

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua.

UNAN-Managua

Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria.

FAREM-Estelí



Effectiveness of Real-Life based Passages on the Development of Reading Comprehension in tenth Grade Students at the “National Institute of Palacagüina Rodolfo Castillo” during the first semester 2017.

Authors

1. María Zeneyda Calderón Dávila
2. Mariel Omara Sánchez Talavera
3. Kenia Elizabeth González Olivas

Adviser

M.Sc. Jeydels Alexander Espinoza Barahona

Estelí, November 2017

2017: AÑO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD EMPRENDEDORA



Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, Managua
(UNAN-MANAGUA)

~

Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí
Departamento Ciencias de la Educación y Humanidades

Carta de recomendación del tutor

Por medio de la presente hago constar que **Mariel Omara Sánchez Talavera, María Zeneyda Calderón Dávila y Kenia Elizabeth González Olivas**, estudiantes de la carrera Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, han cumplido con los requisitos científicos, técnicos y metodológicos estipulados en la normativa correspondiente para la culminación de su monografía y por ende sus estudios superiores.

Por lo anterior se autoriza para que realicen la presentación y defensa de su trabajo de investigación, ante el tribunal que se estime conveniente.

Se extiende la presente a los veinte días del mes de noviembre de dos mil diecisiete.

Atentamente,

MSc. Jeydels Alexander Espinoza Barahona
Docente
UNAN-Managua/FAREM-Estelí

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension can be really challenging to master, especially for learners of English as a second language (ESL). The goal of reading is to derive meaning and comprehend what we read. The main topic of this research is “Effectiveness of real life based passages to improve reading comprehension at the National Institute of Palacaguina “Rodolfo Castillo” in 10th Grade Students, during the 1st Semester 2017. The focus of this study was on whether or not learners exposed to real-life based passages would improve their reading comprehension by learning with authentic materials as opposed to passages from textbooks.

In order to achieve this goal, twelve students from a government-run secondary school were selected as participants. The school is located in the city of Palacaguina, Department of Madriz, Nicaragua. The study was carried out over three weeks (6 visits). The data for this research was gathered through observation guides, interviews to the students and an interview that was directly applied to the teacher. This data was then analyzed under the qualitative approach.

The results reflected that the use of real-life based passages as one type of authentic materials is of great significance to the personal and cognitive development of learners of a second language. It has been proved that the use of authentic materials along with engaging teaching strategies will result in significant learning of the language, particularly in the enhancement of the reading skill.

Dedicatory

We dedicate our work, firstly to God who is our sublime creator. We thank him for giving us life, wisdom, understanding, strength, good will and enlightenment in all the development of our research.

We also thank our parents for their unconditional support in different areas and for being the ones behind this project. Thanks for the motivation and for caring about dreams.

To Mrs. Isidra Herrera Aguirre, who helped us at the moment of requesting information to enrich our work. She helped us obtain new and different knowledge to our benefit.

And we dedicate this work in a very special way to our advisor, MSc. Jeydels Barahona, for being the one who guided us during the research process.

Today we can say that we have achieved our goal. To all of them thank you so much!

Acknowledgments

Firstly, we give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ because he gave us the wisdom and strength in all of this process.

We express our sincere gratitude to all of those who have helped us in one way or another during this research process, especially during the investigation and during the writing process of this paper. We want to make mention the following people in particular for their invaluable contribution to this thesis.

Our special thanks go to our Adviser MSc. Jeydels Barahona, who has been our guide in all the aspects of this research paper. His contribution to the investigation, writing and logistic of this thesis is invaluable. His ideas, comments, and encouragement have enriched not only the content of this thesis but also our academic, professional, and personal life. He is our model supervisor. He always had time to correct our English and to comment on our writing style.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to the teacher: Mrs. Isidra Herrera Aguirre for being a big help in all of this process. Thanks for her unconditional support and all her contributions for the best development of this research.

Our gratitude also goes to our parents who motivated us to continue in this process of learning every single day and also who supported us financially throughout this process of study.

We would also like to thank all the students who took part in our research, to the English teacher and the National Institute Rodolfo Castillo.

Thousands of thanks to all who took part in the process of this document

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT | 2 |
| 3. BACKGROUND..... | 3 |
| 4. JUSTIFICATION..... | 4 |
| 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... | 5 |
| 5.1 English as a Second Language ESL | 5 |
| 5.2 The four language skills | 6 |
| 5.3 Reading | 7 |
| 5.4 Reading Comprehension..... | 8 |
| 5.5 The Importance of Teaching Reading..... | 9 |
| 5.6 Authentic Materials | 9 |
| 5.7 Important Factors in Choosing Authentic Reading Material | 10 |
| 5.8 The Use Of Authentic Reading Materials In The Classroom | 11 |
| 6 RESEARCH VARIABLES | 13 |
| 7. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN | 14 |
| 8. CHRONOGRAM OF ACTIVITIES | 17 |
| 9. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION | 20 |
| 10. CONCLUSION | 24 |
| 11. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 26 |
| 12. ANNEXES..... | 29 |

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the English language has become a need to have access to better opportunities. It is a language that joins countries, races, social lives and business. English is a fundamental subject in the scope of the educational curriculum according to the ministry of education. MINED considers the learning process of a new language as an essential part of the development of any person. However, reading comprehension has become a challenge for the students, probably because many of our secondary school English classes are based on traditional materials and textbooks whose content is set to foreign situations and fictional scenarios. Consequently, teachers are in constant search for creative methods that improve and motivate students to learn the language.

Our research is focused on the effectiveness of using authentic materials to improve reading comprehension in tenth grade students. These kinds of materials have proven to make students feel motivated and interested in the English class. Authentic passages could make the content easier to understand and therefore have a positive effect in their learning process.

