Incarcerated Adult Learners' English Reading for General Information Through the Skimming Strategy and Graphic Organizers

Rubén Miguel Cheuquel Paine
Claudio Heraldo Díaz Larenas

Linguistics

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La lectura de información general en inglés entre alumnos adultos en situación de cárcel mediante la estrategia de *skimming* y organizadores gráficos

Rubén Miguel Cheuquel Paine
Universidad de Concepción, Concepción, Chile
ruben.mchp@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2931-6364

Claudio Heraldo Díaz Larenas
Universidad de Concepción, Concepción, Chile
claudiodiaz@udec.cl
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2394-2378

RESUMEN

The present action research study aimed to explore how the explicit teaching of the skimming reading strategy using graphic organizers can support six adult learners' reading for general information in a Chilean EFL incarcerated context and to describe their perceptions of the skimming strategy intervention. Based on an intervention of four sessions utilizing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), the data was collected using pre and post intervention tests and a focus group discussion. The findings revealed that the explicit teaching of skimming strategy and the use of graphic organizers helped incarcerated learners to improve their reading skills to find general information in a text. Moreover, the findings showed positive perceptions from learners towards the teaching of the strategy and the use of graphic organizers.

Palabras clave: adult learners; explicit teaching; incarcerated context; reading; skimming strategy.

ABSTRACT

El presente estudio de investigación-acción tuvo como objetivo explorar la manera en que la enseñanza explícita de la estrategia de lectura *skimming* a través del uso de organizadores gráficos puede apoyar la lectura de información general de seis estudiantes adultos de Inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE) en un contexto carcelario chileno, y describir sus percepciones sobre la intervención realizada. Sobre la base de una intervención de cuatro sesiones utilizando el Enfoque Cognitivo de Aprendizaje del Lenguaje Académico (CALLA), los datos se recopilaron mediante pruebas previas y posteriores a la intervención y una discusión de grupo focal. Los hallazgos revelaron que la enseñanza explícita de la estrategia de *skimming* y el uso de organizadores gráficos ayudaron a los alumnos encarcelados a mejorar su capacidad de lectura para encontrar información general en un texto. Además, los hallazgos mostraron percepciones positivas de los estudiantes hacia la enseñanza de la estrategia y el uso de organizadores gráficos.

Keywords: enseñanza explícita; estudiantes adultos; estrategia de *skimming*; contexto carcelario; lectura.

1. Introduction

One of the skills that students encounter the most is reading (Amin, 2019). As Grabe (2014) states, reading is a complex skill not only to define but also to acquire. Since learners have different purposes for reading, they are expected to use different strategies to create meaning from words. Therefore, when learners of English as a second or foreign language encounter reading passages, they might use different strategies to succeed in reading comprehension (Gómez & Ávila, 2009). In Chile, the Ministry of Education (2016) points out the English reading skill as a fundamental tool for students to gain new knowledge of different topics and cultures. Hence, it is suggested to teach strategies. For instance, it is pointed out that strategies can be taught either explicitly or implicitly. As a result, if students use the right strategy or strategies during the reading process, they can be more successful in comprehending texts.

Majidi & Aydinlu (2016) mention that by teaching strategies to enhance reading comprehension, students are expected to have more solid tools to improve their reading skills. Accordingly, one of the strategies that can help learners is skimming. As Scrivener (2011) explains, the skimming strategy is to read quickly to discover key topics, main ideas, the overall theme, basic structure of the text, etc. In the same regard, Pan & Pan (2009) investigated the use of visuals to support students' comprehension of texts. They concluded that these tools have a very positive effect on readers' comprehension skills. Hence, Saputra (2017) states that the use of graphic organizers aid students when they have limited vocabulary.

In the Chilean context, when teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to incarcerated youth and adult learners, it is observed that students are mostly exposed to reading texts. However, the reading skill continues to be challenging for them. For instance, in this context, students point out that it is very difficult to understand texts and they do not know how to. In particular, students struggle when they have to find general information in texts or paragraphs. That is why it can be viewed that the reading skill is a complex process for Chilean inmate learners.

In this context, it is common that learners are from different realities, ages, social backgrounds, cultures, among other factors. English is taught as a foreign language and participants have three chronological hours of English a week. English is also part of the compulsory subjects named 'general formation'. This provides the common base of knowledge that contributes to students' development to be prepared for their academic and work future (Mineduc, 2007). Moreover, in the national curriculum framework from the Ministry of Education (2007), there are no specific topics, contents or textbooks related to incarcerated students. Therefore, most of the materials are adapted, since some contents might not be appropriate for incarcerated students.

1.1 Research question and objectives

The current research study aimed to answer the following question: how could the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers support adult learners' reading for general information in a Chilean EFL incarcerated context? Accordingly, the following general and specific objectives were proposed:

1.1.1 General objective

To explore the contribution of the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers in supporting adult learners' reading for general information in a Chilean EFL incarcerated context.

1.1.2 Specific objectives

To analyze the influence of the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers to support participants' reading for general information.

To describe participants' perceptions about the teaching of the explicit skimming strategy using graphic organizers to support reading for general information.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Reading skill in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language

In the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language, there are four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Harmer (2012) explains that these four skills can be grouped into two categories: receptive and productive skills. On one hand, reading and listening skills are considered receptive skills; for instance, learners need to extract information from the discourse/texts. On the other hand, writing and speaking are considered productive skills, because the learners are expected to produce language from the input they receive to produce their own output. Accordingly, Brown & Lee (2015) state that the four skills should be taught together as they can interact and complement each other. Somehow, Harmer (2012) points out that there are teaching stages in which there is a need to focus on one skill rather than on any other. As a result, reading is a skill that needs to be paid attention to regarding its complexities and particular features.

Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) explain that reading is a fundamental skill to solve simple and complex everyday life problems. Hence, reading is naturally required in daily tasks. Moreover, Brown & Abeywickrama (2018) state that reading is a skill that is taken for granted when it comes to thinking of the school context and it is one of the skills which, directly or indirectly, learners encounter the most. For example, in textbooks or tests that can be intended to assess other skills.

In the context of second language learning, Ur (2012) defines reading as reading and understanding. For instance, learners should be encouraged to concentrate on understanding the meaning of texts using their world knowledge. Decoding words is important in the first stage, for example, when students are learning to read, but only as a means to an end. Likewise, Cook (2008) emphasizes that reading, similar to speaking, occurs in context and it does not happen in isolated situations. This means that learners need to have background knowledge. Therefore, a lack of context can affect comprehension.

Harmer (2012) points out that students need to be involved in intensive and extensive reading. He explains that intensive reading is mostly related to classroom contexts, since it does not deal with long texts and there are questions to check comprehension. In contrast, in extensive reading, learners are expected to read outside the classroom or read for pleasure to acquire language gradually.

To comprehend information from texts, Brown & Lee (2015) address the bottom-up and top-down reading processes. They clarify that in the bottom-up process readers are required to have knowledge of the language, because they need to recognize multiple linguistic signals, letters, words, phrases, etc., to make sense of what they are reading. However, in the top-down reading process, readers are required to go from general to specific, utilizing general information of the text.

To comprehend a text is essential to get meaning from texts. Therefore, reading comprehension is needed. Nunan (1989) states that reading comprehension can be explained as the process of decoding written symbols up to sentences to arrive at a meaning. Similarly, Grabe & Stoller (2011) state that reading comprehension can be viewed as the ability to understand information in a text. According to Brown & Lee (2015), to become an efficient reader, readers must master micro and macro skills for reading comprehension. On one hand, micro skills involve understanding micro components of language such as phoneme, morpheme, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. On the other hand, macro skills implicate broader skills for reading, since learners must get specific information and general information, interpret literal and implied meanings or guess meaning from context.

2.2 Strategies to support reading skill

Grabe & Stoller (2013) indicate that the reading skill is a complex skill to define, since readers may have different purposes for reading. Consequently, it is relevant to mention that the focus should not be on remembering every word of the text, but, most importantly, to remember the main and supporting ideas.

Teaching reading skills to non-natives of English is a challenging process and it involves specific problems that can be present at all levels (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014). To exemplify this, Scrivener (2011) explains that some common concerns readers can express are that they do not have enough vocabulary or that they read slowly. Therefore, if the purpose is to make students better readers, it is essential to raise awareness of the use of strategies. Thus, Pourhosein & Sabouri (2016) concluded that reading strategies play an important role in improving reading comprehension. For this reason, if reading is a fundamental but at the same time complex skill to develop, students can use strategies to support and improve their reading.

