Extensive Reading as a Way to Improve Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension: An Action

Research Study in a Social Foundation

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"A nuestros padres, cuyo apoyo incondicional fue clave para culminar nuestra etapa universitaria"

Table of contents

Lista de Tablas

List of figures

List of appendixes

Resumen

Título: Extensive Reading as a Way to Improve Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension: An Action Research Study in a Social Foundation

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Palabras Clave: Aprendizaje del inglés, lectura extensiva, adquisición de vocabulario, comprensión lectora, enseñanza virtual.

Descripción:

La lectura extensiva es un enfoque que se centra en leer grandes cantidades de texto por placer, elección propia y con una motivación integral. El presente estudio, busca determinar en qué medida la implementación de un programa de lectura extensiva en inglés de diez semanas mejora la extensión del vocabulario y la comprensión lectora de un grupo de participantes de 9 a 14 años en una fundación sin ánimo de lucro, ubicada en Bucaramanga, Santander. Se escogió la metodología de Investigación Acción (IA), que permite observar, implementar programas y reflexionar sobre los mismos de forma cíclica. Para dicho proceso, se utilizó un enfoque de métodos mixtos en aras de recopilar la mayor cantidad de información a nivel cuantitativo y cualitativo, haciendo uso de herramientas de recolección de datos como entrevistas, cuestionarios y pruebas de vocabulario y comprensión (tanto diagnósticas como finales). Al concluir dicho programa, se pudo establecer que bajo el enfoque de lectura extensiva se obtuvieron resultados alineados a estudios realizados anteriormente, ya que se observó un incremento significativo en el campo del vocabulario y un incremento leve en la comprensión lectora; factores como la lectura en grupo, lectura individual, uso de herramientas tecnológicas, asistencia y participación en clase incidieron en el resultado obtenido.

Abstract

Title: Extensive Reading as a Way to Improve Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension: An Action Research Study in a Social Foundation

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Keywords: English Learning, Extensive Reading (ER), Vocabulary Acquisition, Reading Comprehension, Virtual Teaching.

Description:

Extensive reading is an approach that focuses on reading large amounts of texts for pleasure, choice and integral motivation. The present study seeks to determine to what extent the implementation of a ten-week extensive reading program in English improves the vocabulary extension and reading comprehension of a specific group of participants from 9 to 14 years old at a non-profit foundation, located in Bucaramanga, Santander. Action Research (AR) was chosen as research methodology, since it allows researchers to observe, implement programs and reflect on the results, all in a cyclical manner. For this process, a mixed-method approach was used in order to collect as much information as possible about both quantitative and qualitative data, making use of data collection instruments such as interviews, questionnaires and criterion-referenced tests. We could conclude that under the extensive reading approach we obtained results aligned with previous studies, since there was significant improvement in participants' vocabulary length and a slight improvement in their reading comprehension; factors such as group reading, individual reading, use of technological tools, attendance and class participation affected the obtained results.

Introduction

The following social intervention was performed in a non-profit organization in the city of Bucaramanga, Santander. This organization works both with low-income school students and senior citizens. We focused on the first population, specifically in the English component provided to them by the foundation.

The foundation was born on December the 17th of 2009, as a social organization that tried to aid old people using an environmental approach, bringing the downtrodden senior community of Bucaramanga together, into a safe space to socialize with each other and perform recycling activities. Later in the last months of 2020, the foundation decided to lend its services to school children, teaching them English using the ICTs. That is, the ELT component is offered online, due to two main reasons: The contingency caused by the pandemic of Covid-19, and the economic situation of the students who, in general, cannot afford transportation and food expenses. We implemented an extensive reading (ER) program that lasted approximately ten weeks (from October the 10th to December the 17th of 2021), where we met with the participants via video-conference platforms, such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Extensive reading aims to make users read large amounts of texts, therefore improving specific linguistic aspects, namely vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Extensive reading is not widely known, let alone practiced, in the teaching community of Colombia. We could confirm this fact after revising the most important TESOL journals (mainly Ikala, How, Profile, and Matices) and public repositories available online, either on Google Scholar or in the online library from our university. Even though there are many papers concerning reading in general, on topics such as reading skills and

strategies, there are not many addressing extensive reading. On the other hand, there have been many referents of ER interventions in Eastern and European countries, where this approach seems to be not only popular but effective at achieving more substantial results in the linguistic abilities of the participants, while also generating motivation and positive attitudes towards the target language. That is one of the reasons why we decided to make use of the extensive reading approach in Colombia, to implement foreign teaching techniques in an underprivileged community, producing not only academic insights but also contributing to a social cause. Furthermore, reading is a key aspect to master a language, and there is a lack of reading from actual literary texts in the EFL classroom, where normally short, adapted texts are used as a way to introduce specific grammar or vocabulary (otherwise known as "intensive reading").

Moreover, the objectives of this project are related to the aims of the foundation. The general objective of the institution is, translated from Spanish, to familiarize the population of Bucaramanga with different fields of knowledge, developing education through innovative systems [Director of the foundation, personal communication, 2021. Author's translation]. Also, one of the specific objectives states that the foundation should be a space to research the forms of different pedagogical approaches and interactive learning materials [Director of the foundation, personal communication, 2021. Author's translation] since, as we said earlier, extensive reading in Colombia is not incredibly popular.

In that order of ideas, we crafted the next research question:

To what extent does the implementation of a ten-week English extensive reading program enhance the vocabulary length and the reading comprehension of a group of students from a non-profit organization in Bucaramanga?

This project attempts to contribute to the social and academic objectives of the foundation, by providing the participants with an opportunity to familiarize themselves, engage with, and develop their reading abilities in English. Socially, this goal enriches the academic possibilities of students who are not privileged enough to pay for an English course focused on reading abilities (or any English course for that matter), and who are part of a public school system that does not guarantee sufficient development in foreign languages, due to many hindrances such as few instruction hours and lack of prepared educators. Academically, this project serves as a contribution to the literature of extensive reading, which in Colombia has not been explored to a great extent, proven by the fact that there are not many papers focused on ER in the most important journals and public repositories (the few available ones will be referenced below). Professionally, we believe that this experience can pave the way for any further work experiences related to English teaching using innovative results, while also providing us with field experience working with economically disadvantaged populations in online environments.

Several previous studies have stressed the need to continue implementing extensive reading programs (Song, 2020; Mo, 2020; Suk, 2017) due to the great innovative methodology which potentiates skills in English, and, let us say, in any other target language, in an easier, more effective and engaging way (Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007). ER has been documented to outperform traditional methods (Mason & Krashen, 1997), even improving writing abilities besides reading skills. Therefore, we believe it is imperative to adopt the principles of ER in the context of a Colombian social foundation, in order to discover to what extent the revised literature correlates with the local reality of ELT.

1. Objectives

Taking into account the previous information, we established the next objectives:

1.1   General objective

To analyze to what extent an extensive reading program enhances vocabulary length and reading comprehension in a group of students from a non-profit organization.

1.2   Specific objectives

1. To inquire about the attitudes of the participants about reading in EFL, both before and after the intervention.

2. To expose students to the reading of literary texts in English adapted to their language level.

3. To analyze to what extent the reading of adapted literary texts increases the students' English reading comprehension and vocabulary length.

This study is composed of the next sections: Theoretical framework, methodological design, intervention report, conclusions, and recommendations. Each section, except for the last two, is divided into sub-sections, depending on the type of information presented.

2. Theoretical framework

This section is divided into four sections: Previous studies, conceptual basis, legal background, and ethical aspects.

2.1   Previous studies

Research studies can be classified depending on their objective. Most extensive reading studies seek to improve certain aspects of reading in EFL such as comprehension, vocabulary, rate and/or speed. We classified previous ER research studies into two main categories: On-site and online. The first ones are also divided into studies with teenagers/adults, and studies with kids. We will start by talking about national studies, and then move on to international papers.

In Colombia, Ruíz de Guerrero and Arias (2009) developed an ER project with students from Universidad Santo Tomás (USTA) in Tunja. They stated that ER was a "way to decrease students' negative feelings towards studying English and improving their reading proficiency" (Ruíz de Guerrero and Arias p. 85), reporting that ER helped students gain vocabulary and knowledge about the topic (p. 85). Likewise, Garzón (2020) carried out a study with 10th grade students from a public school, to see if they could engage in English reading after the ER program. Garzón reported that, mainly, vocabulary was reinforced when participants worked collaboratively, created EFL habits and used contextualized materials (p.