As part of the scope of this research, we have created some authentic materials for the English class that is real-life based passages, whose primary sources of information were real people, interviewed and recorded on three different topics. In this document, we present the passages that were created based on interviews and how these passages were integrated into lesson plans in conjunction with motivational strategies for the development of reading comprehension in real English classes.

The main objective to fulfill with this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the real-life passages for the development of reading comprehension in tenth-grade students at the National Institute “Rodolfo Castillo” during the first semester 2017.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most of the time, English classes are based on traditional materials and textbooks whose content is set to foreign situations and fictional scenarios. If teachers use innovative materials while teaching, it is probable that student will be more interested in the class and learn more as a result.

Students should be exposed to appropriate knowledge and teachers should try different strategies and teaching methods to enhance the students' skills. Teaching reading should not be considered a boring task. Instead, it should be an innovative process with interesting, new knowledge; including key vocabulary, phrases, grammar structures and some cultural insights.

2.1 Guideline questions

1. What is the best approach to create authentic reading materials based on real-life experiences for the development of reading comprehension?
2. How to implement real-life based passages in English classes as a motivational strategy to enhance reading?
3. How effective are real-life based passages for the development of reading comprehension?

3. BACKGROUND

In the past, some similar studies have been conducted by other students of the English major offered by UNAN-Managua. According to Rodríguez Toruño & Téllez(2010) on the research about reading comprehension carried out at at the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario high school* and at *Colegio Rural Casa Blanca de Pueblo Nuevo*, there are strategies that help students improve their reading skill. The survey made by the researches showed that students enjoy learning English through stories or readings about real-life or daily situations that call their attention and interest.

Aráuz, Molina, & Molina (2014) carried out a similar research on reading comprehension. Their results suggest that some methodological strategies are more suitable for reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. They affirm that the use of reading in English classes is fundamental to the development and learning process of a second language. At the same time, it makes it easier to improve listening, speaking and reading comprehension about what they read.

On the side of authentic materials, the research by Alaniz, Barahona, & Ortuño (2011) worked on creating audio-visual authentic materials for the development of listening and speaking. 61% of the students strongly agree that they understood the message in short one-minute videos. The pictures and sounds in the videos they created had a good impact in the comprehension of the topics. Almost 95% of the student agreed that the drawing or pictures helped them to understand the message within the videos. Everyone agreed that the use of micropills, that is authentic videos based on real-life topic, are an excellent material to learn and practice a new language.

Taking into account the results of these research papers, we pretend to develop our research focusing on the effectiveness of real-life based passages for the development of reading comprehension.

4. JUSTIFICATION

Reading is a very critical skill that many students can take for granted. Most high school students in Nicaragua are not used to practice much reading in the English class. Students will often feel discouraged to read during the class; therefore strategies that motivate them to read in the English class are needed.

Students often show a lot of problems such as lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, difficulties in translation and weaknesses in grammatical tenses. Sometimes, teachers do not have teaching resources for the English class. These reasons have motivated us to do this investigation to find out other existing reasons that are influencing the development of the reading ability.

The results of this research will provide useful insights about the way authentic reading passages can influence reading comprehension in students. These passages will be based on the students' learning needs and their environment as well, which is why they have more potential to motivate them to practice reading.

This research has been based on the importance of English as a foreign language in our daily lives to implement strategies to develop reading comprehension and to determine the skills acquired by tenth Grade Students at the National Institute "Rodolfo Castillo", during the first semester 2017.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, we will review the literature related to the strategies and methods for teaching reading in English as a second language. In addition, some of the theory regarding the use of authentic materials will be covered. Thus, this theoretical framework will introduce concepts related to the reading skill, its importance, and different methods to teach the skill, the definition of authentic materials and its use, all of which are of high level of significance to plan the study and analyze the data.

5.1 English as a Second Language ESL

As an essential piece of our language experience, readings can be of great value to foreign language teaching which can propel language learning. According to Richard Lane (2009), the English language is now closer to being the world's second language than any other since the dominance of Latin in Western civilization. Today, English is the official or first language most popular around the world.

The best estimates are that 50,000,000 primary school students and 75,000,000 secondary school students are currently studying English as a second language. To this can be added millions more who are studying English at the adult and college/university levels.

Learning a new language takes time and dedication. Once learners make it, being fluent in a second language offers numerous benefits and opportunities. Learning a second language is exciting and beneficial at all ages. It offers practical, intellectual and many aspirational benefits.

5.2 The four language skills

For Charles Bowes (2016), language is the means of thoughts and learning. Thanks to the language skills, we receive pieces of information, we provide them and construct our own reality.

Which are the four basic language skills and what do they consist of?

Listening: There's a big difference between hearing and listening: hearing means to perceive sounds vibrations; listening involves understanding and giving meaning to what you hear.

Speaking: Children develop this language skill by listening to their relatives. They start relating specific sounds with a concrete meaning in a natural way. A good start for the academic success is a big contact with the language: the more parents speak to their children the better they get prepared to assimilate knowledge in the school.

Reading: The development of reading is the key for a good learning; it's absolutely necessary to understand what you read in order to assimilate the contents.

Writing: It's the way to put on a paper the words you say. For a child it's the longest process.

We learn our mother tongue by listening, speaking and later by reading and writing. Nevertheless, when learning English or another language, we have to develop the four skills in the same time insomuch as by growing, we start losing our capability to absorb languages and we focus on the codes of our mother tongue.

But in this case we are focused in reading skill. This work aims to develop our Reading Comprehension, which is basically the evaluation of what we have interpreted or understood a particular narrative, extracting what is termed as the main ideas that mark precisely the essence of what we have read, as well as giving

place to the main concepts that are turned in the content of the narration or the text that we have analyzed.

5.3 Reading

According to Mikulecky (2008), *“Reading is a conscious and unconscious thinking process. The reader applies many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended. The reader does this by comparing information in the text to his or her background knowledge and prior experience”*.

