for the kind of vocabulary they had to learn.

In question number 14, it was based on their preferences to learn *grammar*, the majority of them did not like because it was too boring and they did not understand too much. And, some others liked to learn by this way.

Finally, in the question number 15 participants highlighted that they really liked and preferred learning *pronunciation* and they mentioned the importance to know the pronunciation of some words to improve their speeches.

Appendix J:

The Individual Preferences in Learning a Foreign Language Questionnaire

detailed explanation participants' responses from group B.

In question number 1, there was a the same percentage expressing their preferences for learning with the whole class, one part of the group chose yes and the rest sometimes, giving as reasons their joy to be in a good classroom environment in which everybody could learn almost at the same time. And, they could participate and learn from and with others.

In question number 2, participants *sometimes* liked to *go out and learn* making explanations such as too many variations in weather conditions which could affect the development of the activity and the importance of choosing suitable places to practice. In contrast, some who chose *no* mentioned they did not like these kind of activities because they did not find any reason for doing it and they preferred to stay in the classroom.

Taking about question number 3, the majority of the participants *preferred learning in groups* because they found it funny and effective, also everybody collaborated by helping each other and learning from others. In the other face, some of them who chose *no or sometimes* believed they liked to practice the language with the people who had the same level of English, if not, they preferred to learn alone.

In question number 4, participants liked to learn *in pairs* because they believed that with less people they could practice the language in a better way and acquiring new vocabulary to make improvements in their speech. But, the rest of them did not like too much and they just joined with others when it was completely necessary.

In question number 5, which had to be with their preferences to learn *alone*, they explained they did not like to be alone because they did not have anybody who could help them to solve some doubts and they got bored. Nevertheless, some which chose *yes or sometimes* mentioned that in this way they could concentrate more and they highlighted the fact of getting frustrated while working in groups.

In question number 6, participants really liked to learn by *seeing words,* and their reasons were that they could remember how to identify different words and their writing and, in this way, they comprehended better. But, some of them believed it was boring.

Taking about question number 7, they liked learning by *hearing words,* because they could learn new vocabulary and its pronunciation. Anyway, some of them believed they could not see how to write some words making difficult to understand some parts.

Finally, in question number 8 the majority of them *sometimes* liked to learn by *doing something while learning* because they could acquire the ability to talk while doing other things and they enjoyed doing those activities. But, some of them considered it difficult and boring.

In question number 9, participants liked to listen to different recordings, because they could remember the pronunciation of the words by learning to listen to different kind of materials; also, they considered it funny, easy and practical. Moreover, some of them did not like to learn by this way because they believed it was boring.

Question number 10, which had to be with *speaking,* participants highlighted they liked to practice orally the language and the main reason was they could practice the language and they believed it was the best way to learn. But, some considered it was difficult and they avoided practicing it.

Taking about question number 11, participants expressed their likes *to read* second language materials, because they could see, analyze and acquire new vocabulary making improvements in their writings. In the other hand, there were some who considered it was boring and they did not like it.

In question number 12 participants explained they did not like to learn by *writing* because they did not understand very well the language. But, there were some others who believed that writing was the best way to practice their orthography and they enjoyed writing things because it was funny.

In question number 13, participants expressed they liked to learn *new words* and their reasons were they could know what some words meant and it helped them to develop other skills. However, there were others who believed they had too many doubts and they got confused; so, they preferred to learn little by little.

In question number 14, which was based on their preferences to learn *grammar*, the majority of they *sometimes* liked it because they liked to know how sentences are well written. And, some others did not like considering it boring.

And, in the last question, participants highlighted that they really liked and preferred learning *pronunciation* and they mentioned the importance to improve their fluency, accent and pronunciation to talk in the correct way. Anyway, some of them considered it as a useless thing.

APPENDIX K:

Reading treatment findings

The detailed findings of each step are presented:

Step number one: *raising awareness to have a purpose for reading:* Teacher presented the cities to the participants, the objects related to each city and five steps this treatment consisted on, participants were very interested and at the time teacher was sticking the names of the cities, participants were telling other names of USA cities. So, it motivated them to discover more about each city through the different steps.

Another interesting thing in this step was the fact that participants started to manipulate all the objects related to the cities and their awareness rose. Some of them started to draw predictions about the cities and why certain objects had to be with a particular city.

At the end of this step, participants had a purpose for reading and when teacher pointed out it was the first step participants made some comments with their partners about the steps and their interests to know more about a particular city. The majority of them tended to make comments about New York and Las Vegas.