According to Oxford (1990), strategies can be defined as conscious actions or steps that learners use to improve the process of acquiring skills in learning a foreign language. Besides, Grabe & Stoller (2011) also state that strategies are conscious actions that learners take to control their process of developing a skill. More recently, Purpura (2014) agrees that strategies are thoughts or behaviors that learners take into consideration to regulate their learning.

In 1990, Oxford proposed a strategy taxonomy in which she grouped six strategies into two groups: direct and indirect strategies. Memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies are classified as direct strategies. While metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies are classified as indirect strategies.

Accordingly, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) stated that strategies can be classified into three main categories: cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. Cognitive strategies help students to organize their learning; metacognitive strategies help students think of their process to monitor and assess their learning; and social/affective strategies help students to interact with their peers regarding the use of strategies. Brown & Lee (2015) also point out that there are different reading strategies that can be classified into 'bottom-up' and 'top-down'.

The use of strategies to support reading is an important process that enhances cognitive and metacognitive processes. For that reason, Brown & Abeywickrama (2018) state that strategies are fundamental to accompany the process of reading. Moreover, Ahmadi et al. (2013) argue that metacognitive reading strategy awareness plays a significant role in reading comprehension and in the educational process.

2.3 The explicit teaching of strategies

Over the last decades, the explicit teaching of strategies in the process of learning a foreign language has been given special attention in the field of research, schools, and syllabus (Chamot & O'Malley, 1997). As a way of illustration, Brown & Palincsar (1985) explain that teaching strategies explicitly encourage students to be aware of how to monitor and assess their process of learning. Thus, Chamot & O'Malley (1997) point out that teaching strategies can enhance students' reading comprehension. Grabe (2008) states that strategies comprise the reader's awareness of comprehension problems and selection of the most appropriate tools to solve the problems to get meaning and comprehension. Thence, Purpura (2014) expresses that one of the main ideas of teaching strategies explicitly is to increase the learners' awareness of how to use and monitor strategies.

In a Norwegian context, Brevik (2019) concluded that the explicit teaching of strategies is an example of successful reading instruction. Similarly, the explicit teaching of reading strategies is a fundamental component due to the complexity of what reading a text involves (Gilani et al., 2012). Thus, Küçükoğlu (2013) states that reading strategies are key elements to developing students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, Spörer et al. (2009) suggest that explicit strategy instruction would have a positive effect if it was considered as part of the overall curriculum. Consistently, Ahmadi et al. (2013) corroborated the view that explicit instruction of metacognitive reading strategies is a practical and feasible tool to enhance students' reading comprehension and they point out the benefits of explicit reading instruction.

To teach strategies, Chamot & O'Malley (1997) proposed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). This framework has the purpose of illustrating a way to teach strategies explicitly in an ESL or EFL context. On that account, Chamot & Robbins (2005) presented a framework to demonstrate the way strategies should be taught. Hence, Suh (2012) explains that "the CALLA model consists of three components: (1) topics from the major content subjects, (2) the development of academic language skills, and (3) explicit instruction in learning strategies for both content and language acquisition" (p. 203). Thus, the three components of the CALLA model are expected to be carried out in the following five stages:

> (1) preparation, (2) presentation, (3) practice, (4) evaluation, and (5) expansion. First, the teacher poses questions to students to elicit their background knowledge and strategies in the preparation stage. Second, the teacher presents new strategies, concepts, and language through modeling in the presentation stage. The teacher is encouraged to use lots of visuals and demonstrations. Third, students use the strategies they learn from modeling and apply the strategies more effectively with new tasks in the practice stage. They verbalize and describe their efforts to apply strategies with learning activities, often working with classmates in a collaborative manner. In the

fourth stage students raise their metacognitive awareness of what they achieved and assess their learning process. Finally, in the expansion stage, the students relate what they learned to their culture and transfer strategies they learn to the outside world. (Suh, 2012, pp. 203-204)

Regarding the implementation of the CALLA model, Suh (2012) also states that the CALLA model emphasizes both language and content. Therefore, this model can be suitable to be implemented in EFL or ESL classroom context. Respectively, Albashtawi (2019) conducted a research study where participants were divided into two groups: an experimental and a conventional group. The results showed that students' reading achievement increased only in the experimental group, since they were taught using the CALLA model. Additionally, the students expressed that being taught using the model had a positive impact on their learning process.

2.4 The skimming strategy

In accordance with Krashen & Terrel (1983), when learners are looking for the main or general idea of a passage, they do not focus on specific information or pay attention to details. This reading strategy is called skimming. As specified by Scrivener (2011), when students use the skimming strategy, it is expected that they need to read quickly to discover key topics, main ideas, overall theme, basic structure of the text, etc. By doing this, students do not need to read every word, instead they only read portions of the text. Furthermore, Scrivener (2011) affirms that the skimming strategy uses top-down processing. Students read for overall information and when they do this process, they focus on text shape or structure. Additionally, Brown & Lee (2015) indicate that skimming is a valuable strategy, since it gives them the opportunity to predict the purpose of the passage and the main topic; it can also make them predict supporting ideas, resulting in reading in a more focused way.

Dhillon et al. (2020) found out that students who use the skimming strategy can improve their ability to comprehend texts. However, the study also showed that students who did not use the strategy could not be able to show improvement. Sari (2016) conducted classroom action research regarding the use of skimming and scanning strategies. Focusing on the skimming strategy, it was shown that students made significant improvement in relation to reading comprehension and it also showed that this had positive results with respect to students' participation in joining the reading class. Darmawan (2017) concluded that the skimming technique had a significant contribution to students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, in a study to find out whether the skimming and scanning techniques can improve EFL students' English reading comprehension in Indonesia, Yusuf et al. (2017) found that the mean score between a pre-test and a post-test was significantly different.

2.5 The use of visuals: graphic organizers

The use of visuals to predict content from a text is essential. Hence, Pan & Pan (2009) determine that any graphic displays that accompany a text's content can be defined as visuals. For instance, charts, pictures, photos, animations are defined as visuals. Accordingly, Majidi & Aydinlu (2016) concluded that the effects of visuals are very significant in the process of reading when they mingle with the use of reading strategies. Campbell & Cuba (2015) determine that using visuals is a great feature to support reading comprehension. Respectively, Yunus et al. (2013) found out that most teachers had positive perceptions about the use of visuals in the classroom.

When learners of a foreign language must present ideas, information in a new language can be overwhelming. This is why graphic organizers can show the information graphically (Echevarria et al., 2008). They also say that graphic organizers are used in school, but it would be of a great advantage if they could be linked to the lesson learning objectives. Further, students can use graphic organizers that are appropriate to organize the information they are learning. Respectively, Jiang & Grabe (2007) argued that graphic organizers represent the discourse structures of a text. Therefore, graphic organizers could illustrate strong evidence of effectiveness.

Action research conducted by Saputra (2017) highlights that graphic organizers are visual displays where the relationship between facts, terms, or ideas can be illustrated. Another important finding was that the use of graphic organizers helped students to overcome boredom. Praveen & Rajan (2013) concluded that the use of graphic organizers by ESL learners promoted strategic reading competence, classified the content of a passage, distinguished the most salient ideas from the supporting information. Furthermore, they revealed that in comparison with the traditional reading approach, the use of graphic organizers provides more chances for school learners to participate more actively in constructing organizers.

2.6 Chilean EFL incarcerated context

Education for youths and adults started in 1976 to improve the rates of illiteracy as well as to increase compulsory schooling (Ibarra et al., 2020). In this context, the national curriculum is based on equality, since it allows the same opportunities of education for all students to improve their life projects. For this reason, it is important to mention education within confinement contexts, since this is a concept used in Chile when accessing education in the penitentiary space, in institutions for young people, adult people and in closed addiction care centers. The main goal is to safeguard people's human rights

(Huaiquián et al., 2021). In this context, it is common to find learners from different realities, ages, social backgrounds, cultures, among other factors that involve their learning process to finish their secondary school studies.

When teaching in incarcerated contexts, it is relevant to mention the importance of giving inmates the guarantee of access to education as well as to highlight the relevance of educators and their contribution to teaching in unconventional contexts (Guerrero et al., 2022). Due to the complexities and particularities that exist in incarcerated contexts, Mineduc (2019) identified some issues regarding not having classrooms or spaces available for teaching, behavior and discipline, which can be difficult for classroom management. However, it is highlighted how teachers and other professionals can promote a positive environment based on respect. Respectively, Garcés et al. (2018) explain the importance of materials to support students' learning process, exemplifying that it is essential to have materials that are designed for incarcerated contexts as well as the power of innovation in the classrooms.

