

# A Reading Strategy Intervention to Improve Reading Comprehension in the Chilean EFL Classroom: A Mixed-methods Study<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Reading comprehension is one of the steppingstones to understanding and learning a language. However, attaining comprehension can be challenging in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. Research on EFL reading and didactic orientations to English language teaching highlight the use of reading strategies to improve learners' comprehension. These advantages, nevertheless, have not been vastly investigated in Chilean school education. Based on this context, this study is relevant for both pre-service and in-service teachers as it presents the findings that emerge from a reading strategy intervention conducted in three class groups from three different schools in Ñuble region, Chile. The participants of the study were 62 students, aged 14 to 16 and three young teachers of English aged 23 to 28. The study used a mixed-methods approach as data were gathered before and after the intervention through a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Findings reveal that learners' reading comprehension increased in the three class groups after the reading strategy intervention which included the teaching of reading strategies. Additionally, it was determined that through the reading strategy intervention, students were more motivated to read and use reading strategies in their lessons. Teacher participants underscored the benefits of the intervention not only for their learners, but also for their own professional growth. The results of this study seem to indicate that EFL teachers should strategically plan reading activities to effectively engage learners in the use of reading strategies and thus increase their reading comprehension. Future studies could focus on the effects of teaching and using reading strategies for a longer period of time in different educational contexts.

## Resumen

La comprensión lectora es uno de los pilares fundamentales para entender y aprender un idioma. Sin embargo, lograr la comprensión puede resultar un desafío en contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). La investigación sobre la lectura en EFL y las orientaciones didácticas para la enseñanza del inglés resaltan el uso de estrategias de lectura para mejorar la comprensión de los estudiantes. No obstante, estas ventajas no han sido ampliamente investigadas en la educación escolar chilena. En este contexto, el presente estudio es relevante tanto para docentes en formación como para docentes en ejercicio, ya que presenta los hallazgos de una intervención de estrategias de lectura realizada en tres grupos de clase de tres escuelas diferentes en la región de Ñuble, Chile. Los participantes del estudio fueron 62 estudiantes de entre 14 y 16 años y tres jóvenes docentes de inglés de entre 23 y 28 años. El estudio empleó un enfoque de métodos mixtos, ya que se recopilaban datos antes y después de la intervención mediante una combinación de técnicas cuantitativas y cualitativas. Los hallazgos revelan que la comprensión lectora de los estudiantes aumentó en los tres grupos de clase después de la intervención, que incluyó la enseñanza de estrategias de lectura. Además, se determinó que, gracias a la intervención con estrategias de lectura, los estudiantes estaban más motivados para leer y utilizar dichas estrategias en sus clases. Los docentes participantes destacaron los beneficios de la intervención no solo para sus alumnos, sino también para su propio desarrollo profesional. Los resultados de este estudio parecen indicar que los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera deberían planificar estratégicamente las actividades de lectura para involucrar eficazmente a los alumnos en el uso de estrategias de lectura y, por lo tanto, aumentar su comprensión lectora. Futuros estudios podrían centrarse en los efectos de la enseñanza y el uso de estrategias de lectura durante un período de tiempo más prolongado en diferentes contextos educativos.

## Introduction and Review of the Literature

Developing strong reading comprehension skills has been the major concern of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and investigators over the past decades (Akkakoson, 2023; Ali et al., 2019;

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Farrell, 2001; Katims & Harmon, 2000; Shang, 2018). This interest has been strengthened by a better understanding of reading as a contextualized practice and the use of strategies that support comprehension. In this respect, Duke and Pearson (2002) highlight the importance of explaining reading strategies and teaching learners how to use them. A case in point is a research study conducted in Turkey, in which learners improved their reading skills after being exposed to instruction on reading strategies (Küçüköğlü, 2013). Katims and Harmon (2000) also reported favorable results in their study on academic literacy after implementing a cognitive reading strategy to improve middle school learners' reading achievement. Their findings reveal a significant increase in all participants' overall reading comprehension. Marliasari, (2017) tested the efficacy of fast reading, namely skimming and scanning, on the reading comprehension of Indonesian learners. Their findings reveal that teaching these strategies was significantly effective considering the contrast of pre- and post-tests administered to experimental and control groups. Similarly, the researchers Yusuf et al. (2017) examined teaching skimming and scanning techniques to a group of high school students who showed an improvement in their reading comprehension after the intervention. Par (2020) and Munawaroh's (2022) studies examined the relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension and both studies hinted at a positive correlation in these two areas. Akhmetova, et al. (2022) claimed that given that the use of reading strategies may be influenced by learners' first language experiences and background knowledge, educators must effectively address the use of reading strategies to provide equal opportunities and thus facilitate EFL reading comprehension. This latter assertion finds support in Hedcock and Ferris' (2018) views of the role of L2 teachers as these are expected to use strategic pedagogical actions to guide learners to select and employ strategies that facilitate their reading processes and encourage them to enjoy reading.