Step number two: *making predictions:* Participants manipulated some paper bills and coins trying to predict which city had to be with money. Some predictions were New York because they considered you need money to travel to this city and to buy many souvenirs, but others predicted they corresponded to Los Angeles because it was so big and if you really wanted to enjoy the place money is needed. The teacher avoided those options and fast participants guessed the city "Las Vegas". They made comments about it because of their famous casinos and its relation with some movies they had seen.

As soon as they got the name of the city, teacher delivered each participant a true/false exercise (see Appendix G.1) which they answered to draw predictions about some facts of Las Vegas. Teacher read one by one the questions, and when she finished she delivered them the post card in order to check if their answers were corrected or not. They just had wrong the statement number 4 which was about the main attraction in Las Vegas, it was considering pubs and discotheques as main attractions, however when they read the information, they changed their answer because the main attraction was the casinos. They took 5 minutes for completing the activity.

Step number three: *skimming:* teacher brought some oranges. Participants started to say possible predictions about the city, some of them said that the oranges had to be with Los Angeles because of its weather and some others said Orlando because it was the unique which was a kind of town because the others were larger and had another services. It was so interesting because they were interested and they started to have the ability to predict the content of the text.

The following exercise was a true/false (see Appendix G.2). Again, teacher read one by one the statements left time for participants to underline the option they consider was the correct. In this exercise, participants committed more mistakes in their answers, because the statements had to be with specific details than in the previous step. So participants just had correct number 4 and 5, both were related with general information such as how people considered the city and its main attractions.

The three rapid comprehension silent reading strategies were introduced and the participants paid attention and they made some comments about the unknown words because they explained the majority of the time they stopped their reading to look for it in the dictionary and most of the times they got lost in the reading. Teacher made special emphasis in the reading strategy about skipped over the unknown words because a word could not give the general idea of the text.

A second exercise was delivered to the participants (see Appendix G.2 *skimming strategy*). It was considered four multiple-choice questions in which participants had to choose one getting the general idea of each paragraph. Teacher told participants they just had 2 minutes to complete the exercise, for that reason teacher suggested the use of the previous rapid comprehension silent reading strategies. Participants solved it after the 2 minutes, more less the majority of them took 3 minutes because some were distracted and just when the teacher monitored them passing through the rows they started to work. However, when teacher handed out the post cards and participants shared their answers with a partner, they started to get interested in the content of the reading because their partners made some comments about the reading. After some minutes, teacher came back the post cards and she guided the

answers of the participants. Participants committed just one mistake in the first question because they chose the option about *introduction of the location of Orlando* because they believed that in this paragraph the reading was telling where is Orlando getting confused in the length of the paragraph because when the teacher asked for another one, they said the option about *the factors which are taken into account in ranking a city* and they explained that the location of the city was considered in the second paragraph and it was the answer for question number two about the main idea of the second paragraph. Teacher asked them to re-read the first and second paragraphs having in mind the main topic of each paragraph.

The second reading strategy was stuck on the board, skimming. Teacher asked participants about this strategy, some participants made comments about perceiving more information in less time or the main ideas of the paragraphs. When teacher explained the main use of this reading strategy was getting the general idea of the text, participants started to comment the main idea of the text with a partner asking some questions about citrus camps and weather conditions in Orlando to the teacher. This strategy was so useful for them because they explained that they sometimes started a reading but they continued it up to the end and when they were there they could not remember many things, and using this strategy they focused their attention on the main points of the reading without taking too much time in doing so. Their attitudes towards reading started to change getting interested in continue reading more information about the other two cities.

Step number four: *guessing words from context, scanning and creating mental images:* participants were asked to repeat the same activities of the previous steps.

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However this time the teacher brought mini paper flags and seals. She remembered participants the missing cities and participants predicted that the flags and seals were representing Los Angeles because they believed New York had a more colorful symbols considering its importance around the world. However when the teacher explained that the flags and seals were representing New York participants made some predictions about the men who appeared in the seal (see Appendix G.3: *post card*), they considered they were the ones who founded the city and in their honor people put them in the seal.

For the true/false exercise (see Appendix G.3 *skimming strategy*) the majority of participants did not commit any mistake in their answers, but some had wrong the ones which were considering specific information such as year of foundation (statement number one) and the location of the city (question number five). However when teacher delivered to them the reading, the participants reconsidered their answers changing them without help form the teacher.

Teacher delivered to them the multiple choice-exercise (see Appendix G.3 *guessing from context*)) and participants started to look for the main information of each paragraph, teacher remembered to them the three rapid comprehension silent reading strategies to make the participants' reading easy and fast. This time they just took the 2 minutes and they just had the first question wrong because they chose USA beginnings explaining that they believed that the reading was telling them how USA was founded; however, when the teacher asked for other option they quickly said the option about origins of New York. Teacher asked them to re-read the first paragraph considering the main topic of the paragraph. Participants

reconsidered their option explaining they got confused and they though it was about USA, but after making the second reading they got the correct main idea of the paragraph.