Taking into consideration the context explained above, it can be observed that the reading skill is a complex skill to develop. Although the Ministry of Education (2016) suggests teaching strategies to enhance the reading comprehension process for secondary students, in the syllabus for adult learners, this is not mentioned explicitly. However, Mineduc (2020) proposed the foundation of a national curriculum basis on education for young people and adults, in which it is encouraged that the curriculum has to be adapted to the context. Somehow, students from confinement contexts may face many drawbacks when it comes to learning English as a foreign language because there are some limitations in terms of technology, curriculum, schedule, students' socio-cultural and the mere physical environment, resulting in lack of appropriate strategies to develop reading comprehension tasks. Therefore, in an incarcerated context, it can be observed how most students find it challenging and difficult to comprehend varied types of texts in English. More specifically, there is almost scarce research on how adult learners from confinement contexts develop the process of reading comprehension by using strategies.

Gutierrez De Lucio et al. (2018) explain the context of working in a prison. As they state, there are many challenges that teachers experience when teaching inmates. For example, different academic knowledge, lack of knowledge, technology prohibition and lack of materials. However, the authors mention that reading could be considered as a skill to get students distracted from their immediate reality. Moreover, they found out that inmates considered English classes as a rewarding experience, because they can express their emotions and build human relationships. Shippen et al. (2010) researched to examine basic reading skills of incarcerated males. They discuss that even though incarcerated learners have a lower level of English, if teachers can increase their literacy skills, their

quality of life can be strengthened. Regarding reading, in Chile, Álvarez & Álvarez (2011) found out that when inmates are interested in reading, it is for academic, religious or technical reasons.

3. Method

3.1 Type of research

The present action research study was implemented in an EFL class for adult inmate learners in an incarcerated school context. According to Burns (2005), action research can be seen as a means to understand problematic situations that occur in particular contexts with the purpose of improving them. Correspondingly, the problem was related to the reading skill, since it was identified that students had difficulty when reading for general information. Accordingly, Crookes (1993) points out that action research is a particular research type, where teachers are directly involved in the study, and they research to answer the issues and questions that affect their school context.

3.2 Description of participants

The participants in this action research study are six inmate adult learners who are in an incarcerated school context. They are 9th and 10th graders. They are taking this modality as part of the special program for youth and adult students in the country, which aims to provide these students with the opportunity to finish their primary or secondary studies in a flexible program. The students' ages range from 19 to 50 and they come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, which means they come from different cities and social strata of the country. Additionally, some students identify themselves as indigenous native people.

The participants have three hours of English classes a week. Some of them have not been in the school system for years, whereas there are others that have interrupted their secondary studies recently. Moreover, students are part of the school system for different purposes. They explain their desire to finish their studies to get benefits from the prison system as well as personal goals that involve themselves or their families. Regarding their level of English, at the beginning of the year, students sat for an adapted international diagnostic exam, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), from Cambridge University, specifically the Knowledge of English Test (KET). As a result, the exams showed that only some students were able to get close to an A1 level of English in relation to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001).

Concerning the sampling selection, this corresponds to a non-probability sampling since participants were selected in a convenience sampling due to some limitations and particular characteristics of students (Taherdoost, 2016). Consequently, according to Mason (2002), this action research has a purposive sampling because the participants selected were meaningful in accordance with the objectives this action research embraces as well as what the literature suggests.

3.3 Stages of the action research

This action research study consisted of five sessions in total. In the first session, participants took the pre-reading intervention test and they were taught the first lesson regarding the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers. In the second, third and fourth sessions, participants were also taught the strategy explicitly. In the fourth session, the students also took the post-reading intervention test. Finally, in the fifth session, the students took part in a focus group interview in which they had to discuss the questions stated to finally make a drawing to deepen on the answers provided in the focus group discussion.

In sessions number one, two, three and four, participants were explicitly taught the skimming technique using graphic organizers. The lesson structure was based on the Chamot & O'Malley (1997) framework for teaching strategies, named as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). This framework is composed of five stages: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. During the five stages, students are prepared by activating prior knowledge, presented with the strategies they will use, they practice the strategy in a guided way, they assess their performance using the strategy taught and, finally, they practice the strategy autonomously.

To gather data regarding the students' perceptions towards the explicit teaching of the skimming technique using graphic organizers, they took part in a focus group discussion. The questions were related to three dimensions: the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy, the teaching and use of graphic organizers and their improvements to enhance the reading for general information sub-skill. Furthermore, to inquire about their answers, students were asked to make a drawing to display their experience regarding the sessions they were part of. Accordingly, each session is described in Table 1:

Table 1.

Lesson planning for teaching the skimming strategy and graphic organizers utilizing the CALLA framework stages

Session	Objective	Activities
1	Based on an explanation of what a skimming strategy is, students are able to skim general ideas from a descriptive text supported by the use of a "tree" graphic organizer.	**Preparation:** greeting, rules of the class and objective and prior knowledge activation. **Presentation:** vocabulary, teaching of the skimming strategy and the use of a graphic organizer. **Practice:** practice of the strategy and use of the tree graphic organizer. **Evaluation:** self-assessment checklist based on their performance. **Expansion:** use of the strategy and creation of a tree graphic organizer.
2	After having practiced how to skim general ideas from a text, students are able to gather general ideas from a descriptive text creating a "tree" graphic organizer to display the information.	**Preparation:** greeting, rules of the class and objective and prior knowledge activation. **Presentation:** vocabulary, teaching of the skimming strategy and the use of a graphic organizer. **Practice:** practice of the strategy and use of the tree graphic organizer. **Evaluation:** self-assessment checklist based on their performance. **Expansion:** use of the strategy and creation of a tree graphic organizer.
3	After having reviewed how to skim general ideas from a text, students are able to gather general ideas from a descriptive text supported by the use of a "spider" graphic organizer.	**Preparation:** greeting, rules of the class and objective and prior knowledge activation. **Presentation:** vocabulary, teaching of the skimming strategy and the use of a graphic organizer. **Practice:** practice of the strategy and use of the tree graphic organizer. **Evaluation:** self-assessment checklist based on their performance. **Expansion:** use of the strategy and creation of a spider graphic organizer.
4	After having practiced how to skim general ideas from a text, students are able to gather general ideas from a descriptive text creating a "spider" graphic organizer to display the information.	**Preparation:** greeting, rules of the class and objective and prior knowledge activation. **Presentation:** vocabulary, teaching of the skimming strategy and the use of a graphic organizer. **Practice:** practice of the strategy and use of the tree graphic organizer. **Evaluation:** self-assessment checklist based on their performance. **Expansion:** use of the strategy and creation of a spider graphic organizer.

Source: Own elaboration.

3.4 Data collection techniques

To collect data and to answer the research question and its objectives, this study aimed to use two types of data collection tools: pre and post tests and a focus group discussion. The instruments were piloted with a group of 6 secondary inmate students from 9th and 10th grade.

3.4.1. Pre and post-reading intervention tests

According to Lankshear & Knobel (2004), pre and post-intervention tests aim to compare whether or not changes occurred. In this study, the pre and post reading tests are intended to measure students' improvements regarding the explicit teaching of the skimming technique through the use of graphic organizers. The type of text consists of a reading text that mainly focuses on reading for general information. Therefore, the pre-reading test that students take in the first lesson is a descriptive text where they have to answer one single item that contains open-ended questions. Consequently, after the sessions and at the end of the action plan, students take the same reading text; however, they have to display general ideas from texts by using a graphic organizer instead of answering open ended.

3.4.2 Focus group

To collect students' perceptions regarding the skimming reading strategy and the reading process that they took part in, a focus group to discuss the topic was conducted at the end of the intervention. Lankshear & Knobel (2004) state that the purpose of focus groups is to generate discussion based on questions that are asked to several individuals simultaneously. Therefore, this helps to obtain insights, consensus or divergences on an issue or topic. Moreover, focus groups can help to maximize data collection in a limited period of time. In this context, the focus group discussion will contain six questions to guide the conversation and the questions are based on three dimensions; the explicit teaching of the skimming technique, the use of graphic organizers to support the reading technique and improvements in the sub-skill of reading for general information.

3.5 Data analysis techniques

The collected data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Firstly, the pre and post-reading intervention tests were statistically analyzed based on a measure of central tendency. For instance,

findings are presented in a chart as descriptive statistics, which show students' improvements based on the score they get in both tests.

Secondly, the focus group interview is based on content analysis. According to Lankshear & Knobel (2004), content analysis is mainly used with interview transcripts and fieldnotes. For that reason, content analysis helps to make valid inferences from the data analyzed. However, this does not mean that any inferences can be made, so the inferences are only based on what the text says.