Reading is a number of interactive processes between the reader and the text, in which readers use their knowledge to build, to create, and to construct meaning. Reading means different things to different people, for some it is recognizing written words, while for others it is an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking. However reading always has a purpose. It is something that we do every day, it is an integral part of our daily lives, taken very much for granted and generally assumed to be something that everyone can do. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading.

Alderson (2000) defines reading as *“...an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed*.

Reading is seen from different aspects to different persons, for some it is only recognizing written words, whereas for others it is an opportunity to reinforce pronunciation, teach vocabulary, improve fluency and practice speaking. On the other hand reading always must have a purpose. The cause for reading depends immensely on the purpose for reading. According to Alderson (2000.) Reading can have three main purposes, *for survival, for learning or for pleasure*. *“ Reading for survival is considered to be in response to our environment, to find out information and can include street signs, advertising, and timetables”*. It depends infinitely on the day to day needs of the reader and often involves an immediate response to a situation. In contrast reading for learning is considered to be the type of reading

done in the classroom and is goal orientated. While Reading for pleasure is something that *does not have to* be done.

The Pedagogue Nuttall (1996), in his research “Teaching Reading English Skills in a Second language”, shows that the central ideas behind readings are:

- The idea of meaning
- The transfer of meaning from one mind to another
- The transfer of a message from writer to reader
- How we get meaning by reading
- How the reader, the writer and the text all contribute to the process.

The most comprehensive description of the reading process are *interactive models*, “...in which every component in the reading process can interact with any other component”. For Joseph (2000), reading is considered to be an interactive process (a conversation between writer/reader, even though the writer is not present) and for it to occur both processes are necessary, top-down to predict the meaning and bottom-up to check it. The two are therefore complementary ways of processing a text. Knowledge and experiences of the world around us also influence how a text is read or processed. It operates actively and constructively, with our knowledge of the world being a continuous process that upon receiving new information interprets it on the basis of what is already known.

5.4 Reading Comprehension

According to Wallace (2001), most of reading process can be seen mostly as a cognitive activity. Besides, it gives greater prominence to the students’ “*affective in engaging themselves into the text. Regarding the cognitive process and students*” engagement to the text, the terms of reading comprehension become a vital component in reading process. “*Reading comprehension can be described as a complex process which needs readers active thinking in constructing meaning to get deep understanding to the concepts and information displayed from the text*”.

Westwood (2008) states that besides using prior knowledge, students should have good word recognition skills and implement some reading strategies such as identifying main ideas, making connections, questioning, inferring, and

predicting who asserted that a good reader is considered to be actively engage with the text and use comprehension strategies. It can be concluded that to comprehend a text successfully, there are various factors that contribute into the process which are L2 language knowledge and reading strategies that the readers applied through reading the text.

5.5 The Importance of Teaching Reading

Hedge (2003) states that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals:

- the ability to read a wide range of texts in English. This is the long range goal most teachers seek to develop through independent readers outside EFL/ESL classroom.
- building a knowledge of the language which will facilitate reading ability
- building schematic knowledge.
- the ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (i.e. skimming, scanning)
- developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English
- taking a critical stance to the contents of the texts

The last goal can be implemented at an advanced level. Students, however, should be kept aware that not all Internet content is authentic since there are no “gate keepers” and anyone can post whatever he/she likes in this cyberspace.

5.6 Authentic Materials

According to Calpro (2007), authentic materials are print, video, and audio materials students encounter in their daily lives, such as change-of address forms, job applications, menus, voice mail messages, radio programs, and videos. Authentic materials are not created specifically to be used in the classroom, but they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic.

Authentic texts have been defined as “...real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes” They are therefore written for native speakers and contain “real” language. They are “...materials that have been produced to fulfil some social purpose in the language community.” (Gates & Soler., 2001.), in contrast to non-authentic texts that are especially designed for language learning purposes. The language in non-authentic texts is artificial and unvaried, concentrating on something that has to be taught and often containing a series of “false-text indicators” that include:

- perfectly formed sentences (all the time);
- a question using a grammatical structure, gets a full answer;
- repetition of structures;
- very often does not “read” well.

5.7 Important Factors in Choosing Authentic Reading Material

Belard (2006) affirms that there are four important factors in choosing authentic material and four types of authenticity which are the following:

Suitability of Content

- Does the text interest the student?
- Is it relevant to the student’s needs?
- Does it represent the type of material that the student will use outside of the classroom?

Exploitability

- Can the text be exploited for teaching purposes?
- For what purpose should the text be exploited?
- What skills/strategies can be developed by exploiting the text?

Readability

- Is the text too easy/difficult for the student?
- Is it structurally too demanding/complex?
- How much new vocabulary does it contain? Is it relevant?

Presentation

- Does it “look” authentic?
- Is it “attractive”?
- Does it grab the student’s attention?
- Does it make him want to read more?

Four types of authenticity within the classroom have been identified and in particular to the use of authentic texts:

- Authenticity of the texts which we may use as input data for our students
- Authenticity of the learners’ own interpretations of such texts;
- Authenticity of tasks conducive to language learning;
- Authenticity of the actual social situation of the classroom language.

5.8 The Use Of Authentic Reading Materials In The Classroom

One of the main ideas of using authentic materials in the classroom is to “expose” the learner to as much real language as possible. Even if the classroom is not a “real-life” situation, authentic materials do have a very important place within it. It has been argued that by taking a text out of its original context, it loses its authenticity: “As soon as texts, whatever their original purpose, are brought into classrooms for pedagogic purposes they have, arguably, lost authenticity.” (Wallace C. , 2000)

Even if true, the learner is still exposed to real discourse and not the artificial language of course textbooks, which tend not to contain any incidental or improper examples. They also tend to reflect the current teaching trend. Authentic materials also give the reader the opportunity to gain real information and know what is going on in the world around them. More times than not, they have something to say, be it giving information, a review. They also produce a sense of achievement. Extracting real information from a real text in a new/different language can be

extremely motivating, therefore increasing students' motivation for learning by exposing them to 'real' language (Gauriento, 2001).