57). However, Céspedes (2018) stated that an ER program by itself is not enough to improve students' English level, since it is necessary to guide the reading process and apply the pre, while and post phases of reading (p. 102), using materials related to the students' context, English proficiency and interests (p. 6). Cespedes developed an ER project with first-semester students from Universitaria Colombo Americana (UNICA) in Bogotá, implementing grounded theory methodology and making special emphasis on scaffolding to improve reading proficiency of participants (2018). In Mexico on the other hand, Flóres-Gonzáles (2019), implemented a study with a blended methodology, where online sessions were carried out along with on-site classes. The aim of her program was to characterize the perceptions of the students of the Bachelor in English Teaching in Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). The results showed that effectiveness of an ER program is determined by a design that takes on board participants' needs and preferences, which resulted in an increase on reading comprehension (p. 53), allowing participants to grasp the global meaning of the texts due to the constant exposure to the content. However, positive results are not only confined to the Colombian territory; internationally, there have been many findings that need to be reported in the next paragraphs. Plus, studies that take into account outcomes depending on the type of population, whether they are pre-teenagers or adults.

Regarding reading comprehension, both Tanaka and Stapleton (2007) and Suk (2017) observed a somewhat small increase in a semester-long intervention. The first authors specified that improvement was mostly achieved due to the individual motivation of students to use "graded readers" outside of the class (2007). Suk proved that there was a great increase in this area, mainly due to the amount of reading and the nature of the study (2017).

In regards to vocabulary acquisition, Suk reported even more significant results, since the intervention helped 172 Korean university students to learn words and reinforce the existing ones (Suk, 2017). Still, the causes consisted mainly of permanent exposure to reading materials containing similar lexical content in a high frequency (2017), and that most participants had a high-beginning reading proficiency level before the intervention (2017). The last point resembles what Webb and Chang (2015) stated in an investigation of the impact of prior word knowledge on vocabulary acquisition in an ER program. Their findings indicated that learners who possessed larger vocabulary made better gains (2015), confirming that previous lexical understanding is key to learning vocabulary.

The last two reading components targeted in recent research are speed and rate. When it comes to reading speed, Tanaka & Stapleton (2007) and Mo (2020), evidenced that learners who were given the opportunity to read texts accommodated to their reading level increased their learning speed, and maintained general comprehension of the texts, as long as they could comprehend what they read in 70% to 90% range (2020). In other words, in order to gain reading speed students are encouraged to make use of "graded readers", which are texts that adapt to their proficiency level. On the other hand, the reading rate improved in the study by Suk (2017) due to the mere usage of graded readers, which are perceived as approachable by participants.

Moreover, ER projects in kids have shown similar results. Quantitatively, Song showed that vocabulary knowledge had improved significantly in an eight-week program, while comprehension only increased slightly (2020). In contrast, in a qualitative study by Nkomo, learners believed that their perceptions and attitudes towards reading, fluency, and rate had improved due to the intervention (2020).

Finally, research using the ICTs has reported similar findings. Mobile-assisted ER has proven to be effective, making students develop positive attitudes towards reading with the assistance of the researchers (Milliner & Cote, 2015). Mobile-assisted ER also outperformed computer-assisted learning in Lin's study (2014), not only improving participants' basic reading skills but also their attitudes about ER. Moreover, studies that concentrated on learning through computers also provided interesting insights. For example, computed-assisted ER was useful according to the students (Sun, 2003) , contributing to their own reading skills improvement. There has been evidence on how a web-based ER program improved the reading skills of participants numerically, from 54.85% to 75.95% (Aisyah and Mabaroh, 2021, p. 193).

There has to be a special mention to one major quintessential paper by Mason and Krashen (1997), where the authors carried out three experiments in different contexts, confirming the value of extensive reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In all cases, ER proved to be better at increasing students' attitudes towards reading, reading comprehension, and even writing competencies, outperforming students that focused on traditional cloze test practice (1997).

2.2   Theoretical basis

The meaning of extensive reading has evolved since its first appearance, in the second half of the 20th century in the book "The Scientific Study of Languages", by Harold Palmer (Day and Bamford, 1998; as cited by Silva & Araujo, 2016). At the time, extensive reading made reference to the type of reading done rapidly from one text to another (Silva & Araujo, 2016), used to differentiate it from grammar-focused reading, also called "intensive reading". Also, Caroll and Carson (1997) expressed that ER "generally involves rapid reading of large

quantities of material (...), with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read rather than on the language" (as cited in Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). That is, ER privileges meaning over form, unlike intensive reading (Silva & Araujo, 2016).

Given its essence, extensive reading can provide plenty of benefits. Namely, it increases students' exposure to the target language (Elley, 1991, as cited in Bell, 1998), enhances vocabulary length and reinforces current lexis (Nation & Waring, 2019; Aka, 2019; Bernard and Robb, 1990), improves grammar concepts (Aka, 2019), and even upgrades writing performance (Sakurai, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 1997). Additionally, ER can motivate learners to read more, while also fostering reading habits, broadening cultural horizons, and personalizing the learning process (Silva & Araujo, 2016).

Nevertheless, ER does have limitations. Elley and Mangubhai (1981) found it crucial to dedicate plenty of time to achieve positive results (as cited in Nation, 2009), which demands that teachers/researchers and participants set apart sufficient instruction time, which can be constrained by several factors out of the researcher's range of control, such as institutional pressure, and lack of willingness from subjects. It is equally challenging to find adequate materials since they should be aligned with the learners' proficiency level and their interests (Day et al., 1998). Moreover, insufficient funding becomes a problem planning an ER program (Day et al., 1998,), especially in areas where reading materials are scarce and cannot be accessed easily.

Owing to its complexity, ER programs have particularities. Day et al. (2015) suggest that an ER project should include three key aspects: "amount of reading, focus on meaning and general understanding, and faster reading rate" (p. 2). Other practical recommendations include increasing students' participation, tracking individual development, reading aloud in class, having brief students' presentations, and developing written assignments in response to

the reading (Bell, 1998; Day et al., 1998). Additionally, Bell suggests the incorporation of audio materials into reading plans, the avoidance of exams and excessive usage of dictionaries, and investing time and energy to entertain participants with multimedia resources (1998). Likewise, Nation (2009) finds it relevant to consider the following aspects to make an ER intervention entertaining and ultimately successful:

> Understanding the type of learning that can occur through such reading, determining learners' existing vocabulary knowledge, having interesting and engaging books, getting learners to do large quantities of reading, and making sure that the learning from reading is supported by other kinds of learning (p. 49)

Moreover, extensive reading could be a contributing factor to children's English proficiency. Children are, according to Hall & Coles (1999), "selective of what they read, child readers often re-read, they follow authors, series and genres which they enjoy, and they choose texts for interest and pleasure over utilitarian learning aims" (as cited in Cheetham, 2015, p. 4). It would make sense then, that children are more driven to engage in reading in the target language extensively than intensively. However, to make children acquire vocabulary, and improve their reading skills, the same texts must be continuously repeated (Cheetham, 2015). This applies to our population, since the participants are, on average, 11 years old.

2.3   Legal framework

Due to the nature of our intervention, it is essential to understand the legal framework we need to abide by. First of all, Law 115 of 1994, the General Law of Education, establishes a series of regulations in the educational field, including both the public and private sectors. Furthermore, regarding the ELT field, law 1651, also known as the "Bilingualism law",

dictates provisions in relation to bilingualism and EFL. Additionally, there are two documents that offer the particular framework for EFL in Colombia: Guide 22 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2006), the official document of the Ministry of Education that defines the standards for EFL, and the suggested curriculum (MEN, 2016), a series of documents that provide guidelines for EFL teaching and learning for schools that choose to adapt them.

Apart from EFL documents, the regulations governing the foundations are framed by specific decrees that promote the normal development of activities within foundations. First, the protection and promotion of associative and solidarity forms of property are mentioned in Article 58 of the Colombian Constitution of 1991. Likewise, the government's contribution to the organization, promotion, and training is mentioned in article 103, as well as the inspection, and rent discussion monitoring, which are specified in the numeral 26, article 189. In the same vein, the legal recognition of entities (associations, corporations, foundations, or organizations of common utility) is regulated by decree 1529 of 1990. However, it is decree 427 of 1996 which dictates the general provisions for non-profit legal entities registration.