4. Findings

This chapter aims to illustrate the findings related to the two specific objectives stated for this action research. The following data was gathered before and after the intervention. Regarding the specific objective number one, the data was collected from the pre and post reading intervention tests. With respect to the specific objective number two, the data was collected from the focus group discussion and drawings from students together with the questions to explain their drawings.

4.1 Specific objective 1: to analyze the influence of the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers to support participants' reading for general information

4.1.1 Pre and post reading intervention tests

The following table aims to show each student's score in terms of the means and standard deviations obtained in the pre and post-reading intervention test.

Table 2.

Mean and standard deviation from re and post intervention tests

Student	Pre intervention test	Post intervention test	Mean	Standard Deviation
Student 1	7	21	14	7
Student 2	21	23	22	1
Student 3	19	24	21,5	2.5

Student 4	19	23	21	2
Student 5	20	22	21,5	1
Student 6	17	23	19,9	3
Total	103	136	119.5	16.5

Source: Own elaboration.

In relation to the pre and post-reading intervention tests, it can be observed that all the students had improvements with respect to reading for general information. Considering the global score, it is observed that the standard deviation (SD) from the mean is 16.5. With respect to each student's score, the results are explained as follows: student number one is the one who increased his score the most in comparison to the pre-intervention test. Student number two had a good performance in the pre-intervention test. Somehow, it can be said that he did not have issues when reading for general information. Student number three had a great performance in the post-reading intervention test in comparison to the pre-intervention test. Student number four also had a higher score in comparison to the pre-intervention test. Student number five is one of the students whose score did not differ greatly in comparison to the pre-intervention reading test. Finally, student number six was the second student who had a greater performance in relation to the pre-reading intervention test.

4.1.2 Dimensions of the rating scale for assessing the graphic organizer

In order to assess the answers from the pre and post intervention tests as well as to assess the use of the graphic organizer in the post intervention test, a rating scale was applied. Therefore, the rating scale assessed three important dimensions: **content, organization and language.**
   a) The 'content' dimension addressed the following descriptors:
   - The text contains relevant and sufficient information. The text illustrates the whole idea from the text. (4 points)
   - The texts contain relevant and sufficient information. The texts illustrate general ideas from each paragraph. (4 points)
   b) The 'organization' dimension included the following descriptors:
   - The general idea of the text is shown in a figure/space. (4 points)

- The general ideas of each paragraph are shown in figures/spaces. (4 points)
c) The 'language' dimension covered the following descriptors:
- The texts/ideas do not contain any grammatical errors, spelling or punctuation. (4 points)
- The texts/ideas are coherent and cohesive. (4 points)

Correspondingly, Table 2 aims to show the scores obtained in the pre and post-intervention tests so as to explain the mean and standard deviation from the tests.

Table 3.

Mean and standard deviation from the global scores per dimension

Dimension	Pre intervention test	Post intervention test	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Content	29	44	26.5	7.5
2. Organization	34	48	41	7
3. Language	40	44	42	2
Total	103	136	119,5	16.5

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3 shows the results obtained from both intervention tests, pre and post. As observed, in the dimension related to content, students showed great improvement in terms of identifying the general idea from the text and general ideas from the three paragraphs the reading text contained. Therefore, it can also be said that this is the dimension in which students showed remarkable improvement.

In terms of organization, students showed great improvement as well. However, in the pre-intervention test, the general idea from the whole text and general ideas from each paragraph had to be written below the right questions. However, in the post reading test, the general idea of the whole text had to be written in the right space of the graphic organizer. However, most students were not able to complete and write some of the questions in the pre-reading intervention test, while in the post-reading intervention test, all the students were able to write all of the answers in the right graphic organizer.

In relation to language, students showed great improvement in both tests. Somehow, in the post-reading test, their scores were four points higher. The results did not show a great difference,

since students wrote their answers in Spanish and that is one reason why they did not show spelling problems, nor did they have inaccuracies regarding coherence or cohesion.

4.1.3 Mean, median and mode from the pre intervention tests

The following table aims to show students' scores in terms of the mean, median and mode in the pre-reading intervention test.

Table 4.

Mean, median and mode from pre intervention tests

Student	Pre intervention test	Minimum possible score	Maximum possible score	Mean	Median	Mode
Total	103	6	24	17.1	19	19

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4 shows that the total score achieved by all the students is 103 on a rating scale, whose minimum possible score was 6 and the maximum score was 24. The mean was 17.1 and the median was 19. Regarding the mode, the score of 19 was repeated twice, since two students had the same score.

4.1.4 Mean, median and mode from the post intervention tests

Table 5 aims to show students' scores in terms of the mean, median and mode in the pre-reading intervention test.

Table 5.

Mean, median and mode from post intervention tests

Student	Post intervention test	Minimum possible score	Maximum possible score	Mean	Median	Mode
Total	136	6	24	22.6	23	23

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 5 shows that the total score achieved by all the students is 136 on a rating scale, whose minimum possible score was 6 and the maximum score was 24. The mean was 22.6 and the median was 23. Regarding the mode, the score of 23 was repeated three times, since three students had the

same score. Additionally, it is important to say that students who had the same scores in the post-reading intervention tests were not the same students whose scores were the same in the pre-reading intervention test.

4.1.5 Mean, median and mode from the pre and post intervention tests

Table 6 aims to show students' scores in terms of the mean, median and mode in the pre and post intervention test.

Table 6.

Mean, median and mode from post intervention tests

	Pre intervention test	Post intervention test	Mean	Median	Mode
Total	103	136	19.9	21	23

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 6 shows the mean, median and mode regarding both tests, pre and post-reading intervention tests. For instance, the difference between both tests is 33 points, resulting in having a higher score in the post-reading intervention tests from all the students. The mean is 19.9, the median is 21 and the mode is 23, the mode is repeated three times and it corresponded to the post-reading intervention tests. Overall, it can clearly be seen that students had a great performance in the post-reading tests, which means that the intervention had a positive effect on students' performance regarding the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers in supporting reading for general information subskill.

As a result, the data showed that most of the participants improved their scores regarding the pre-intervention test. Interestingly, the majority of the participants' scores were a little similar in the pre-intervention test. On the other hand, in the post-intervention tests, those participants increased their scores, but they were slightly higher. However, one of the participants had a great performance in comparison to the pre-intervention test. When assessing each dimension in regard to the use of graphic organizers, it was observed that participants improved their scores regarding two criteria: content and organization; since their scores in terms of the use of language did not differ much from the pre-intervention test.

4.2 Specific objective 2: to describe participants' perceptions about the teaching of the explicit skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers to support reading for general information

To describe participants' perceptions about the teaching of the strategy using graphic organizers to support their reading comprehension for general information, a focus group discussion was conducted. The discussion was based on eight questions regarding the teaching of the strategy. For instance, between two and three questions were intended to address each dimension. To illustrate this, questions number one, two and three were related to the explicit teaching of the strategy; questions four and five had to do with the use of graphic organizers to support the strategy use; and questions number six, seven and eight addressed the students' improvement regarding the pre and post tests as well as the sessions they were part of.

4.2.1 Perceptions towards the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy

The following section is about participants' perception towards the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy. The three subheadings tackled are in concordance with three questions asked to the students. For instance, students had to answer regarding the explicit teaching of the strategy, its use and results, as well as the strengths and difficulties when using the strategy.

a) Explicit teaching of the skimming strategy

Regarding the first question, the participants were asked about their impression towards the sessions where they were explicitly taught the skimming strategy. In general, students expressed that the sessions helped them in terms of keeping learning English and as a good experience. To illustrate the answers, participants number one and two expressed the following:

P1. "Bueno, mi impresión fue que, pude aprender inglés, no sabiendo nada. No sabía que yo podía aprender y participar en las clases de inglés" [Well, my impression was that I was able to learn English, not knowing anything. I didn't know that I could learn and participate in the English classes].
P2. "Fue bueno, porque la enseñanza que nos dio fue algo. Fue una experiencia buena porque trabajar aquí nosotros es algo que hemos aprendido y que nos va a servir a lo mejor más adelante" [It was good, because the teaching he gave us was something. It was a good experience because working here is something that we have learned and that will serve us better later on].

Consequently, the explicit teaching of the strategy raised awareness of the importance of learning a strategy but also learning the target language. Therefore, it resulted in a positive experience for students.

b) Use of the strategy and its result

In relation to question number two, participants were asked if they were able to use the skimming strategy and what happened when they used it. One student provided an answer that shows that he was able to use the strategy and it helped him to understand the text better. For instance, he explained:

"Si, pudimos utilizar la estrategia, ya que se nos facilitó más para entender cada párrafo de cada diálogo que se ponía, y a la vez se nos hizo más fácil para completar la materia" [Yes, we were able to use the strategy, since it made it easier for us to understand each paragraph and each dialogue, and at the same time it made it easier for us to complete the task].