Teacher delivered to the participants the following exercise (see Appendix G.3 *guessing from context*). It was about guessing words from its context. Participants look for the indicated words in each number underlining them in the text; after that, they chose an option considering the context of the word. They committed three mistakes in their answers, words considered in numbers 1,4 and 5; they expressed they were not familiar with the kind of vocabulary indicated in those questions and, even with its context, they really got confused with its meaning. As soon as teacher checked their answers she asked participants to substitute the underlined words with its synonyms. It was so helpful for them because they expressed that using those words instead of the original ones they could understand better all the information about New York.

At the next stage, participants were asked to complete the sentences using the information from the text (see Appendix G.3 *scanning*). Any participant had problems in answering the exercise and it was answered around 3 minutes later. Participants did not commit any mistake in their answers. They felt so good because before they knew the previous strategies they could not summarize the main information of a reading or solved exercises which were considering this kind of questions.

At the end of this step, teacher delivered to each participant the last exercise (see Appendix G.3 *creating mental images*). It was considering a square in which participants drew New York taking into account the information which they had red. Participants were interested in this activity and some of them made connections with the incident of the Twins Towers and mostly with the Statue of the Liberty. However, others drew Central Park, cars, tall buildings, theaters and the sea.

Anyhow they showed their understanding of the reading through this activity and their interest which was raising little by little towards reading.

Step number five: *paraphrasing strategy:* the same previous procedure was followed. However, teacher asked participants to remember the order of the reading strategies. Participants were enthusiastic about it because they could get involved in the reading treatment. At the beginning, some boxes of movies were manipulated by the participants and the teacher asked them to say the name of the missing city. Participants fast said "Hollywood" but the teacher asked again for the city, they thinking for a while and suddenly one of them say Los Angeles. So, before the teacher delivered the exercises of each reading strategy she made some questions about the reading strategy which followed. Participants had some mistakes in the names of the reading strategies and they got confused especially with skimming and scanning, but they remembered the kind of exercise they did before in a correct order.

In the first exercise (True/False) for *making predictions* about the reading *(*Appendix G.4), the participants did it well, because they just committed a mistake in the last

question about the climate of Los Angeles because they believed it was kind of wet and cold; however they noticed their mistake when the reading was delivered by the teacher. They were really surprised about this fact and they made some comments about its sub-tropical weather and its location.

For the next multiple-choice exercise for *skimming* the information *(*see Appendix G.4 *skimming)* participants answered it very quick and all their answers were correct. It was one of the reading strategies they really liked because they learnt to look for main ideas.

However, in the following exercise about *guessing unknown vocabulary from context (*see Appendix G.4 *guessing from context)* they just had three correct answers because the other two (questions 3 and 4) were so difficult for they. They expressed those words had a particular place in the reading, but they could skip over them and continue the reading without any problem. It was because they had the previous information about the three suggested rapid comprehension silent reading strategies (Brown, 1994).

At the vey last part of this step, participants answered the exercise for *specific details* (see Appendix G.4 *scanning*), they did not commit any mistake in their answers, and they completed it in a shot period of time (2 minutes). Their drawings which were considering the description of the city (see Appendix G.4 *creating mental images*) those were about the big letters of Hollywood, some buildings and people walking around.

At the end of this step, participants were asked to decide about the city which was the most attractive to visit. According to it, teacher divided the classroom into four teams organizing the teams. Participants joined in a team, and using the objects which represented each city, team by team were making a short presentation of their city acting as tourist guides trying to persuade others to visit the city. Participants made use of the objects from each city to support their explanation, they made special emphasis on the places to visit, weather, things to do and interesting features. The majority of them preferred Las Vegas and Orlando because of their attractions and their popularity. In the case of Las Vegas participants made use of the paper American dollars and the coins to invite their partners to increase their economy putting into practice their luck and ability to manage themselves in the casinos. In the case of Orlando, they started to explain about its oranges production and its main attractions such as Disneyland and Universal Orlando Resorts. They indicated Orlando is a funny city to be and you always have something to do. For the other two cities, nobody chose New York and just three participants chose Los Angeles. They made their presentation considering the movies, making special emphasis on the weather the city has and the attractive places to visit such as Hollywood and Beverly Hills. They mentioned that everybody has to visit the city to know how a famous movie was made and to take a photograph in the big announcement of Hollywood. When the teacher asked why nobody chose New York, they answered that it was because in the others you have the chance to visit more things and make different things, and in New York there are just museums, historical and commerce points. They considered it as the most boring city of the ones which were presented.