All the former legal background relates to the mission, vision, and objectives of the foundation, evidenced mostly in its specific objectives, whose emphasis is related to the investigation of interactive teaching methods, pedagogical innovations, and teaching materials [Director of the foundation, personal communication, 2021. Author's translation]. The previous regulations will be of vital importance to understand under what parameters the constitution of this organization has been established, and therefore to comprehend the context in which we will be immersed in executing our role as practicing teachers who are endorsed both by legal regulations and internal norms.

2.4   Ethical Aspects

In order to keep an ethical behavior throughout our intervention, we took measures to secure both the foundation's and the participants' integrity. First, Data-Collection Instruments (DCIs) included two main aspects: A small introduction to our identities as student-researchers and of our institution (UIS), as well as an informed consent (appendix A) that stated the exclusively-academic purpose of the application, which was aligned to our intervention's objectives. Second, we kept our participant's identities coded by assigning numbers to each of them in our interviews and questionnaires. Third, we made sure that the recordings of the classes were stored only in the Google Classroom assigned to us by the coordinator of the foundation.

3. Methodological design

3.1   Research approach

We chose a mixed-methods approach for our project, which is defined by Cohen et al. (2017) as "collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies" (p. 32) since it best encompasses the aim of our study by taking into account the data and analysis from participants' perceptions and attitudes, as well as quantifiable statistics (depending on the DCIs). In the same vein, it is established that, by conducting qualitative and quantitative analysis through the mixed-methods approach, more abundant and well-founded information is obtained (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 4; as cited in Cohen et al, 2017, p. 32). The aforementioned information is completely essential due to the fact that our study intends to find an answer to our research question by

implementing both quantitative (tests and questionnaires) and qualitative data collection instruments (semi-structured interviews); likewise, as researchers we will have the capability to make use of sufficient information to generate appropriate and holistic results.

3.2   Type of research

As it is planned, this project meets the criteria for what is called "action research" (AR). This methodology seeks to change and improve the characteristics of a particular environment, where "researchers" understand and generate knowledge about educational practices and their complexity" (McAteer, 2013, p. 21; as cited in Cohen et al., 2017, p. 440). In other words, AR is used to generate academic and social change in the participants, the research environment, and the researchers themselves.

As researchers, we made use of the AR methodology to try to improve the English skills of the participants, abilities that could enhance the overall quality of their lives. Utilizing the extensive reading approach, we observed their reading level, reflected on our performance, and took action. The AR cycle can be observed in figure 1 (based on Cohen et al., 2017):

Figure 1

Action research cycles
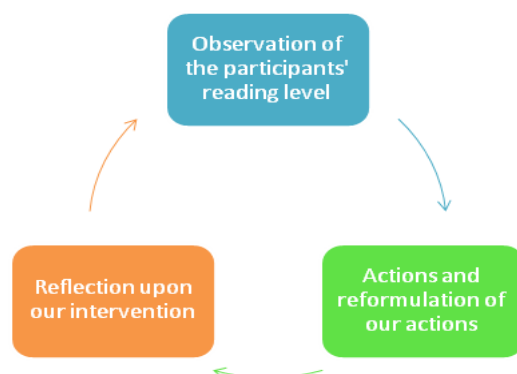
3.3   Participants and sampling

The population was selected using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, also called accidental or opportunistic sampling (Cohen et al, 2017, p. 218), is a type of non-probability sampling method where the researchers choose "the nearest individuals to serve as respondents, (...) those who happen to be available and accessible at the time" (p. 218), mainly for very specific purposes, such as being the most suitable sample in a limited population. That is why we decided to carry out the implementation with the most advanced group of the foundation, an eleven-student group from ages 10 to 12 years old on average (that got smaller with time due to several factors explained below), and whose proficiency level ranges between an advanced A1 to a beginner A2. These learners had been working in EFL for almost 10 months, having experiences with reading in English. Nonetheless, we could only teach eight students, from which only seven completed the intervention.

3.4   Data collection instruments

We chose three types of data collection instruments that we used before and after the intervention: Tests (diagnostic and final assessment), questionnaires, and interviews. In order to validate the instruments, the director of this project proofread them to find any potential mistakes to be corrected, such as ambiguities or skewed questions. Also, there was a piloting phase before the class intervention, performed with another group of the same foundation. Instruments are defined and justified below:

3.4.1. Test

A test is a tool used for many purposes, "for example to diagnose a student's strengths, weaknesses and difficulties, to measure achievement, to measure aptitude and potentia" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 570) . However, the tests we used were not carried out for

grading purposes, but for research goals. There were two types of tests, one pre-test and one post-test.

3.4.1.1 Diagnostic test (Pre-test).

A type of criterion-referenced test where there is an identification of the strengths and the weaknesses of the participants "in the aspect with which they are concerned" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 565). We utilized this instrument to evidence the current state of the participants' reading skills, specifically in vocabulary length and overall comprehension. The implementation took place in the very first session of the intervention. This test has forty-seven questions, from which forty-three are multiple-choice and four are open-ended (Appendix B).

3.4.1.2 Final assessment test (Post-test).

This type of test is also a criterion-referenced test, a tool that "requires the student to fulfill a given set of criteria, a predefined and absolute standard or outcome" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 566)". This test not only has the same original forty-seven questions from the diagnostic test but also three more likert-scale statements for the students to evaluate the intervention (Appendix C). We utilized this test in the last session of our project, in order to discover what was the actual improvement of the participants in the two aforementioned variables. We correlated the data with the information of the questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.2. Questionnaire

A type of survey research tool implemented to find out about the participants' opinions, needs or preferences. It provides "structured, often numerical data, (...) and often comparatively straightforward to analyze" (Cohen et al., 2017. p. 471). We used a questionnaire to discover the attitudes and experiences of the participants about reading in the

English language (Appendix D). We carried out the questionnaire in the first session of the intervention. After the intervention, this questionnaire was triangulated with the other instruments.

3.4.3 Interviews

An interview is "a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data-collection exercise" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 503). In this project, a personalized semi-structured question format was crafted and utilized to find out about the individual opinion of each participant about the project, taking into account their judgments of value about the materials used, the teaching methodology, and the ELT approach, as well as any sort of comment to improve our practice (Appendix E). These interviews were performed in the last week of the intervention.

3.5   Resources

In table 1 we specify the resources that were utilized:

Table 1

Resources for the development of the project

Resources	Teachers	Students
Internet connection	X	X
Technological devices (PCs and cell phones) with microphones	X	X
Chatting services (Whatsapp, Google chat)	X	X
Graded readers books	X	X

Institutional Platforms	X	X
Videos	X	
Class materials (slides, worksheets, lesson plans, etc.)	X	
Video conference platforms (Zoom, Meet)	X	X

3.5.1 Materials

We intended to conduct this study by using four English graded-readers which allowed us to formally instruct the lessons, taking into account their elementary English level of the students. Students chose four books from this available titles:

1. Three Sherlock Holmes Adventures (by Arthur Conan Doyle)

2. The Robot Stories (by Isaac Asimov)

3. The Red Pony (by John Steinbeck)

4. Inspector Holt (by John Tully)

5. Shark Attack (by Jan Keane)

6. The Picture of Dorian Gray (by Oscar Wilde)

7. The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor (by John Yeoman)

8. The Black Cat and Other Stories (by Edgar Allan Poe)

After presenting the books in a Zoom meeting September the 2nd, the four graded-reader books chosen by the students were: Three Sherlock Holmes Adventures

(Lewis, 1982), The Red Pony (Paine, 1976), The Black Cat and other Stories (Strange, 1991), and Shark Attack (Cripwell & Jones, 1986). All of them were taken from the storage of the school of languages from UIS. We transcribed and uploaded the books in a Google Drive folder, giving all the credit to the respective editorial house. Also, we shared that folder with the participants. All this process was settled with the director of the project since most of the certified materials online are pay-to-read, or not available at all, and the institutions do not have access to the books.