The student tried to explain that using the strategy helped him and the class to understand what was being read and carry out the task. When he referred to the 'materia', he referred to the class and the task related to reading.

c) Strengths and difficulties when using the strategy

With respect to question number three, the participants were inquired regarding the strengths and difficulties when using the skimming strategy. The participants who addressed this question, stated that when using the strategy, the task seemed easier to carry out. However, regarding difficulties, they pointed out that vocabulary was a drawback. As an example, participants two and three answered:

P2. "Las fortalezas es que, la estrategia que usted nos explicó, nos hace más fácil aprender el párrafo, de lo que se trata la oración; eso fue lo más fácil. Pero lo difícil para nosotros era el vocabulario, porque no entendíamos, pero cuando usted nos enseñó la estrategia, empezamos a leer el párrafo más comprensible, y entendíamos más la oración" [The strength is that, the strategy that you explained to us, makes it easier for us to learn about the paragraph, what the sentence is about; that was the easiest part. But the difficult thing for us was the vocabulary, because we didn't understand, but when you taught us the strategy, we began to read the paragraph more understandably, and we understood the sentence more].

P3 "Bueno, lo más difícil era, como decía el compañero, el tema del vocabulario ya que todos no teníamos el Inglés adaptado, ósea, en nuestra lengua, entonces, igual en esa parte fue más complicado. Y ahí con la nueva forma que se hizo, pudimos comprender un poco más" [Well, the most difficult thing was, as the colleague said, the vocabulary, since we all did not have English language adapted, that is, in our language, so, maybe in that part it was more complicated. Then, with the new way that was explained, we were able to understand a little more].

Figure 1.

Participants' most frequent concepts about the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy
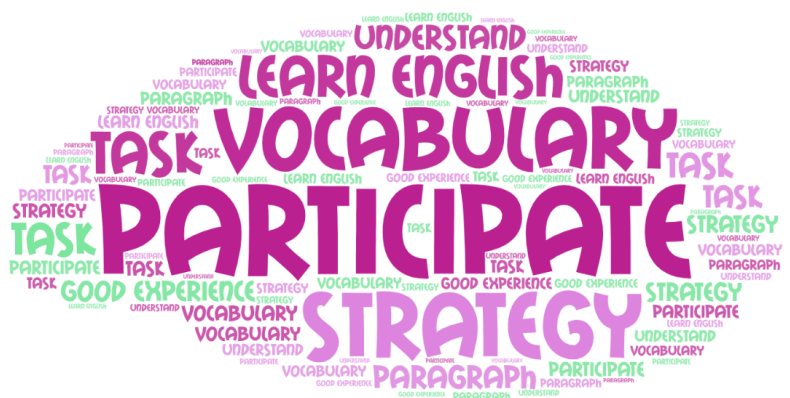
Source: Own elaboration.

As seen in Figure 1, there were some frequent concepts and words that are important to pay attention to. Since these concepts exemplify the positive effects of action research and its implementation. Moreover, it can be observed that it was a positive experience for the participants. As they could use the strategy, resulting in learning and understanding more. Furthermore, in relation to the strengths and difficulties, students expressed that learning and using the strategy helps them to understand what they are reading; however, vocabulary is still an issue they find difficult to deal with.

4.2.2 Perceptions towards the use of graphic organizers to support the strategy use

The following subheadings are stated to explain participants' perceptions towards the use of graphic organizers to support the strategy of use. Correspondingly, the students were asked to address two questions regarding the experience of using graphic organizers to support the reading for general information and if graphic organizers helped them in their learning process.

   a) Experience of using graphic organizers

Regarding question number four, students needed to answer how they would describe the experience of using graphic organizers instead of responding to written questions. In general, students stated that the use of graphic organizers can be seen as a positive tool. For instance, participants two and four pointed out the following:

P2. "Los gráficos fueron algo bueno. Porque haciendo los gráficos empezamos a desarrollar la historia, la lectura que estaba en la guía que usted nos daba y aparte uno comprendía más porque podía analizar toda la historia que se… venía en la guía" [The graphics were a good thing. Because when making the graphics we began to develop the story, the text that was given on the worksheet that

you gave us. And apart from that, I understood more because I could analyze all the story that was in the handout"].

P4. *"Porque se hace más fácil aprender un poco, los organizadores gráficos. Porque uno centraliza toda la… el contenido en cada organizador gráfico [Because it makes it easier to learn a little bit, the graphic organizers. Because you centralize all… the content in each graphic organizer].*

The answers provided by the students explain that the use of graphic organizers aided in guiding, analyzing and learning.

b) Graphic organizers to help the learning process

The students were asked to discuss if graphic organizers helped them in their learning process. One student answered by explaining that using graphic organizers was a tool that made it easier to read the text. To exemplify, participant number three expressed this:

"Si, yo considero que sí. La gran parte ya que se nos fue más fácil comprender la lectura, porque fuimos separando cada párrafo de cada contenido. Entonces, para mí por lo menos, se nos fue un poco más fácil para comprender todo" [Yes, I think so. Most of it because it was easier for us to understand the reading, because we were separating each paragraph from each content. So, for me at least, it was a little easier to understand everything].

Figure 2.

Participants' most frequent concepts about the use of graphic organizers
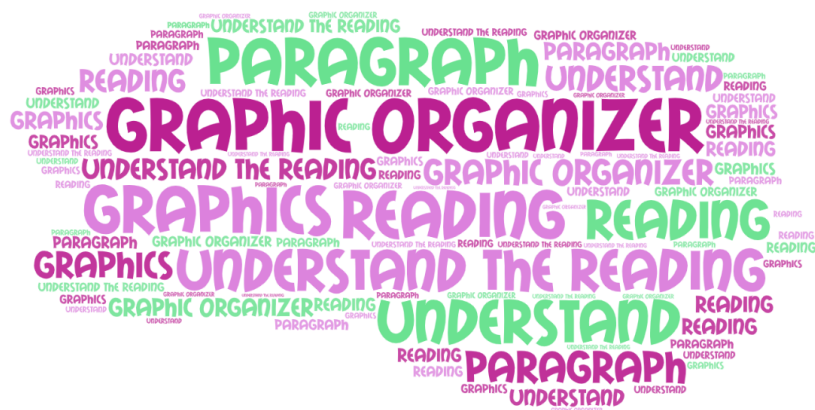
Source: Own elaboration.

As observed in Figure 2, the most repeated word or concept was graphic organizer. Which is fundamental, since participants were asked how the use of graphic organizers helped them. Consequently, participants explained that graphic organizers help to understand the texts more because the text can be split up to order the ideas and analyze what is being read. As a result, when students use graphic organizers, they find it less difficult to read and understand reading texts.

4.2.3 Improvements regarding the pre/post intervention tests and intervention sessions

The subheadings addressed in this section are intended to explain the participants' perceptions regarding the improvements and implications regarding the skimming strategy. Focusing on the pre and post- intervention tests as well as the intervention sessions, participants discussed the changes and improvements, and if they will use the skimming strategy in the future.

a) Changes and improvements

During the process of teaching the skimming strategy, participants needed to explain if they noticed any changes in their responses and if they improved their reading comprehension. The answers provided illustrate that students noticed changes during each class and how they were improving. For example, participants number two and three explained:

P2"Si notamos cambios, porque con la estrategia que usted nos dio se nos hizo fácil comprender la lectura y hacer las oraciones más fácil (de manera más fácil). Porque cada gráfico tenía un… lo que significaba, y colocamos todo para hacer la oración" [Yes, we noticed changes, because using the strategy that you gave us, it was easy for us to understand the reading and make the sentences easily. Because each graphic had… what it meant, and we put everything to make the sentence].

P3. "Claro, porque fuimos mejorando. Porque al principio no teníamos idea qué hacer, nos costó. Y con las clases, en cada clase fuimos mejorando, o sea por todo [Of course, because we were improving. Because at first, we had no idea of what to do, it was difficult. And through the classes, in each class we were improved. I mean, for everything].

Therefore, the students were able to notice changes regarding reading comprehension as well as they observed that it was easier to understand the texts.

b) Skimming strategy and its implications in future readings

In regard to question number 7, the idea was to inquire if students think that in future readings they will use the strategy to locate general information in texts. Hence, the ideas explained by the students illustrate that they may use the strategy as well as they pointed out the use of graphic organizers as supporting tools. To exemplify, participants number three and one answered:

P3. "Sí, absolutamente sí, porque ya hemos aprendido más" [Yes, absolutely. Because we have already learned more].