They also reflect the changes in language use, (again something that does not occur in textbooks, which become very dated, very quickly) as well as giving the learner the proof that the language is real and not only studied in the classroom:

“Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people.” (Gauriento, 2001)

6 RESEARCH VARIABLES

| Main research variables | Definition | Dimensions | Indicators |
|--|--|--|---|
| Independent Variable Real-Life based Passages | Reading passages that are based on real-life stories from people living in communities and other places in Nicaragua. | Motivation and empathy with the stories. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students' motivation towards reading the passage 2. Interest in the content of the reading 3. Empathy with characters in the stories 4. The student's reaction to the message of the passage. 5. Associations with similar real-life stories 6. Willingness to share/tell or create similar stories in their lives. |
| Dependent variable Development of Reading Comprehension | Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what you are reading. Reading comprehension is an intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing. (K12 Reader, 2016) | Vocabulary, grammar and comprehension. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding of vocabulary in the passage 2. Comprehension of the main idea of the passage. 3. Discussion about the reading content 4. Comprehension of grammatical structures in the passage. 5. Practice of grammar related to the passage. 6. Solving of specific exercises in the passage. |

7. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This section of the research introduces the methodology. Here we state the research design we followed, and the procedures for participant's selection. Moreover, this section includes a description of the data collection methods we applied, and a brief plan for data analysis.

Research Design

This research follows a qualitative design to explore the reaction of the students to the passages in detail from a more open perspective. We want to verify that both students are interested in practicing reading comprehension through real life stories and get their opinions about the new materials.

This research was conducted during the first semester of the 2017 school year. Because of the nature of the data to be gathered, this research worked following a qualitative design. We aimed to analyze the perspectives and points of view of the participants in the selected sample regarding authentic reading passages and evaluate our results with the existent literature on the topic. The methodology was addressed to an educational range, tenth grade of secondary school.

Research Site

The National Institute of Palacaguina Rodolfo Castillo, is a secondary school located in Palacaguina in the department of Madriz. The school offers regular instruction from Monday to Friday, so the student population is served in two shifts (morning and afternoon).

The school has an infrastructure of 18 classroom designed for students, from which only 13 are used by the students. The school has all the basic conditions including a library, two data classroom, a staff room, a principal's office and a sports field.

Subject Selection

The universe of this research was of 163 students of the afternoon shift, at the “National Institute of Palacaguina Rodolfo Castillo” high school, in the first semester 2017, in the municipality of Palacaguina, Department of Madriz. The population was composed of 32 students of tenth grade “C” the afternoon shift.

Sampling: The sample was taken by convenience because we chose students with better performance in the English class.

The sample was formed by 12 students of tenth grade “C” at National institute of Palacaguina Rodolfo Castillo, representing 32 students of the total population and an English teacher.

Data Collection

In this research we applied two types of instruments: interviews and an observation guide, so that we do not restrict the views of participant. Data collection was with a few open-ended questions that we design.

Observation Guide

According to (Kawulich, 2005), observations have been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes and cultures in qualitative research.

Interview

According to (Brinkmann, 2014), the interview is a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee.

Before teaching, interviews were applied to the people who are the sources of information for the real-life based passages. These were unstructured interviews whose goal was to collect as much details of the story as possible.

In order to evaluate the teaching process and the effectiveness of real-life based passages, the following interviews were applied:

- 1- The first interview was made out of 12 questions targeted to the English teacher. This was done in order to know more about his experience teaching reading to the students in the class.
- 2- A second interview was carried out and aimed at the students. This interview included 12 questions based on the two main variables in the study: English reading comprehension and authentic passages.

Data Analysis

According (Nigatu, 2009) qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we moved from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situation we investigated. It is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data.

After collecting the data from the interview and observation guide, the results gotten from the applied instruments were analyzed and discussed.

8. CHRONOGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

| No | Activity | Time/Place | Participants | Hours |
|----|--|--|--------------|-------|
| 1 | Methodological discussion. | March 14th, University | Group | 2 |
| 2 | Brainstorming general theme. | March 19th, Zeneyda's house. | Group | 4 |
| 3 | Definition of research questions. | March 21st, University. | Group | 1 |
| 4 | Problem Statement. | March 23th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 5 | Problem Statement. | March 26th, Zeneyda's house. | Group | 3 |
| 6 | Background. | March 30th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 7 | Background. | April 03rd, Library of FAREM-ESTELI | Group | 2 |
| 8 | Definition of research objectives. | April 06th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 9 | Improving background and developing layout for theoretical framework | April 17th, Library of FAREM-ESTELI. | Group | 6 |
| 20 | Review of theoretical framework layout with the teacher. | April 20th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 21 | Downloading book and reading literature for the theoretical framework. | April 23rd, Kenia's house. | Group | 7 |
| 22 | Working on theoretical framework. | April 24th and 25th, Library of FAREM- ESTELI. | Group | 8 |
| 23 | Working justification and review of | April 27th, | Group | 2 |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|-------|----|
| | theoretical framework with the teacher. | University. | | |
| 24 | Visiting the Institute for permission. | May 02nd, Nacional Institute of Palacagüina Rodolfo Castillo Amador. | Group | 1 |
| 25 | Obtaining Variables | May 04th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 26 | Working methodological design. | May 07th, Mariel's house. | Group | 6 |
| 27 | Review methodological design with the teacher. | May 11th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 28 | Application of interviews people particular on experiences. | May 12th and 15th, teacher Urania's house in Yali; Pastor Vilda's house; Ali's store in Esteli. | Group | 15 |
| 29 | Writing stories. | May 16th, Library of FAREM-ESTELI. | Group | 8 |
| 30 | Review the stories with the teacher. Instrument design, chronogram of activities and bibliography. | May 18th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 31 | Improving instrument design. | May 21st, Zeneyda's house. | Group | 5 |
| 32 | Planning class and materials. | May 25th, University. | Group | 2 |
| 33 | Planning class and materials. | June 01st, University. | Group | 2 |
| 34 | Preparing material to develop plans class. | June 04th, Zeneyda's house. | Group | 5 |
| 35 | Application of lesson plans. | June 08th and | Group | 3 |

| | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|-------|----|
| | | 09th, Nacional Institute of Palacagüina Rodolfo Castillo Amador. | | |
| 36 | Application of interviews to students and teacher. | June 15th and 16th, Nacional Institute of Palacagüina Rodolfo Castillo Amador. | Group | 2 |
| 37 | Analysis instruments. | June 18th, Kenia's house. | Group | 7 |
| 38 | Writing discussion, results and conclusion. | June 19th to 25th, Library of FAREM-ESTELI and Zeneida's house. | Group | 35 |
| 39 | Working introduction and abstract. | June 26th and 27th, Library of FAREM-ESTELI. | Group | 8 |
| 40 | Improve and review of final document. | June 29th, teacher Jeydels house. | Group | 7 |

9. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is the effectiveness of Real-Life based Passages for the Development of Reading Comprehension?

Alderson (2000) defines reading as “...an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed.

“Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people.” (Gauriento, 2001) In order to test the effectiveness of passages based on real life experiences, we followed three research guideline questions:

1. What is the best approach to create authentic reading materials based on real-life experiences for the development of reading comprehension?

Three interesting themes were selected: a love story, a miracle and how to overcome obstacles. The information for the creation of the stories was collected through interviews with the participation of three particular persons for its later writing. It took us three days to record the stories.

In order to make the first interview, we traveled to the municipality of “Yalí, Jinotega” where a local English teacher offered us an interview about the topic “Overcoming obstacles” (see annex 3, pag 36). The second interview was carried out with a shop owner called. Ali told us his story and we entitled this passage “Ali is in love” (see annex 2, pag 32). One of the main difficulties for Ali’s interview was that initially he did not let us record him, but once we convinced him, he agreed to participate and be recorded. As for the last story, we decided to interview an evangelic pastor (See annex 1, pag 29). She told us about a miracle that happened to her son. When she was sharing her testimony, she felt sad

because she remembered all the difficulties they had gone through, so she had some difficulties to speak.

2. How to implement real-life based passages in English classes as a motivational strategy to enhance reading?

Prior to the application of the three stories in the classroom, we worked in the making of a strategic and methodological plan in which the level of authenticity of the stories had to be reflected and put into practice. The plans focused on reading comprehension and creative activities, apart from meaningful interactions among the students.

To execute the plans, we had two sessions of classes with a sample of twelve students. In every plan, we included different activities such as: fast reading, identifying the grammatical structure, cutting up and rearranging the story, story recreation, responding key question and discussing questions. Lastly, we asked some follow-up questions to evaluate our own performance during the class.

3. How effective are real-life based passages for the development of reading comprehension?

To estimate the level of effectiveness of our work, we made use of observation guides and interviews that were applied to the students. The questions on these instruments were taken from on our research variables. Next, we will describe in detail the results of these instruments.

Student's Interview and observation

During the application of the classes, we realized that passages based on real life situations definitely impact the reader and help them connect with the experiences lived by the author, because every life experience can easily become a real story that can be reproduced as a learning material in the English class.

Westwood (2008) states that besides using prior knowledge, students should have good word recognition skills and implement some reading strategies

such as identifying main ideas, making connections, questioning, inferring, and predicting who asserted that a good reader is considered to be actively engage with the text and use comprehension strategies. Most students specially senior high school are not familiar with authentic reading, for this reason the teacher affirms that the use of these will evidently be compared or associated with their own life, independently have or not have enough vocabulary students are able to comprehend the context according to the methodological strategy implemented by the teacher, and the ability to relate.

The observation guide for our study measured a series of variables that are relevant for evaluating the effectiveness of the passages. During the classes, we could witness the level of motivation and interest shown by the students for the content of the readings. From the first moment we explained that the class was based on real life stories, they started to make questions about their content.

Out of the 12 students that participated in the class, at least 10 of them felt identified with the characters in the reading and in turn were able to relate the content with other similar stories they had previously heard. It was evident that the students were able to identify the main ideas, comprehend what they were reading, engage in meaningful participation and develop the assigned exercises with the help of the teacher.

We applied a written interview at the end of the last class for the purpose of confirming the results of our observation regarding reading comprehension. This instrument was a great tool to get an idea of the motivation and interest of the students towards the materials.

In general, students expressed their willingness to continue learning with these types of stories. They said that the stories were appealing and caused a positive impact on them by making them more willing to learn and read more. In addition, they said that it was easier to understand and complete the exercises contained in the passages, which included grammatical structures, comprehension questions, use of verbs and reading strategies.

During this study, we realized that reading comprehension is a complex and challenging process that relies a lot on the materials and teaching strategies carried out during the class. Reading has to do with ability to understand what is said in the text, to extract the main ideas, as well as in interpreting and giving value to the information expressed in the text.