3.6   Timeline of the main dates

In table 2   all the specific events that took place throughout Trabajo de Grado I y Trabajo de Grado II are specified:

Table 2

Timeline of the project

Date	Event
August the 31th of 2021	Presentation of the project to the CTG, according to the established guidelines for each type of TG
September the 2nd - September the 6th of 2021	Asking future participants to choose their favorite books from the options provided to them
September the 7th - September the 11th of 2021	Transcription of materials to eBook format

September the 12th - September the 18th of 2021	Crafting the data collection instruments
September the 19th - September the 24th of 2021	Presentation of the DCIs to the director of the project and, if necessary, reformulation and corrections
October the 10th - December the 17th of 2021	Intervention in the foundation two days and three hours a week (Wednesdays 5:15-7:00 pm and Saturdays 8:30-10 am)
October the 10th - October the 16th of 2021	Piloting of the data collection instruments.
October the 17th of 2021	Reformulation of the DCIs taking into account the piloting phase (if necessary)
October the 18th - October the 22nd of 2021	Implementation of the DCIs: Diagnostic test and questionnaire of attitudes
November the 5th - November the 10th of 2021	Registration of the subject Trabajo de Grado II and scheduling of meetings with the director, to assess and monitor the process

December the 11th - December the 15th of 2021	Implementation of the DCIs: Final test and interviews
January the 11th - January the 21th of 2022	Data analysis phase
January the 24th - February the 6th of 2022	Writing the draft of the final report to be presented
February the 7th of 2022	Presentation of the draft of the final report to the director of the project
February the 8th - February the 13th of 2022	Correction of the draft of the final report
February the 21st of 2022	Presentation of the final report of the project to the CTG, endorsed by the director of the project
February the 21th - February the 28th of 2022	Oral defense of the project to the CTG, evaluation of the defense, and final weighted grade (written report: 70%; oral defense: 30%)

*February the 22nd - February the 29th	Final presentation of the results of the intervention to the general community of the foundation (parents, school staff and students)
March the 1st - March the 8th of 2022	Delivery of the graded final report to the library of Universidad Industrial de Santander , adjusted to the respective procedures

*The tentative date is subject to change.

3.6.1 Schedule of activities for the project

In table 3, we summarize the organization of the activities carried out during the ER program. Each week was divided into two sessions, each with its activities and assigned time. We introduced the project and carried out the diagnostic test and the questionnaire. Then, we presented reading strategies (SQ3R, skimming and scanning, vocabulary identification, summaries, etc.). After that, we read the four books and implemented pre-reading (predicting, activating prior knowledge, setting reading purposes, etc.), during reading (making connections, checking predictions, guiding questions, etc.), and post-reading activities (producing output, story analysis, language-focus exercises, etc.). Finally, we developed the interviews and implemented the final test.

Table 3

Schedule of organized activities

Week	Session (a= Wednesdays; b= Saturdays)	Time
1	a) Introduction of the project and general guidelines -	1h:45 min

(Oct 17th - 23rd)		Implementation of DCIs (Diagnostic test - Questionnaire) - Intro to reading strategies	
	b)	Intro to reading strategies (part 2) - Presentation of the first book - Pre and during reading activities - Assign homework (Drawing - post reading activities)	1h:30 min
2 (Oct 24th - 30th)	a)	Reading aloud in group - Pre and during reading activities	1h:45 min
	b)	Reading aloud in group - Reading activities (Pre and during reading activities)	1h:30 min
3 (Nov 1th - 6th)	a)	Check homework - Closing activities of the first book	1h:45 min
	b)	Presentation of the second book - Pre and during reading activities - Assign homework (Drawing - post reading activities)	1h:30 min
4 (Nov 7th - 13th)	a)	Reading aloud in group - Pre and during reading activities	1h:45 min
	b)	Reading aloud in group - Reading activities (Pre and during reading activities)	1h:30 min
5 (Nov 14th - 20th)	a)	Check homework - Closing activities of the first book	1h:45 min
	b)	Presentation of the third book - Pre and during reading activities - Assign homework (Drawing - post reading activities)	1h:30 min
6 (Nov 21th - 27th)	a)	Reading aloud in group - Pre and during reading activities	1h:45 min
	b)	Reading aloud in group - Reading activities (Pre and during reading activities)	1h:30 min

7 (Nov 28th - Dec 4th)	a) Check homework - Closing activities of the first book	1h:45 min
	b) Presentation of the fourth book - Pre and during reading activities - Assign homework (Drawing - post reading activities)	1h:30 min
8 (Dec 5th - Dec 11th)	a) Reading aloud in group - Pre and during reading activities (Pre and during reading activities)	1h:45 min
	b) Reading aloud in group - Closing activities of the fourth book / - Check homework (Post reading activities)	1h:30 min
9 (Dec 12th - Dec 18th)	a) Check homework (Drawing) - Implementation of final DCIs (Final test - Interviews)	1h:45 min
	b) Presentation to parents and school staff about the results of the intervention	1h:30 min

4. Intervention report

We will present the diagnostic of the problem, then move to report the activities of the project, and finish with both the evaluation of the activities and the assessment of the intervention.

4.1 Diagnostic of the problem

The diagnosis undertaken in the institution was focused mainly on the aforementioned linguistic variables (vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension) and participants' attitudes concerning extensive reading, without leaving aside social aspects such as region and age. To do so, we carried out a piloting phase of the initial instruments (pre-test and

questionnaire), and then we developed the diagnosis with the actual population chosen for the study.

Apart from the form errors that we corrected, the piloting stage allowed us, initially, to identify several aspects to be improved in our data-collection instruments, as well as a general view of the reading level and attitudes from a group different from our sample, which was part of the same foundation. This pilot group was in the same age group from the sample group (from 9 to 14). During the pilot phase it was possible to change some minor details to be modified. We changed the wording of questions in sections that were not entirely clear, especially regarding reading comprehension items, and we fixed several numeration and wording typos. Furthermore, the piloting phase also allowed us to check on the piloting group's reading comprehension and vocabulary length in a general way, as well as understanding their perceptions towards extensive reading. Nonetheless, we only observed the results of these piloting instruments, since they were, naturally, not our population in question.

After the implementation of the pilot phase, we developed our diagnostic data collection instruments with our sample group. This test was answered by only five participants, since at the time, there were only six active, and one could not attend the class when we administered it.

In the test, we established that any item must be answered with at least a 60% accuracy (three out of five people) to be considered as a passing grade. We then classified the obtained results regarding items that did not reach the 60% threshold. The first ones were problems in terms of vocabulary, especially on nouns and adverbs. Students could not successfully answer questions regarding cloze exercises, filling in the gaps with missing words or replacing a word by another one. Four (4) answers regarding nouns did not reach

the threshold (items number 7, 9, 10, 12), and instead remained between 20% to 40%. Moreover, only 20% of the students identified the correct adverb for item number 3.

Moving on to comprehension items, participants presented problems related to re-stating literal information (item number 44), paraphrasing literal information (item number 21), and making inferences from small paragraphs (items number 15 and 18). Furthermore, students could not successfully infer information about four (4) items where they had to look at a related image from each book and, in one sentence or even phrase, make any inference.

On the other hand, the questionnaire about attitudes and preferences gave us interesting insights. This instrument was answered by seven (7) people. We could argue that the attitudes about reading were positive, since all participants claimed to like reading in any language, even if four said that it depended on the type of text. Regarding reading in English, four people said that they were greatly motivated and three only slightly; plus, five out of seven said that they had read in English before, occasionally or rarely. When it comes to how they read in English, five people claimed that they preferred digital media, while only one said that he was more fond of physical materials. The remaining person stated that he did not read in English at all. The former insight was particularly encouraging because the intervention was developed entirely using digital media. Lastly, five students selected that they wanted to have homework, dividing into three that wished for daily assignments, and two who only desired to have weekly homework. This last aspect made us reflect on what and how often to leave assignments to participants.

Their perceptions about our target variables were also positive: All participants stated that reading augmented their lexis, but one of them clarified that the reader must know most

words beforehand. Also, all participants affirmed categorically that reading increased their comprehension in the target language.

All in all, participants presented positive attitudes towards English, recognizing the benefits that extensive reading entails. However, at least half of the group lacked skills in reading comprehension and information analysis, as well as the identification vocabulary items such as of grammatical and lexical subjects.

4.2   Activities in the intervention

In this section, we present a report of the activities developed in our project. First, we will cover the activities regarding reading strategies that we implemented. Then we will move on to the activities that we developed in class, and the products that students produced. Finally, we will present the analysis of the data we collected during the implementation of the project and the comparison between DCIs.

In the first class, we presented several reading strategies activities using a PowerPoint presentation. The strategies were inference, SQ3R, and identification of vocabulary through context clues. Inference is concerned with how a person can interpret contextual evidence and relate it to prior knowledge, in order to come up with an accurate assumption. We presented figure 2 and made students come up with related inferences. They related the image to concepts related to the topic: The tale Beauty and the Beast.