P1. "A futuro nos sirve mucho, porque como dice el compañero, en otro tiempo al leer así por leer no íbamos a entender. Pero así con los gráficos que nos enseñó aquí el profesor, ahora podemos entender un poco más y cada día más vamos a ir aprendiendo más…" [In the future it will be very useful for us, because as my classmate says, in other times, when we read for the sake of reading, we would not

understand. But with the graphics that the teacher taught us here, now we can understand a little more and every day we are going to learn more…].

As explained by both participants, they agreed about using the strategy in the future and they also said that they had learned a little more. Moreover, participant number one added that the graphic organizers are supportive tools.

c) Level of reading comprehension

Finally, in question number eight, the students needed to discuss if they noticed any change in their level of reading comprehension. Two students answered the question, and they explained what changes they experienced. Then, participants number two and one pointed out:

P2. "Si observamos, porque no sabíamos nada de inglés. El mismo vocabulario y el gráfico que empezamos a desarrollar, todas las preguntas que venían en las guías y con la enseñanza que usted nos dio. O sea, obviamente, aprendimos a desarrollar los gráficos y el mismo vocabulario que va a ir" [I observed changes because we didn't know any English. The graphics we began to develop, all the questions that were on the worksheet and with the teaching that you did. I mean, obviously, we learned to develop the graphics and the vocabulary that is in it].

P1. "Si, yo logré comprender más. Porque como dije anteriormente, no sabía nada de inglés y ahora sé algo de Inglés, aprendí algo de Inglés. Quiero seguir aprendiendo más Inglés" [Yes, I managed to understand more. Because as I said before, I didn't know any English and now I know some English, I learned some English. I want to continue learning more English].

Figure 3.

Participants' most frequent concepts regarding their improvements after the pre and post-intervention tests and intervention sessions

Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Figure 3, the concepts expressed by participants are crucial to the questions they were asked. In this case, they were able to use and explain words related to the implementation of the action research and those concepts were related to the skimming strategy and the use of graphic organizers. Consequently, the answers provided by the students explain that they observed changes regarding the reading skill. It can also be viewed that after the intervention, they knew what they had to do and they also explained the vocabulary they needed to use. Moreover, one student explained that he wants to continue learning.

In conclusion, the improvement participants noticed in relation to the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy is related to a positive experience when using the strategy. Participants expressed that they learned what the skimming strategy is, how to use it to find general information and how to display it in graphic organizers. This is also supported by the idea that using the strategy can result in reading the text with less difficulty. Although students explained that vocabulary was an issue when it comes to reading, they stated that the strategy and the use of graphic organizers helped them into reading and understanding the global meaning of the texts. Additionally, students stated that they may use the strategy in the future since it helped them to learn more and improved their reading comprehension. Correspondingly, the use of graphic organizers is another important aspect of the implementation of this action research, since students advocate these tools as supportive and guiding. Furthermore, students provided good reasoning regarding the experience they got from the action research.

4.3 Drawings as a means to gather more data from the participants

To gather more data from the focus group discussion, the participants were also asked to make a drawing based on the three following suggestions:
  a) Express through the drawing how you felt when doing the first and last reading test.
  b) Express through the drawing how you felt when learning the skimming strategy to find the main ideas in the text and paragraphs.
  c) Express through the drawing how you felt when learning to use and create graphic organizers.

4.3.1 Participant number 1 (See Drawing 1).

Firstly, regarding the first suggestion, participant number one expressed the following: *"Representa la enseñanza de vocabulario y así también representa de que igual hemos aprendido" [It represents the teaching of vocabulary, and it also represents that we have learned and that we have grown]*.

Secondly, in relation to suggestion number two, the participant stated: *"Representa el dibujo que está el profesor enseñándonos la estrategia de skimming, que para leer una lectura, tenemos que leer la primera estrofa, la estrofa del medio y la última estrofa. Y cómo podemos saber la conclusión que se de…"* [It represents, the drawing represents that the teacher is teaching us the skimming strategy. If we want to read a reading text, we have to read the first 'stanza', the one in the middle and the last one. And we can know what the conclusion is].

Thirdly, the participants explained something very positive: *"si, representa algo bueno, buena educación"* [yes, it represents something, good education].

Drawing 1.

Participant number one
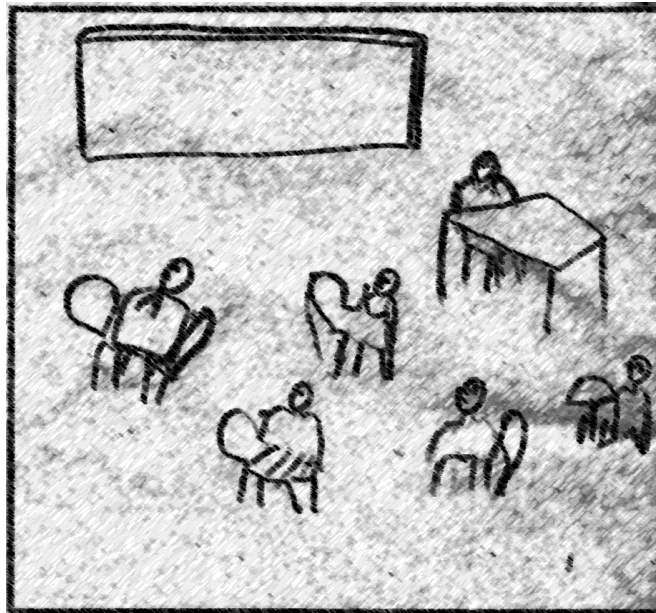
From the drawing and the interview extracts, it can be inferred that the sessions in which the student took part were very significant and he could remember specific steps to use the strategy. He also mentioned that the lessons were a symbol of good education and he valued the role of the teacher in guiding and modeling the lessons.

4.3.2 Participant number two (See Drawing 2).

In relation to the first suggestion, participant number two explained: *"Bueno yo hice prácticamente el vocabulario, representa la primera clase. La primera clase era como que no sabíamos nada, palabras que no sabemos, y empezamos a ver el vocabulario. Con la última prueba y con el skimming aprendimos a traducir los párrafos, los últimos párrafos para sacar la oración y también saber de qué*

se trata el texto" [*Well, I practically drew the vocabulary, it represents the first class. The first class was like we did not know anything, words we did not know and we started to see the vocabulary. In the last test and with skimming, we learned to translate the paragraphs, the last paragraphs to get the sentence and also to know what the text is about*].

With respect to the second suggestion, the participant stated: *"Como le dije anteriormente, fue de que con el skimming que aprendimos, usted nos enseñó a ver la oración al principio y al fin, ahí se trata todo…"* [*As I told you before, it was that using skimming we learned, you taught us to see at the beginning and at the end, that is what it is all about*]. Regarding the use of graphic organizers, the student pointed out: *"Los organizadores gráficos fue un aprendizaje bueno, porque ahí, uno hacía el primer gráfico, los cuadritos. El primer párrafo, segundo párrafo, tercer párrafo y al último hacemos un resumen de lo que significaba"* [*The graphic organizers were good learning, because there, I did the first graphic, the squares. The first paragraph, the second, the third, and at the end we do a summary of what the text meant*].

Finally, regarding the colors used, the participant mentioned: *"Los colores fueron café y verde, como vida"* [*The colors were brown and green, like life*].

Drawing 2.

Participant number two
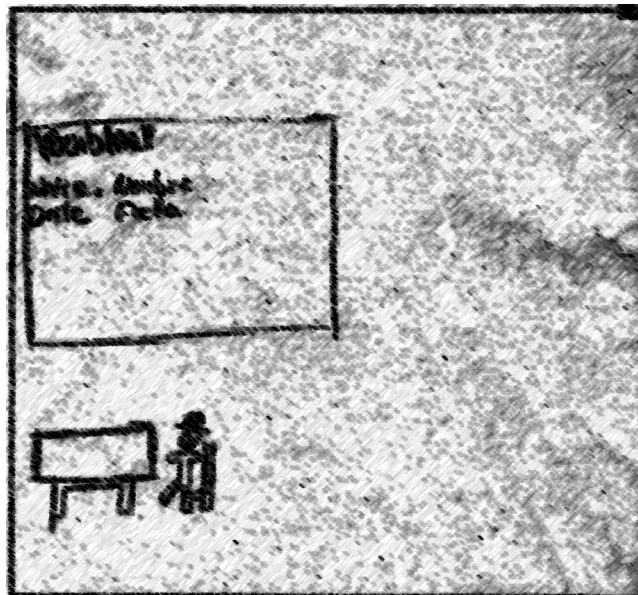
To make inferences from the drawing and the answers provided, the participant explained that at first, he did not know about the strategy and at the end he was aware of what to do and the steps to follow. Regarding the use of graphic organizers, he explained how they are used and that they are good

in terms of learning. Finally, he referred to the colors as something positive, since he related the colors to life.