Many high school students have serious difficulties understanding the texts they read. Reading comprehension requires skills and competencies that are rarely taught to the students. The lack of reading comprehension skills imposes limitations to the students that have a serious impact in their professional careers later in life. (Gutiérrez, Trujillo Obando, & Merlo Castillo, The effectiveness of short stories as an strategy to teach reading comprehension, 2017)

Teacher's Interview

As part of this research, an interview was applied to the English teacher. She affirms that students are highly motivated when presented stories based on real life experiences and the majority of them show interest in knowing the content. The content of the passages evokes curiosity and besides some of the students can relate to the characters in the readings. Likewise, the English teacher considers that only a part of the students are able to analyze and interpret the message contained in the reading, because their comprehension depends on the vocabulary that they have been taught in previous classes and the one they have learned by themselves. With that said, the students' self-taught knowledge and their interest towards the class are extremely important for improving their reading skill.

Undoubtedly, it can be said that the use of authentic materials based in real life passages are of great significance to the personal and cognitive development of learners of a second language. It has been proved in this study that the use of authentic materials along with engaging teaching strategies will result in significant learning of the language, particularly in the enhancement of the reading skill.

10.CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using authentic materials in the English class in the form of real-life based passages for the development of reading comprehension.

To achieve this goal, we studied different ways to use authentic materials in the classroom, interviewed people with interesting stories and created short passages according to the students' previous knowledge and needs. Afterwards, we planned lessons incorporating different motivational strategies that would blend properly with these stories. As a result, we achieved active and total participation from the students and deep comprehension of the content of these passages.

After analyzing the data collected during the classes, we can definitely say that reading passages based on real life stories are of great importance and value for developing the student's ability to read in the English class. Authentic materials can be easily remembered because they are produced out of things that students can relate to, therefore making stories catch the attention of the readers with more ease.

During the research process, we found out how important it is to make students aware that being active readers can help them understand the language more easily and that they should read in order to connect with the message that the authors are trying to convey.

It is necessary for our educational system to form efficient readers who feel enthusiastic and committed to reading and find meaning to what they read. As teachers and researchers, we made use of authentic material to motive students to read about topics that would grab their attention.

We conclude that the effectiveness of the real-life based passages proposed in this research will depend on the interest, ingenuity and creativity with which they

are used by teachers and anyone who joins the noble task of rescuing interest and liking for reading in our students, teenagers and young people. Its use allows us to carry out productive activities that attract attention by engaging the students in interesting tasks.

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Alaniz, D., Barahona, J., & Ortuño, E. (2011). Influence of micropills and the task based method on the development of listening and speaking at San Francisco High School in Estelí, during the second semester, 2011 . Estelí: FAREM-Estelí.
2. Aráuz, L., Molina, M., & Molina, H. (2014). How can we encourage 11th grade students to improve their reading comprehension skill in English at high school at the “National Institute José Martí” in La Trinidad, Estelí. Estelí: FAREM-Estelí.
3. Belard, S. (2006). The Use of Authentic Material in The Teaching of Reading. *The Reading Matrix*, 63.
4. Bowes., C. (3 de junio de 2016). Bilinguismo y Tecnología. Recuperado el 26 de junio de 2017, de The four language skill and thir involment in learning english.: <http://www.bilinguismoytecnologia.com/en/las-cuatro-habilidades-del-lenguaje-y-su-implicacion-en-el-aprendizaje-del-ingles/>
5. Brinkmann, S. (2014). *Interviews*. SAGE Publications.
6. CALPRO. (2007). *Professional Development based on Authentic Material*. American Institute for researches.
7. Dawani, S. (2006). *Understanding the four basic language skills*. Obtenido de Education Director: www.google.com
8. Gates, P., & Soler., J. (2001.). *Taking Literacy Skill Home. Focus on Basics.*, 19-22.
9. Gauriento, M. (2001). *Text and Task Authenticity in the EFL. Classroom in ELT*. Washington. D.C.: Oxford.
10. Gutiérrez, G. L., Trujillo Obando, E. F., & Merlo Castillo, C. M. (12 de January de 2017). The effectiveness of short stories as an strategy to teach reading comprehension. 24. Estelí, Nicaragua.
11. Gutiérrez, G. L., Trujillo Obando, E. F., & Merlo Castillo, C. M. (12. de January de 2017.). The effectiveness of short stories as an strategy to teach reading comprehension. 24. Estelí., Nicaragua.

12. Harmer, J. (2001). How to teach English. Malaysia: Longman Pearson Education.
13. Hornby, A. S. (2006). Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. New York: Oxford University Press.
14. IBERCOTEC. (2009). Micropildoras, avanzando en los nuevos códigos de comunicación: un minuto, un mensaje . Estelí, Nicaragua.
15. Jarquín, S. (12 de Abril de 2014). Importance of English Language. El Nuevo Diario, pág. 19.
16. Joseph., A. (2000.). Reading in a foreign Language. London.: Longman.
17. K12 Reader. (2016). K12 Reader - Reading Instruction Resources. Obtenido de What is Reading Comprehension?: <http://www.k12reader.com/what-is-reading-comprehension/>
18. Kawulich, B. (2005). Forum Qualitative Social Research. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 2.
19. Lane., R. (2009). English as a Second Language. Stanford. United States of America.: Lane Press.
20. Mikulecky, B. (2008.). What is reading?. Teaching Reading in a Second Language. Boston., United States of America: Pearson Education.
21. Nigatu, T. (2009). Qualitative Data Analysis.
22. Richards, J. (2006). Communicative Language Teaching Today. Recuperado el 22 de Abril de 2011, de www.google.com
23. Rodríguez Toruño , H., & Téllez, S. (2010). How to help to improve reading comprehension skill in English with fifth year students. Estelí: FAREM - Estelí.
24. Wallace, C. (2000). Reading Skill. New York, United States of America: Oxford.
25. Wallace, C. (2001). The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. New York: Cambridge University Press.
26. Westwood, P. (2008). What Teachers Need to Know About Reading and Writing Difficulties. Victoria: Acer Press.