.**Figure 2**

Beauty and the Beast inferential exercise

The second reading strategy was "SQ3R", which is a five-step strategy: Survey, question, read, recite, and review. Readers survey the text as a way of skimming and scanning the test for any relevant information, whether it is specific data or just general comprehension of the text. After that, readers have to make a question about the reading based on the information that they surveyed (any sort of doubt, related to prior knowledge), which will be answered later by reading the text. Then, readers read the text without rushing, trying to understand as much as possible. Then readers should try to repeat concepts at loud, and write down any notes that might help them to review the text. At last, they should try to summarize and re-read the notes. Students were presented with a short text and were told to implement the SQ3R strategy in class, which they did successfully.

Finally, we taught the participants strategy "context clues", identification of vocabulary through the rest of the text. They were introduced to several ways to do so,

identified in figure 3, taken from Marye (n.d), and afterwards they were presented with a short text for them to come up with the meaning of three related words (friends, mates and buddies). Students were instructed to use the context clues strategy, and they put it into practice by learning the three words by contextual clues.

Figure 3

Context clues reading strategies infographic

After instructing participants about reading strategies in the first two classes, we proceeded to present the books. For each of the four books, we assigned an approximate number of classes (see Table 3: Schedule of the activities). However, we had to change the number of classes assigned to each book due to time constraints (table 4)

Table 4

Final number of classes per book

#	Book	Number of classes
1	Three Sherlock Holmes Adventures	7 (Class 3 - Class 9)
2	Shark attack	4 (Class 10 - Class: 13)
3	The Black Cat and Other Stories	4 (Class 13 - Class 16)
4	The Red Pony	3 (Class 16 - Class 18)

As seen in table 4, book one was given seven classes in total. Nonetheless, those classes were not only entirely assigned to reading the book but also to having instructions about the tests and the questionnaire (which were unfortunately not completed until class 5). Plus, we carried out the next activities related to the book:

- Two pictionary sessions (classes 3 and 5): Students were presented words to write using the Zoom Whiteboard or Google Jamboard, and to make everyone else guess the word represented by the drawing.

- Related youtube video Who IS Sherlock Holmes? (TED-ED, 2016) (class 6): A video that contextualized the character of Sherlock Holmes and reinforced particular words such as "coat" or "crime". Students were asked questions about vocabulary and comprehension of both the video and the book.

- Kahoot comprehension quizz (class 8): Students had to answer questions about two of the stories contained in the book, allowing them to remember the plot development.

- Nearpod minimal pairs vocabulary identification (class 9): Participants had to join images with related words, reinforcing already-reviewed vocabulary (e.g: Golden tooth, thick beard, etc.).

Book two was given three and a half classes, and the activities were mainly concerned with the development of the book, using the reading strategies that we previously presented. Also, we made use of the book's last page (Cripwell & Jones, 1986, p. 44), which included comprehension exercises that we carried out in class 13. Still, we presented the video "Why are sharks so awesome?" (TED-ED, 2016), and instructed participants to watch it again at home to compose a related drawing with vocabulary (see figure 5). Furthermore, book three was treated similarly, with three and a half class assigned, comprehension activities taken from the last three pages, and a drawing activity also taken from the book (Strange, 1991, pp. 45- 46).

Book four was the one that had only two sessions and a half. That is, due to time constraints, we had to use the last half of class 18 to carry out the final test. However, we completed the book and asked basic comprehension questions in every session from class 16 to class 18. Unfortunately, we could not do any special activity related to book four.

Needless to say, we carried out the methodology of pre, while, and post-reading activities in every single class, and made students use the reading strategies presented at the beginning of the intervention. Students had to read parts of the book and summarize the readings at the end of the class, as well as at the beginning of the next session. In order to do so, time had to be augmented after the first book, from one hour or one hour and a half to two hours in classes 9 to 18. That way, we could cover all the books, even if some sections (either

a specific number of pages or a short chapter) were assigned as homework for students to read, summarize and recite in class.

Moving on to actual productions from participants, they had to make four drawings and attach vocabulary related to the books. However, due to time restrictions, we could only ask them to make two drawings, one related to the book Shark Attack, and another one related to The Black Cat and Other Stories. Examples of the drawings can be seen in figures 4 and 5. Students were given the choice to draw either online (figure 4) or physically (figure 5). As seen in the images, participants had to associate vocabulary from the stories to the drawings, in order to reinforce words that were read in class.

Figure 4

Example of a physical drawing from students
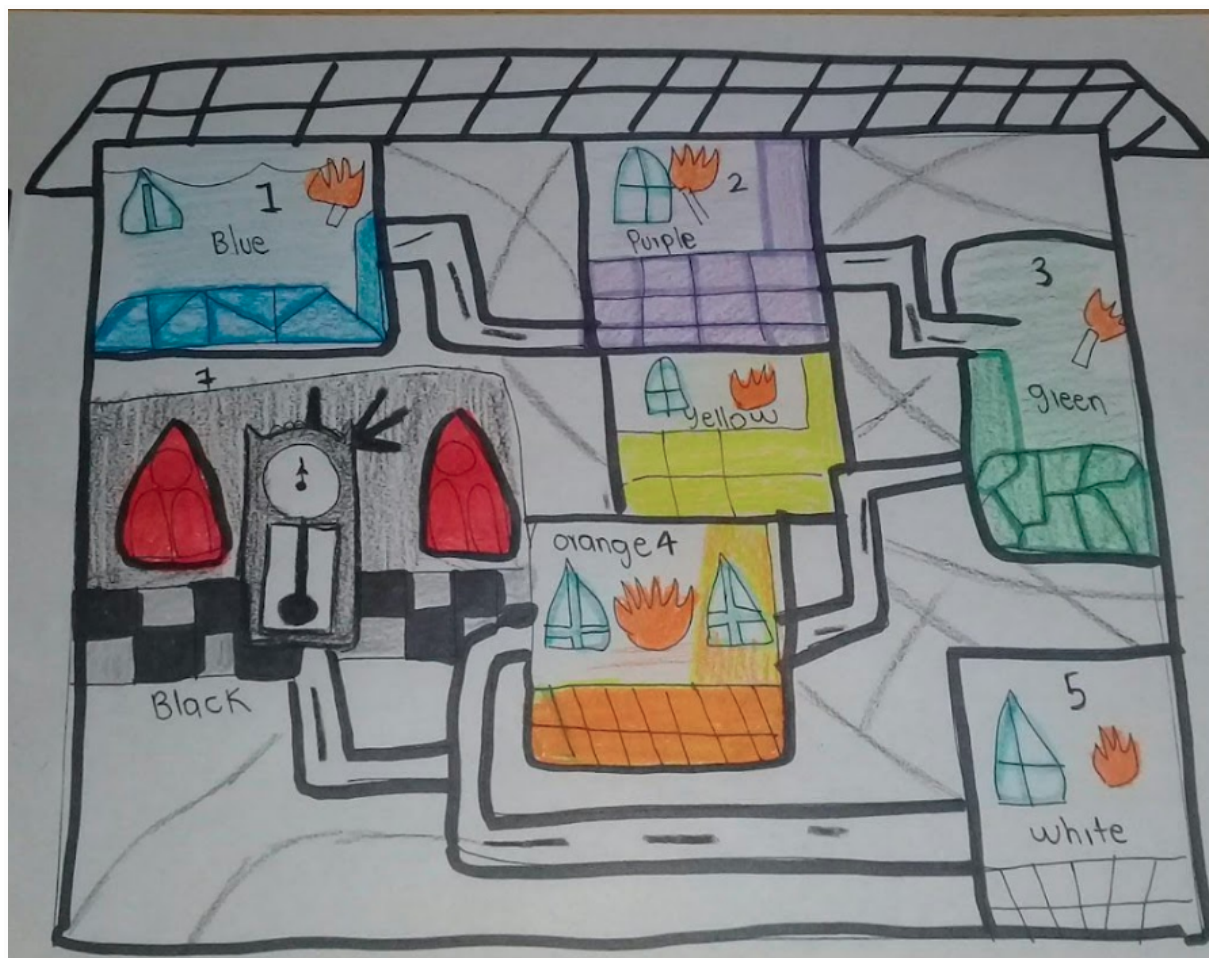
Figure 5

Example of online drawing from students

Moving on to the DCIs, results in the final test indicated a significant difference from the initial diagnostic test (appendix F). After the implementation of the final test, we carried out a comparison of the questions between the two tests, which is organized in three main categories (leaving out the likert-scale statements), depending on the improvement percentage (table 5):

Table 5

Number of items depending on improvement

Category	Number of items
Improved	17 (14 close-ended +3 open-ended)

Stayed the same	22 (21 close-ended +1 open-ended)
Decreased	8
Total	47

The criterion to compare both tests was mainly the percentage of improvement. We need to clarify that, even though five people presented the diagnostic test, six people presented the final test. Therefore, there had to be at least a 16.7% difference (which represents one person among six individuals) between the answers from the first and second test to consider it a deviation from the original result (appendix G). In that order of ideas, there were seventeen answers that improved after the intervention, and eight that worsened, including open-ended items. Thus, if we subtract decreased from the improved category, we obtain a difference of six answers, which can be argued to be the real improvement from the participant's answers.