4.3.3 Participant number three (See Drawing 3)

In concordance to the first suggestion, participant number three expressed: *"Mi dibujo representa lo aprendido en las clases más que nada, ya que con la estrategia de como sacar el método de skimming"* *[mi drawing represents what we learned in class, above all, since with the strategy of how to get the method of skimming].* In relation to the second suggestion, the participant said: *"Mi dibujo prácticamente se denomina la estrategia de skimming. Hice el gráfico del tipo de araña, que fue con el que me siento más cómodo y más ordenado para aprender más"* *[my drawing practically is named as the skimming strategy. I did the spider graphic type, which was the one with which I felt more comfortable and is more ordered to learn more].*

Regarding the graphic organizers, he mentioned that his drawing represented the following: *"Representa lo aprendido y el orden prácticamente"* *[It presents what we learned and order practically].* In relation to the colors, the student explained: *"...los colores representan más que nada colores de la naturaleza ya que en el lugar en el cual estamos no se aprecian muchos colores…"* *[the colors represent nature mainly, since the place where we are, we do not appreciate colors].*

Drawing 3.

Participant number three

As seen and stated above, it can be observed that the student drew what he learned from the class and mentioned the strategy they were taught. He also drew one type of graphic organizer, the spider one. He emphasized the use of the graphic organizer because he said that using a graphic organizer helps to order ideas and the answers are also ordered. Finally, the colors he used have a relationship with the place where he currently is: jail.

4.3.4 Participant number four (See Drawing 4)

Participant number four drew according to the three suggestions. For instance, he first mentioned that: *"Mi dibujo representa el vocabulario que uno aprendió y respecto a la segunda prueba de leer y comprender en Inglés y del skimming, de leer la primera y la última oración" [My drawing represents the vocabulary that I learned and with respect to the second text of reading and understanding in English and the skimming, which is to read the first and the last sentence].*

In relation to how he felt learning the strategy, he explained: *"Que hay que leer y comprender bien el texto, y la estrategia de skimming abarca leer el primer párrafo y la última parte del párrafo para comprender de qué se trata el texto" [We have to read and comprehend the text, and the skimming strategy is about reading the first and the last part of a paragraph to comprehend what the text is about].*

Regarding the use of graphic organizers, he said: *"Bueno yo ocupé un organizador gráfico donde le puse leer y comprender, leer el primer y último párrafo. Y le puse "aprendizaje", porque… todo abarca una sola cosa que es aprendizaje" [I used a graphic organizer where I wrote, read and comprehend, read the first and the last paragraphs. And I wrote "learning", because… everything is one thing, learning].*

Finally, when he was asked about the colors, he explained: *"Los colores no tienen nada que ver" [The colors had nothing to do].*

Drawing 4.

Participant number four
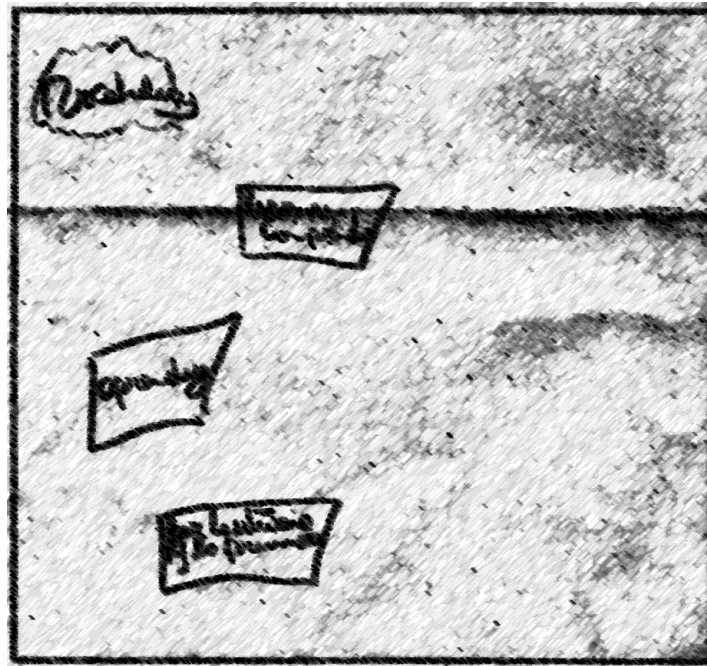
In the drawing as well as the answers provided, it can be pointed out that the participant four also referred to vocabulary that he learned and how to use the skimming strategy. He also mentioned the importance of comprehending the general information from the text and paragraphs, and when he needed to explain about the use of graphic organizers, he linked them to learning. Finally, the student did not link the colors to the drawing.

To conclude, drawings were very helpful to gather more data or to reinforce ideas stated in the focus group discussion. For instance, participants showed interest in drawing and being asked to explain them. Most of the answers showed positiveness in relation to the interventions and the knowledge gained. Moreover, they were able to compare their performance based on the pre and post-intervention tests, they could explain their thoughts on the strategy taught and the process of identifying general ideas in texts and paragraphs. Furthermore, they expressed a positive perception towards the learning and use of graphic organizers. Finally, when they were asked to explain the colors used, one of them explained that he used colors that were related to the fact of being in prison and another participant did not link colors to a feeling or thought. However, one participant linked colors to life. Then, the use of drawings was an essential tool for this action research study, since it helped to not only gather more data regarding their perceptions, but it also helped to give them the chance to express their feelings and emotions. Participants were able to link their feelings and knowledge in a drawing.

Therefore, it can be stated that the use of drawings not only helped to gather more data to describe the participants' perception, but they also helped to reflect participants' emotions and feelings. In this regard, it was understood that they showed a positive reflection based on the learning of the strategy and being part of the action research study too.

5. Discussion

Based on the data gathered and analyzed, findings showed that the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers to support participants' reading for general information had a positive outcome regarding the objectives stated. Findings were analyzed based on the following two specific objectives: to analyze the influence of the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers to support participants' reading for general information and to describe participants' perceptions about the teaching of the explicit skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers to support reading for general information.

5.1 Specific objective one

Regarding the first specific objective, pre and post-reading intervention tests were applied. To assess both tests, an analytic rubric was designed and adapted. Firstly, when both tests were scored, the post-testing results showed that all the students improved their reading for general information subskill. Therefore, as students were taught the skimming strategy during four intervention sessions, they raised awareness of the use of a strategy to improve reading comprehension and supported their understanding using graphic organizers. Respectively, the results are in concordance with Pourhosein & Sabouri's (2016) conclusions in the field of reading comprehension in foreign language learning. They discussed whether learning reading strategies can enhance students' reading comprehension or not. They stated that reading strategies have an important impact on students' reading comprehension and students become active makers of meaning. However, they also pointed out that reading activities should be attractive and related to the students' proficiency level. Therefore, even though the reading intervention tests in this action research study were adapted and simplified, vocabulary was a drawback for students when reading the texts. As Spielman (2022) explained, a lack of reading skills or strategies can limit students to carry out different tasks, which can be academic ones or situations they could face in the future. It was also stated that the lack of reading skills can also limit students' access to rehabilitation. For instance, in this action research study, this can be related to the problems the participants faced when they needed to carry out reading tasks. To illustrate those problems, the

participants struggled a lot when they were asked to read in English. They considered that texts were difficult to understand. Consequently, in this intervention, it was observed, in both the pre and post-reading intervention tests, that students struggled with some vocabulary related to pronouns, verbs or adjectives.

Somehow, in the post reading test, it was observed that students were more familiar with the task, since the texts used during the intervention had basic linguistic features in relation to grammar and vocabulary. Correspondingly, it is also important to address what Ahmadi et al. (2013) researched about metacognitive awareness of strategies. In their study, they explain the importance of metacognitive reading strategy awareness in reading comprehension. As they say, when students are aware of the use of the right strategies to comprehend a text, this facilitates students' reading comprehension. In the case of this action research study, participants dealt with the skimming strategy, which can be associated with cognitive strategies. Somehow, the authors also agreed on the explicit teaching of strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. Moreover, Zhang & Guo (2020) concluded that when students are taught and trained to use strategies, they become aware of the use of such strategies. Therefore, they improve their reading comprehension. Furthermore, one of the key points concluded by Svensson (2011) was that reading ability, as well as writing, is an important skill not only for young students in an incarcerated context, but it is also essential for adult prisoners. The author explained that when students are trained to develop language skills, the outcomes are positive for their academic and emotional experiences. Therefore, this can eventually help to enhance their purpose to reintegrate into society and decrease the risks of interrupting studies or recidivism in criminality.