27. Willis, J. (1996). A framework for task based learning. Birmingham:
Longman.

28. Woodward, S. (1997). Fun with Grammar. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

12.ANNEXES

Annex 1 .A Miracle

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Main Character: <i>Vilda Blandón</i> | |
| Place: Estelí | Education level: Primary |
| Age: 72 | Job: Evangelic pastor |



Vilda Blandón is an evangelic pastor. She lives in the Jaime Ubeda neighborhood, in the city of Estelí. Her son used to suffer from a disease that caused him fatigue and asphyxia. One day, God made a miracle in her son's life. After performing several tests, the doctors told her that he needed an open-heart surgery and they advised her to travel abroad. However, their family did not have enough money to make the trip.

She prayed to God with faith asking him for help to go through that terrible situation she was in. In response to her prayers, many people appeared and helped her with all the expenses and she was able to travel to the United States with her son. During the flight, the young man felt something special happening to his body. He told his mother and she exclaimed that it was a sign from God. When they arrived at the hospital, the doctors checked him. Time passed and then she received the news that her son's heart was in perfect conditions and that it was not necessary to have the surgery done. In the end, she and her son thanked God for making this great miracle happen.

LESSON PLANS**National Institute Palacaguina**

Subject:
Foreign
Language
Time: 45
minutes
Stories: “A
miracle of God”
Grammar:
Simple Past.

Grade: Tenth
Content:
 Reading
 Comprehension

Date:
A miracle

Vilda Blandón¹ is an evangelic pastor. She lives in the Jaime Ubeda neighborhood, in the city of Estelí. Her son used to suffer from a disease that caused him fatigue and asphyxia. One day, God made a miracle in her son’s life. After performing several tests, the doctors told her that he needed an open-heart surgery and they advised her to travel abroad. However, their family did not have enough money to make the trip.

She prayed to God with faith asking him for help to go through that terrible situation she was in. In response to her prayers, many people appeared and helped her with all the expenses and she was able to travel to the United States with her son. During the flight, the young man felt something special happening to his body. He told his mother and she exclaimed that it was a sign from God. When they arrived at the hospital, the doctors checked him. Time passed and then she received the news that her son’s heart was in perfect conditions and that it was not necessary to have the surgery done. In the end, she and her son thanked God for making this great miracle happen.

¹ The evangelic pastor Vilda Blandón, authorized us publish this story to take a message of God and at the same time motivate the learning of reading in students.

Vocabulary:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Miracle: Milagro</p> <p>Neighborhood: barrio</p> <p>Disease: enfermedad</p> <p>Performing: presentar</p> <p>Several: Varios</p> <p>Abroad: extranjero</p> | <p>Enough: suficiente</p> <p>Faith: fe</p> <p>Overcome: superar</p> <p>Flight: vuelo</p> <p>Surgery: cirugia</p> |
|--|---|

Activities:

1st Activity

Teacher reads aloud the reading: while teacher reads students will pass to the board and will write the verbs that they can identify in simple past tense.

2nd Activity CUT UP & REARRANGE

1. Divide students into small groups or pairs.
2. Hand out a cut-up version of the story or dialogue.
3. Have students try to arrange the sentences in order. It helps to tell them which sentence is first.
4. Encourage them to tell each other why they think a particular sentence comes next.
5. To make it fun, you could have a prize for the team or pair that finishes first.

3rd Activity

Students will respond key questions to identify the level of comprehension.

1. Where does Vilda Blandon live?
2. What kind of surgery needed her son?
3. Who helped to her in this trouble?
4. What was the news that she received in the hospital of united states?
5. Which was the miracle that god made in her?

Final Evaluation

1. ¿Cómo les pareció la clase?
2. ¿Creen que aprendieron algo nuevo en lo que estudiamos?
3. ¿Sienten que comprendieron el mensaje de las lecturas estudiadas?
4. ¿Les gusto la clase de hoy?
5. Mencionen alguna experiencia que tuvo en esta clase?

Annex 2. Alí is in love

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Main Character: Alí | |
| Place: Estelí | Education level: Primary |
| Age: 66 | Job: Seller |



Ali Javier² is a kind man who lives in Estelí. He has a small store called “Mi cafecito”, which is located in front of Shell Esquipulas. In his youth, his family was very poor and they could never see progress due to his father’s addictions. Time passed and he met a young lady. He fell in love with her and started a nice relationship. They were very happy. They got married, bought a house and formed a family. They had two sons. However, his wife got very sick later.

² Ali Javier authorized the publishing of this story to any use.

He did the best he could to help her, but everything he did was in vain. He got depressed so he started drinking alcohol and forgot about his job and the medicine for his wife. His wife’s health worsened and after twenty years of suffering and fighting against her illness, she passed away in September 29th, 1989. He suffered and felt bad about her death. Five years later, he fell in love again and started a normal life again. He lives happily with his current partner and likes his job at his small store.

Lesson Plan No. 2

National Institute Palacaguina

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Subject: Foreign Language | Time: 45 minutes | Stories: “ alí in the love” | Grammar: Simple Past. |
| Grade: Tenth | Content: Reading Comprehension | Date: | |

Achievement Indicator: Students will be able to comprehend stories of real life applying simple past tense. They will show interest about it.

Content: Reading Comprehension: “A miracle of God”

Initial Activities:

- ✓ **Greetings**
- ✓ **Putting in order the class**
- ✓ **Checking Attendance**
- ✓ **General Orientations**
- ✓ **Exploring knowledge**

Alí is in Love

Ali Javier is a kind man who lives in Estelí. He has a small store called “Mi cafecito”, which is located in front of Shell Esquipulas. In his youth, his family was very poor and they could never see progress due to his father’s addictions. Time passed and he met a young lady. He fell in love with her and started a nice relationship. They were very happy. They got married, bought a house and formed a family. They had two sons. However, his wife got very sick later.