However, the answers can be separated into sub-categories, according to the two initial variables of this study. Table 6 shows the different patterns from improved answers, while table 7 does the same for the worsened items. In the vocabulary variable, we separated the types of words morphologically, including nouns (any form of place, people, thing, etc.) verbs (actions), adverbs (qualifiers of verbs) and prepositions (connectors before nouns). In the comprehension variable, we labeled questions as "literal" (answers are explicit) or "inferential" (answers are implicit), since there were no "critical" comprehension questions in the tests.

Table 6

Types of improved items in the final test

Variable	Number of questions	Type of item
Vocabulary	9	Nouns(5), Verbs (1), Adverbs (2), Prepositions (1)
Comprehension	5	Literal (4), Inference (1)

In table 6 it is specified the number and type of questions that improved. Vocabulary was the variable that increased the most, mainly in the category of nouns present in the graded-readers such as "handkerchief", "clerk", "village" (from questions 7, 11 and 12 respectively), and adverbs like "lately" (question 35). Comprehension on the other hand, improved mostly in the literal sense, as in question 14, where the participant had to respond to the destination of the trip explicitly-mentioned in the paragraph.

Table 7

Types of worsened items in the final test

Variable	Number of questions	Type of item
Vocabulary	2	Nouns (1); Verbs (1)

Comprehension	6	Literal (5), Inference (1)

On the other hand, table 7 shows which variables worsened after the intervention. Mainly, reading comprehension decreased, especially in the literal sense. Vocabulary was also affected, but not as significantly as comprehension.

Regarding the remaining four open-ended questions, we decided to include an image related to each book (either the cover or a character from the book) and ask participants to make an inference about it. The only differences in the second test was that, first, participants already knew what the books were about at the time of the test, and second, that answers of open-ended questions changed from optional (diagnostic test) to mandatory (final test). It was then expected that they could come up with short sentences, or phrases at least, that captured the essence of the image that was directly related to the book. In table 8 we separated the questions by book and the types of answers given by the students.

Table 8

Types of improved items in the final test

Question	Diagnostic test	Final test	Improvement
#1	Literal answers (4), judgments of value (1)	**Summarizing (4)** Literal (2),	Yes

#26	Judgments of value (1), literal (1) and related themes (1)	Literal (3), **summarizing (2)**, judgments of value (1),	Partial
#33	Judgments of value(2), literal (1), related themes (1)	Literal (3), judgments of value (3)	No
#37	Judgments of value (2), literal (1), related themes (1)	**Summarizing (3),** literal (2), judgments of value (1),	Yes

Table 8 shows the improvement of the types of answers given in the first and second test. We separated the answers into 4 categories: Literal (repetition or paraphrasing of the information shown in the picture), judgments of value (qualification of the information, using adjectives and quantifiers), related themes (abstraction of the general topic in a few words) and summarizing (expressing one of the main ideas from the text). The criterion to establish if there was any sort of improvement was, mainly, the presence of any type of summarizing ideas in the participants' response, which had to be larger in number than any other category. Two answers, #1 and #37 improved exponentially, #26 only did so partially, while #37 did not show any increasing percentage.

After showing the results of the tests, we must evidence the insights that participants had in the final interviews. We carried out seven semi-structured interviews, one per participant. Due to the fact that the questions from the interview were mainly concerned with

the evaluation of the intervention, the ER approach and the activities, they will be discussed in the next section. We will only mention the categories from the interview which are related to our variables (appendix H).

First, most participants claimed to have learned a lot of vocabulary due to the intervention, due to the reading frequency. Also, they affirm that now they are aware of the pronunciation of the words they have learned, since they could hear the correct pronunciation while reading the books in class. Only one person told us that there he had not improved in English a lot, since he had not read much in that language before this project took place. On the other hand, all participants seemed to be confident to have improved their own reading comprehension due to several factors. Three people thought that they had improved due to their recent understanding of vocabulary; another person attributed their improvement to online simultaneous translation using the internet, while somebody else said that group reading helped him to reinforce the general meaning of the texts.

4.3   Evaluation of the activities

Firstly, a direct relationship was observed between the activities performed and vocabulary acquisition (the variable that improved the most after the intervention). Most of the students expressed in the interview that they took advantage of the technological advantages found in the ICTs, such as the capacity to read ubiquitously, and the available digital reading strategies (like highlighting important parts). Actually, the vast majority of participants expressed during the final interview having improved their vocabulary, with the exception of one student who was doubtful. Likewise, in the inital questionnaire six out of seven students expressed the same idea with the exception of one student who mentioned having known the vocabulary beforehand.

In the same vein, the aforementioned data correlates to the information evidenced in the questionnaire, where 71,4% of the participants mentioned that they read using mainly computers, cell phones or tablets. Participants claimed that the usage of digital media helped them acquire vocabulary and/or reinforce already existing words, since they could make use of strategies such as note-taking in the same e-book, highlighting key aspects or identifying lexical patterns. Prior information can be summarized in figure 6.

Figure 6

Contributing factors to vocabulary improvement
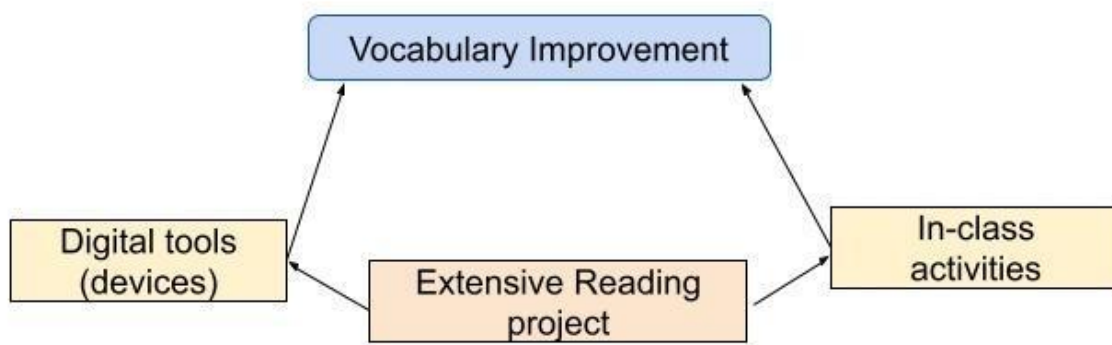
Secondly, it is necessary to establish that the extensive reading intervention had a positive effect in the way in which participants viewed the reading habit in the English language. In fact, six of them in the interview (appendix H) said that they would continue reading literature texts in English. Initially, 57,1% of the participants had expressed in the questionnaire that they would develop the reading habit in English, which was later confirmed by the interviews, where six out of seven expressed that reading during the ten-week intervention did make them develop that habit. However, from those six people, two claimed that the habit would only be developed if they maintained it after the intervention. That is, the reading habit in ER would be truly established if high frequency was

maintained individually, reflecting continuity after any type of group experience such as our project (see figure 7).