When teaching reading, results in this study showed that participants developed the skimming strategy positively and they were aware of its use and why it was used. To exemplify, Dhillon et al. (2020) conducted a research study to find out what the students' ability at reading was without using the skimming strategy and using the skimming strategy. Results showed that students who were part of the experimental group increased their ability to read a narrative text. Students who were not part of the experimental group did not improve their ability to find the main idea from the text. This reinforces the idea that teaching reading strategies explicitly, can enhance students' scores based on their level of comprehension in reading tasks. Moreover, this can be linked to what Freitez (2015) pointed out about the principles regarding the use of material or techniques to enhance effective communication, regarding the role of teachers and learners as fundamental. The author also argued the need for research in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in an incarcerated context. Somehow, it is relevant to mention that in this case, the identification of the problem regarding

the reading skill as well as the action plan to solve the problem resulted in a positive outcome for participants.

Based on the evidence provided before, in the present study, it was observed that students were able to increase their scores in the post-reading test. Also, students were able to find the main idea in each paragraph and how to arrive at the main idea of the whole text. In the same regard, Sari (2016) conducted action research to implement the use of skimming and scanning techniques to improve the reading comprehension achievement of junior high school students. Hence, it was found that students' results improved after the implementation. Although the study mentioned before is based on teaching the skimming and scanning strategies together, in the present study, students could also improve their scores. Consequently, if the implementation of teaching the skimming technique is explicitly taught, positive results can be found if students are trained (Darmawan, 2017).

Regarding the dimensions the rating scale contained to assess the use of graphic organizers as well as the responses students provided, it was found that content and organization of ideas had great improvement. Language also improved. Somehow, in the pre and post tests, students performed well, whereas there was a slight improvement in the post-intervention test. As stated before, the content of answers and the use of graphic organizers were significantly better in the post-reading intervention test. From the ideas they wrote and the use of the graphic organizers to display the answers, it showed how students were aware of the use of the strategy taught. Jiang & Grabe (2007) proposed that the use of graphic organizers should be adopted in comprehension instruction, with clear procedural teaching and claimed that graphic organizers with second language students (L2) facilitate reading comprehension. They argue that, based on empirical studies, graphic organizers can facilitate the representation of discourse. Consequently, Albashtawi (2019) conducted a research study where participants were divided in two groups: an experimental and a conventional group. The results showed that students' reading achievement increased only in the experimental group, since they were taught using the CALLA model. Additionally, the students expressed that being taught using the model had a positive impact on their learning process. To conclude, Egbert (1989) explained the constraints that can be encountered when teaching English in unconventional settings, explaining the constraints met in correctional institutions, which could be administrative or affective. For instance, the author suggested the need for guidelines regarding the curriculum to ensure that students can have a positive educational experience. Then, this can be related to the use of the CALLA model as a fundamental guideline to accomplish the explicit teaching of the skimming strategy using graphic organizers.

5.2 Specific objective two

In relation to the second specific objective, which was to describe participants' perceptions about the teaching of the explicit skimming strategy through the use of graphic organizers to support reading for general information, the results were positive as well. For instance, in the focus group discussion, students explained that the teaching of the strategy helped them to be aware of how to find the general idea from a text. They also stated that the process of being part of the intervention sessions could help them in the future. As explained by Brevik (2019), the explicit instruction of strategies can be an example of a successful reading lesson. Nevertheless, the author also concluded that the teaching of strategies should be daily reading practice, since this could help students not to forget the strategies learned. With respect to the use of graphic organizers to support the skimming strategy, students explained that the graphic organizers helped them to order their ideas and helped them to do the activity more smoothly. To illustrate this, Praveen & Rajan (2013) depicted that graphic organizers are a great tool for students to construct text meaning. In the same way, this also guided and helped students to find the required information as well as to use their creativity.

Taking into consideration the incarcerated context in which this action research study took place, Shippen et al. (2010), expressed that one of the most common characteristics prison inmates typically share is low literacy skills. For example, students in an incarcerated context have commonly unsuccessful educational experiences. The reasons why students may decide to drop out of school can be diverse. That is why in this action research study, the participants could not start or finish their secondary education. However, considering participants' perceptions, they expressed positive feelings about the process they went through during the implementation of the action plan and how this helped them in the post-reading intervention test. For instance, Gutierrez De Lucio et al. (2018) carried out a collaborative study with pre-service teachers who taught English to inmates. Among the data gathered, it was observed that inmates found English a rewarding experience. Similarly, in the focus group discussion of this action research study, some participants expressed that being part of the implementation was like receiving good education and that made them feel more prepared to complete the tasks and the post-reading intervention test.

5.3 Implications and limitations

On one hand, it can be stated that the explicit teaching of strategies is a teaching opportunity to enhance students' performance in their learning process. This process raises awareness of how they can improve their skills and the training aids them to facilitate their learning. Moreover, it also improves teachers'

pedagogical practices. Furthermore, the use of visuals, such as graphic organizers, can facilitate learning in a positive way, as they can be used in any subject or skill. Another important aspect is to generate instances to carry out the teaching of strategies as part of the course or syllabus.

On the other hand, using the CALLA model helped in the planning of each session to monitor learning, time and participants' assessment. Although in the pre-reading intervention it was difficult for the participants to complete the test, during and after the implementation they knew what to do in order to find and display the general ideas from paragraphs and the whole text. Finally, teaching the skimming strategy as well as the two graphic organizers allowed participants to be more familiar with the types of texts and tasks they needed to complete.

The limitations of this study are the context in which this study took place and the time for developing the implementation. The context is totally different from most classroom contexts and students are particularly different in age, social background, interests in studying, and personal issues they deal with, due to their incarceration. Regarding the time provided for developing the study, it can be pointed out that it would have been better to tackle both skimming and scanning strategies and the training process could have lasted longer. Another limitation is that the results come from a small sample. Therefore, the results cannot be over-generalized, nor do they represent the entire population of the town, region or country. Despite these limitations, this action research study provides evidence regarding the explicit teaching of strategies to support reading skills.

6. Conclusions

When teaching reading, the skimming strategy using graphic organizers had a positive influence on participants' improvements regarding reading comprehension. Specifically, students were able to improve their reading for main ideas subskill. Moreover, the use of graphic organizers helped participants to organize and picture their comprehension to display or illustrate the ideas they found in the texts. Furthermore, the explicit teaching of the strategy helped participants to have a framework to guide their readings and use the strategy taught accompanied with graphic organizers. This resulted in increasing their scores and being more autonomous when reading the texts they were asked to.

Participants expressed positive reflections about the teaching of the strategy. In particular, the participants explained how helpful it was for them to be part of the intervention and the knowledge they got from the lessons and the pre-reading and post-intervention tests. Additionally, they reflected upon the improvement they had on the post-reading intervention test in comparison to the pre-reading intervention test. Furthermore, the drawings drawn by the participants were fundamental to going further in their explanations. Consequently, the drawing accompanied by the questions they answered,

helped to get more insights from their perceptions about the teaching of the strategy and the use of graphic organizers.

Working in an incarcerated context is not only challenging but also an uncommon setting for many teachers in the country. The students have their own particularities, needs and behaviors that teachers need to deal with. The lessons that need to be planned for them must be related to their context. The level and complexity are also key points to take into consideration. Respectively, it is very important to research and act based on what is important to improve and to regularly reflect upon our teaching practices. There is always a space to improve to enhance our students' performances in learning. Therefore, when a problem is identified and actions are taken, the outcome is fundamental for us and our school community. Moreover, the results can be shared with other teachers. Finally, teaching strategies in an explicit way has been important to enhance students' skills at learning a second language.

6.1 Recommendations for further studies

On one hand, researching in our classroom is a rewarding and important challenge that we have to think of. Personally, teaching in a non-conventional classroom has been a challenging but valuable experience. It has allowed me to identify weaknesses and possible strategies to support students' learning. Moreover, the chance to involve them in the action research study has contributed to creating a positive rapport in the classroom. Then, this action research study can serve as a tool for school communities, teachers and learners. As there is scarce research in the country regarding teaching in incarcerated contexts, it is important that teachers and researchers can contribute by sharing their work and can be challenged to research in incarcerated contexts.

On the other hand, as this is a small-scale study and one strategy was taught only, results cannot be generalized. Therefore, it is recommended that when planning teaching strategies, teachers could consider other skills, such as writing, listening and speaking, and if there is more time to devote, more strategies can be taught. Moreover, it would be suggested to have a bigger sample and more sessions to have a better scope. Furthermore, if necessary, to test learners after weeks or months, after the post-intervention test is done, to observe if students remember the strategy or strategies they were taught.

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