He did the best he could to help her, but everything he did was in vain. He got depressed so he started drinking alcohol and forgot about his job and the medicine for his wife. His wife’s health worsened and after twenty years of suffering and fighting against her illness, she passed away in September 29th, 1989. He suffered and felt bad about her death. Five years later, he fell in love again and started a normal life again. He lives happily with his current partner and likes his job at his small store.

Vocabulary:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Located: Ubicado | marry: casarse |
| Youth: Juventud | wife: esposa |
| Poor: Pobre | vain: vano |
| Due: debido | shelter: refugio |
| Vices: vicios | dead: muerte |
| fell in love: enamoró | passed away: morir |
| | worsened: empeoró |

Activities:

1st Activity

Teacher reads aloud the reading: while teacher reads students will pass to the board and will write the verbs that they can identify in simple past tense.

2nd Activity

Story Re-creation:

2. Divide students in small groups, and give each group a different story that they'll need to act out in front of the class.

3rd Activity

Students will response key questions to identify the level of comprehension.

1. Where is Ali's store located?
2. Why is it that they never saw progress?
3. How many kids did they have?
4. When did his wife die?
5. What did he do when his wife died?

Annex 3. Overcoming Obstacles

Main Character: Urania

Place: San Sebastian de Yali

Education level: Professional

Age: 24

Job: Teacher



Urania Díaz³ is a young lady who grew up in a humble family in the municipality of Yalí. Her family did not have much money, but she always dreamed about going to college. She started attending the university when she was eighteen years old. She faced many difficulties and nobody helped her with her education expenses. She used to work in the fields picking coffee to continue studying.

During her fourth year of college, she thought about dropping out, but she begged to God to give her strength. Some people encouraged her to continue, which changed her mind and helped her to keep going. She always had a positive attitude after that. Today, she thanks God for overcoming all of the obstacles and does her job with much enthusiasm.

³ The English teacher, Urania Díaz was agree about publish this story to be applied to different uses.

Annex 4. Students Interview

Instituto Nacional Palacagüina Rodolfo Castillo.



UNIVERSIDAD
NACIONAL
AUTÓNOMA DE
NICARAGUA,
MANAGUA
UNAN - MANAGUA

Querido estudiante.

Buen día. Somos estudiantes de la carrera de inglés y estamos en nuestro trabajo final de investigación, sería de gran ayuda para nosotros que dieran respuesta a estas preguntas. De antemano,

muchísimas gracias!

1. ¿Qué tan motivado te sientes al leer estos pasajes de lectura?
2. ¿Crees que es interesante el contenido de estas lecturas?
3. ¿Te sientes identificado con algunos de los personajes de las lecturas estudiadas en estas clases?
4. ¿Cuál es tu reacción al leer el contenido de estas historias? Explique.
5. ¿Al leer estos pasajes recordaste alguna historia que haya sucedido en tu barrio?
6. ¿Podrías mencionar historias similares que has escuchado?
7. ¿Es difícil para ti comprender el vocabulario de estos pasajes?
8. ¿Puedes identificar con facilidad la idea principal de estos pasajes?
9. ¿Entiendes la estructura gramatical que predomina en estos pasajes?
10. ¿Consideras que podrías utilizar la gramática de la lectura para escribir o contar alguna historia de tu vida?
11. ¿Tienes alguna dificultad al resolver ejercicios de comprensión lectora? Por qué?
12. ¿Crees que es importante la creación de historias de la vida real? ¿Por qué?

Annexe 5. Teacher interview



UNIVERSIDAD
NACIONAL
AUTÓNOMA DE
NICARAGUA,
MANAGUA
UNAN - MANAGUA

We are students of the English major and we are working on a research paper based in authentic materials “real-life stories” for the development of reading comprehension. We need your help to answer the following questions about this topic. Beforehand thank you very much!

Name of the teacher: _____ Date: _____

1. Do you think students feel motivated to read real-life stories?
2. When students read, are they interested in knowing the content of the passages or just read superficially?
3. Have you ever noticed if the students identify with the characters in the passages?
4. Are students able to analyze and interprets the message contained in the reading?
5. Do you students compare the stories with their own life experiences?
6. Do you think that they are able to create their own stories?
7. Do you think that students have enough vocabulary to understand the message of the readings?
8. Do the students manage to identify the main idea in the readings?
9. Have you ever observed whether students participate by giving their opinions about the passages?
10. Do you think that students are able to recognize the grammatical structure in the reading?
11. In your opinion, students have mastery of the grammatical structure when forming sentences or writing texts?
12. Do you think that students are able to solve reading exercises?

Annexe 6. Observation guide

General Data

Name of the Centre: National Institute Palacagüina.

Department: Madriz. Municipality: Palacagüina. Date: _____

Turn: Afternoon. Grade: Tenth. Section: "C"

Discipline: Foreign Language.

Objective: To check if the methodology used is effective in student learning.

| Variables to observe | Observation |
|--|-------------|
| 1-The students show motivation for the passage. | |
| 2-Students show interest in knowing the content of the reading. | |
| 3-Students identify themselves with the characters in the readings. | |
| 4-Students interpret the message of the readings. | |
| 5-Students are able to compare other stories with those of readings. | |
| 6-Students share similar stories in their lives. | |
| 7-Students demonstrate proficiency at the time of class. | |
| 8-Students identify the main idea of the passage. | |
| 9-There is participation on the part of the students. | |
| 10-Mastery of grammatical structures. | |
| 11-Performing exercises using the grammar. | |
| 12- Students understand the passages properly. | |

Annex 7. Teaching Process



Picture No. 1 - Students were discussing about the reading “Miracle” and at the same time they shared miracles happened in their lives.



Picture No. 2 - Here students were rearranging the stories and responding key questions about it.



Picture No. 3 - Students were participating in fast reading and identifying grammatical structures developed in the story.



Picture No. 4 - Students were acting about the content of the reading and responding key questions.



Picture No. 5 - Students putting together their story on the board.