Figure 7

Contributing factors to development of the reading habit
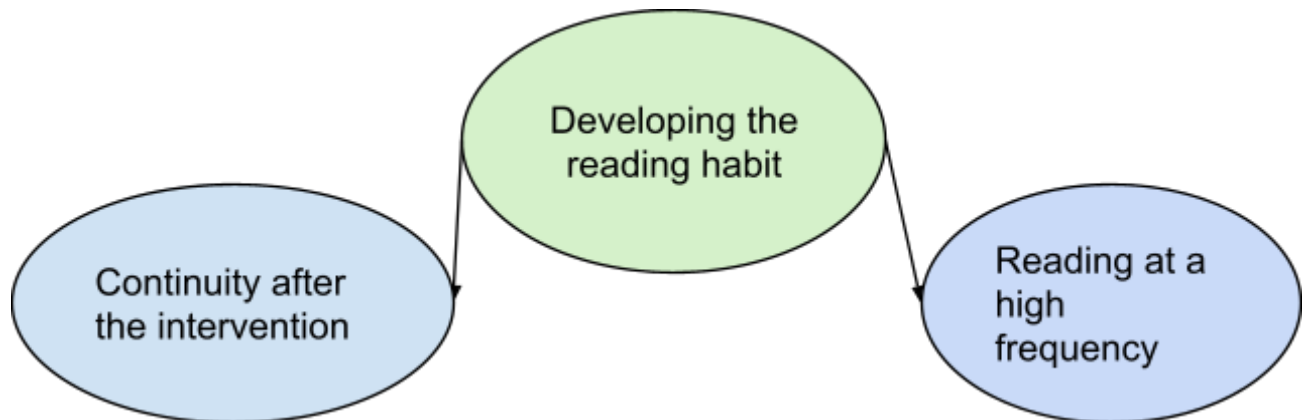
Furthermore, students' motivation was key to understanding the final differentiation between initial and final attitude towards extensive reading, towards the class and, naturally, the activities developed throughout the project. Initially, it was taken from the questionnaire that 51,7% of students were considerably motivated at an early stage to read in English (and the rest were at least a little motivated), which could have contributed to participants engaging in activities and participating in class. Additionally, students were willing to cooperate with home and in-class tasks such as individual and group reading, artistic drawing, and answering general questions. In fact, at the end of the intervention, six out of seven participants expressed their motivation to continue reading in English, more specifically 86% were completely motivated and only 14 % felt doubtful about it (as seen in figure 8).

Figure 8

Comparison of student's motivation and perception towards the intervention
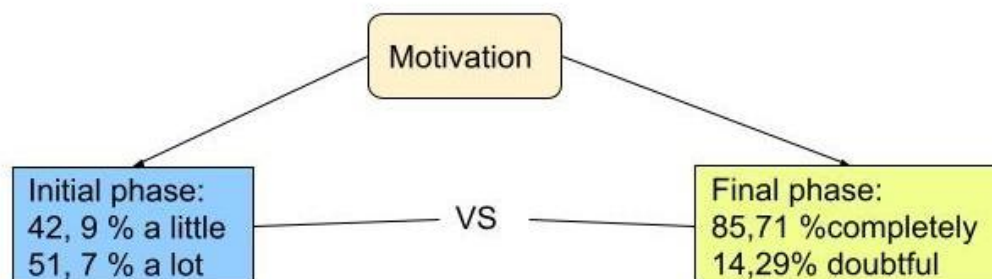
Previous experience is important to determine the potential ability of the group of participants to engage in the activities and to abstract the information more clearly, accurately and concisely. Despite the fact that five out of seven people said in the questionnaire that they had read in English before, they had read in English occasionally or rarely when they were asked in the interview. Even so, they all thought that their English reading skills would improve with the extensive reading project. The information varies partially from what was obtained during the final interview, since only one person expressed having previous experience reading English texts (figure 9). Last but not least, what is evident is the clear improvement in vocabulary and a slight improvement in reading comprehension resulting in a final reading skill improvement (figure 9).

Figure 9

Comparison of student's expectations and actual improvement after extensive reading
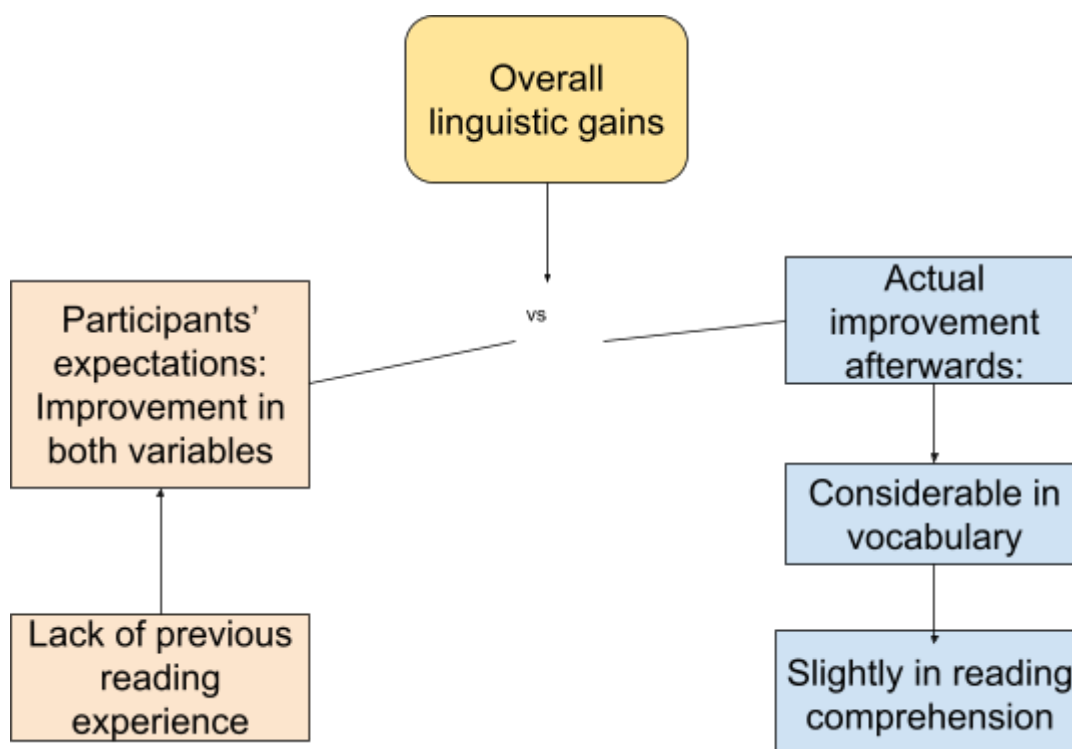
In the first stage, all students agreed in the questionnaire on the fact that extensive reading was key to achieving a reading comprehension improvement. Furthermore, in the final stage of the interview they all expressed having improved their reading comprehension, due to the fact of understanding vocabulary (three participants), using online simultaneous translation (one participant) and group reading (one participant). Nonetheless, the actual results collected after the final test showed a completely different scenario where there was only a slight increase in reading comprehension (see tables 6 and 7). It is then logical to say that the majority of participants had the idea that reading comprehension is mostly based on vocabulary improvement, and not necessarily on other important aspects such as grasping overall meaning of the sentences. This perception might have to do with the outcomes in tests, for participants privileged understanding isolated words instead of whole sentences and/or paragraphs.

4.4   General evaluation of the intervention

Before talking about the outcomes of the project, there are other details to be addressed. Leaving aside the linguistic (improvement of variables) and perceptual aspects (participants' perspectives), there has to be a mention of other, often overlooked, social-geographic . Those characteristics are age and region. Regarding the first aspect, students were from the age range from nine to fourteen, which classified them between kids and pre-teenagers. Participants were mainly participatory, even if the age range might indicate otherwise; in fact, they engaged in the sessions, and read out loud when asked to do so. On the other hand, the regional differences did play a role in the intervention. The population was mainly rural, and not from the same area (some are from Santander, others from Boyacá and other departments). Students had problems with their internet connection, suddenly disconnecting from the meetings, but coming back most of the time. Hopefully, those regional differences did not get in the way of learning, even if they might have compromised some classes. Still, students could watch the recording of the classes, available in the Google Classroom, to catch up with the rest of the participants.

We can conclude that we partially met the main objective, since the vocabulary length and the reading comprehension of the participants were improved. However, it was the vocabulary variable that improved significantly, while comprehension only did so minimally.

Initially, we wanted to cause an impact both socially and academically. Socially, we were part of an extensive reading process in a foreign language, given to students that, just as they said so themselves, had not had any similar experience. Therefore, the participants could, to a significant extent, improve their reading abilities in English, which implies a minor change in their lives. Academically, we sought to expand the research on ER, which is,

as mentioned earlier, scarce in Colombia. That is why this paper serves a contribution to the academic field of ELT in reading-based instruction, even with all its limitations.

Just as Song (2020) had stated before, it was expected to improve mainly in the area of vocabulary and slightly in the area of comprehension, due to the type of short-term program that we developed for our project. Song had carried out a similar study in an even shorter intervention, which lasted only eight weeks, but had very similar results to our own. Furthermore, we could prove what Cheetham (2015) affirmed: The same texts had to be repeated for students to acquire vocabulary and improve reading skills.

Lastly, the intervention was evaluated by the students in the final test. We created three likert-scale questions that were meant for participants to assess three aspects of the intervention from one (1) to five (5): Their performance as students, our performance as teachers, and the activities developed throughout the process. Students labeled both our job as teachers and the activities with the maximum grade, and their performance with an average of four (4), with only one person stating that they had perfect score (5), and another claiming to have a mediocre one (3). We can then deduce that their perceptions about the extensive reading intervention were almost entirely positive, correlating to the information taken from the individual interviews.

5. Conclusions

5.1   Contributions to the community

Initially, we had thought of making two types of contributions: Social and academic. In the first aspect, we could enrich the abilities of students that do not have the economic or educational means to pay for or attend a common English course. In other words, we made part of a foundation and contributed to their social goals of instructing unprivileged students

with knowledge they would otherwise miss. On the other hand, we contributed to the academic community in ELT because we implemented a reading approach which is not common in Colombia, and, thus, provided a reference for further work in extensive reading.

As said earlier, we partially met the main objective in a partial way. That is, the research question can be answered with the next statement: The ten-week extensive reading intervention improved the vocabulary length of the participants significantly, while their reading comprehension was only improved minimally. Plus, we made students produce graphic evidence, which were the drawings, that reinforced both variables but privileged vocabulary. All of these facts will be shared with the community of the foundation once the paper is revised by the school of languages of our university.

5.2   Reflections about our development as professionals

The teaching-learning experience at the Foundation allowed us to learn about a wide range of skills and attitudes that the teaching community faces on a daily basis. Circumstances of time, mode and place, as well as the accompaniment of the participants was conducive to understanding the individual challenges faced by young learners in Colombia, such as lack of access to quality education, and to technological resources and internet connection, as well as the need for greater and more meaningful exposure to the English language. In this way, we learned that our role as teachers in society plays a key role in triggering other skills and benefits as part of the same classroom intervention, through activities such as drawing, reading, and debating, competencies that can enhance other skills that can be useful in other areas. At the end of our stage in the foundation, we consider it necessary to establish starting points to have an advantageous session and be as dynamic as possible. We learned lessons in different teaching aspects, such as preparing class,

anticipating problems, trying to solve academic and personal conflicts from students that are not close to us, using and adapting appropriate materials for specific populations, dividing time to cover all class activities, reviewing and reading before and after the sessions, as well as implementing and reformulating innovative strategies to facilitate knowledge and adequate learning.

5.3   Limitations

There were some limitations that are necessary to be mentioned. First, there were only a small number of books to choose from, due to scarcity of graded-readers online, and the few options we had to select physical material, which was the reason why we had to narrow our options to a few books. Second, participants presented DCIs discontinuously due to absences and/or newcomers causing a lack of important information and problems in the data analysis stage. Third, participants in the diagnostic test did not have a specified section to type their name, making it impossible to compare them individually. Instead, we had to stick to group results. Fourth, could have given socially-acceptable answers in the DCIs due to the classical response bias, which is prevalent but uncontrollable. Fifth, attendance was inconsistent from students, owing to several reasons, which could have been one of the causes of the significant but still minor improvement in reading comprehension and summarizing capabilities.

In terms of reading strategies, students had the opportunity to learn how to use them in the first two classes; however, it is unknown to us whether they kept using them on their own or not. Besides, there were only eighteen sessions in the intervention over the course of ten weeks, which were not enough for students to significantly improve reading comprehension; even though it was the "expected result" for such a short intervention, we as

teachers expected to achieve a higher outcome. At last, internet breakdowns compromised some classes, making it difficult for students to follow the lessons and for us, as teachers, to convey our ideas or develop the lesson with natural flow and efficiency.

6. Recommendations and further work

After the intervention, we compiled a list of recommendations for any person willing to undertake a similar endeavor:

- If possible, we believe that observing at least two classes in the intervention before actually carrying out the intervention can prevent many drawbacks or complications. Naturally, that only applies if the institution in question already has an established group for the researcher(s).

- When it comes to online teaching, the researchers need to make sure that all participants are present in class when DCIs are implemented, and that they finish in class as well. Leaving students, especially kids, to carry out any activity by themselves in a virtual manner is a recipe of confusion and delays, which can cause problems in the data analysis phase.

- It is important to have a rules and project presentation as an introduction in the first session, and to specify what is expected from the participants and how they can achieve the goals. That way, students know what to do in class in order to get the best results and enjoy the intervention as much as possible. Even better, rules can be established collectively with the participants, concerning participation, responsibility and other factors.

- It is better to choose a large list of materials months before the intervention, trying to have as many options for students to choose from. If the researchers can have access

to graded-readers without problems, students can choose from a vast amount of titles, making the experience more immersive for them. Also, if the books can be accessed online, the researchers can skip any transcription process.

- Reading strategies can be reinforced at least two times after the first session, to make sure that students do understand how to utilize them with texts that can either be the same as the books from class, or any others.

- Educational institutions should consider the importance of materials that support the learning of a second or foreign language. Books and related materials are key for the creation of an extensive reading program, since participants/students should be able to choose among a significant number of titles that suit their needs.

- Extensive reading should be included as part of all regular English courses. Students could enjoy the experience of choosing and reading for the sake of it, allowing them to be active participants of their own learning process. Plus, they can make considerable linguistic gains due to the constant exposure to the texts.

6.1   Further work

Research in extensive reading should continue to be developed in Colombia using ICTs, or trying to implement a blended modality of instruction (on-site and online). Studies can focus on longitudinal research that takes into account each student's learning process, with a long project where constant exposure to the texts is ensured, that combines both individual and group work.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Informed consent contained in the DCIs

Este instrumento de recolección de datos será usado únicamente para propósitos académicos de parte de nosotros, Fabián Alexander Acevedo y Juan Martín Illera, estudiantes de octavo semestre, al hacer parte del trabajo "Una Intervención de Lectura Extensiva en una Fundación Social", la cual tiene como objetivo realizar una intervención didáctica en una entidad social para mejorar las habilidades de lectura en inglés de los estudiantes involucrados.

Este trabajo hace parte del desarrollo de las materias Trabajo de Grado I y Trabajo de Grado II, que corresponde al pensum de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander.

Este cuestionario será realizado en inglés para verificar una competencia de lectura básica por parte de los/las participantes.

Luego de leer este consentimiento informado, ¿Está de acuerdo en participar?

Appendix B: Copy of the Google form of the diagnostic criterion-referenced test:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uYvjC5EiPpz37GpQKqjEq1eGYqF_trdwq6lARi9Q98s/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix C: Copy of the Google form of the final criterion-referenced test:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uufu-iSA1oxi_r2JBJWyBHmuF5v0KyK4BqLcJ-aylQM/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix D: Copy Google form of the questionnaire about attitudes and preferences:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaTJyOf1nzh4E0k-8saSRyNMyU9H0-sCYAU2
ICwIJmkwQoDA/formResponse

Appendix E: Interview format

School of Languages – English Teaching Program
Trabajo de grado II - Interview format

Nombre:_____

Querido participante, por favor responde las siguientes preguntas con respecto a la intervención de que hiciste parte en el rol de estudiante:

1. ¿Disfrutaste de la experiencia de lectura extensiva? ¿Qué te gustó /te disgustó más? ¿Si te disgustó, por qué te disgustó?

2. ¿Crees que la experiencia de lectura te motivó a leer más en inglés? ¿Continuarías leyendo libros en inglés en el futuro?

3. ¿Disfrutaste leer libros digitales? ¿Por qué / por qué no?

4. ¿Habías tenido antes alguna experiencia similar de lectura con textos en inglés (novelas cortas y cuentos)?

5. ¿Crees que la experiencia de lectura incrementó tu vocabulario en inglés? ¿Por qué?

6. ¿Crees que la experiencia de lectura mejoró tu comprensión de lectura en inglés? ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Qué aspectos fueron para ti los más demandantes/difíciles de la experiencia de lectura en inglés?

8. Pregunta personalizada para cada subgrupo, proveer ejemplos según corresponda:

   - Para los más aventajados: ¿Qué te ayudó exactamente a comprender los textos en inglés?

   - Para los menos aventajados: ¿Qué te impidió exactamente comprender los textos en su totalidad?

9. ¿Disfrutaste de las actividades que se realizaron basándose en el contenido de los libros? ¿Por qué / por qué no?

Appendix F: Google sheet with the diagnostic criterion-referenced test answers:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VsY7M9zYVzEounzxZtIFpjWJOkW6cna5vaNNn mmMtNA/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix G: Google sheet with the final criterion-referenced test answers:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T1AX19PousFqEVWeq3cl1vl-bjxobyGhXTThW5F NiZs/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix H: Google sheet with the answers of the interview:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13jKVYwqdw86aqDDtYfmTwQfOKMaY7RQVWgi _Lf-JtB8/edit?usp=sharing