Theoretical perspectives on reading comprehension also highlight the relevance of structured methods to address reading strategies in the classroom (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Grabe, 1997; Graves & Graves, 2003; Zhang, 1993). For instance, Graves and Graves (2003) emphasize the importance of a scaffolded reading experience (SRE), which is an instructional framework where learners can develop reading strategies and skills by engaging in a series of pre-, during, and post- reading activities. In the same respect, Duke and Pearson (2002) stress the relevance of using a sequenced instruction, encompassing a pre-, during, and post-reading cycle to provide integral literacy practice for the students. According to Frey and Fisher (2013), teachers have a substantial role in any framework for teaching reading, as they are expected to elaborate strategic questions, prompts, and cues to reach comprehension. In particular, Hedgcock and Ferris (2018) maintain that pre-reading constitutes an opportunity for the educator to teach reading strategies so that students can retrieve and use them in other reading contexts. For instance, the authors explain that teachers can explicitly use the strategy of 'previewing' to familiarize students with both the concept and its use. In the process of familiarization or learning to apply reading strategies, Frey and Fisher (2013) claim that modeling becomes a fundamental step to develop reading skills. They explain, "the idea is that the teacher explicitly or intentionally models the strategies that readers can use as they read" (p. 26). These pedagogical orientations to reading take significant importance in EFL settings where learners at times seem reluctant to read or possess inefficient strategies to read in English.

### ***Reading strategies***

In an everyday context, the concept of reading strategies might be interchangeably used with that of reading skills. However, from an educational perspective, reading strategies refer to the "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text" (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p.368). On the other hand, according to Anderson (2009), reading skills are effortless actions for the learner: "A skill is a strategy that has become automatic. As learners consciously learn and practice specific reading strategies, the strategies move from conscious to unconscious, from strategy to skill" (p. 133). Afflerbach et al. (2008) highlight the potential confusion stemming from the interplay between reading strategies and reading skills. However, in both cases, the instructor's expertise remains crucial. Based on their study, it is evident that reading strategies should be consistently demonstrated and supervised since learners might apply them inconsistently or incorrectly, such as relying solely on skimming to finish quickly. The authors also emphasize that as learners develop a repertoire of strategies, the monitoring process becomes less guided, allowing students to become more independent. This shift of responsibility, from teacher to student, was initially conceptualized by Pearson and Gallagher (1983) within the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, which

was further adapted by Duke et al. (2011). This model illustrates the progression in strategy usage, beginning with the teacher's explicit instruction and culminating in independent student practice.

### Research on reading comprehension in Chilean EFL classroom

Reading comprehension is an area that has not been broadly researched in Chilean education. A preliminary literature review, narrowed to studies exploring reading comprehension in Chile over the past decade was carried out. At the moment of writing this study, seven studies exploring the topic had been identified. Table 1 below, presents the results of the preliminary search, wherein out of the seven studies, only one was an empirical study conducted at high school level.

Citation	Topic	Context
Barraza (2014)	Graphical and technological strategies for EFL reading comprehension.	Tertiary
Becerra Meneses et al. (2017)	The role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension, inferencing skills, and metacognitive awareness in second language acquisition: An analysis of the English teaching program in two schools at Universidad de Chile.	Tertiary
Cataldo López (2008)	Delineating Latino student's reading strategies: Strategies used by a student to improve second language learning along with reading comprehension.	Unspecified
Farías & Abrahams (2017)	Delineating Latino student's reading strategies: Strategies used by a student to improve second language learning along with reading comprehension.	Systematic review
Cárcamo Morales (2020)	Readability and types of questions in Chilean EFL high school textbooks.	Systematic review
Tagle Ochoa et al. (2020)	Teaching and learning how to read in English: Chilean Pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs.	Tertiary
Ortiz Soto (2014)	Reading comprehension for twelve graders: Techniques to foster vocabulary acquisition using the girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2008).	Secondary

Table 1: Summary of Chilean studies on reading comprehension

The lack of empirical studies exploring reading comprehension at a Chilean school context is not consistent with the curricular relevance of reading comprehension. The Chilean curriculum offers a grounded approach to developing reading comprehension in four outcomes that are expected to be met by integrating reading activities and strategies. Despite these curricular orientations, high school classroom research does not appear to be contributing to the understanding of the reading comprehension phenomenon.

### Reading comprehension in the Chilean EFL classroom

The EFL Chilean curriculum at the high school level includes four mandatory learning outcomes aimed at developing reading comprehension skills. These outcomes provide both cultural and linguistic experiences by exposing learners to various types of texts in the target language. The ultimate goal is to improve reading comprehension (Mineduc, 2016). Figure 1 displays the outcomes, which have been translated and organized by the researchers.

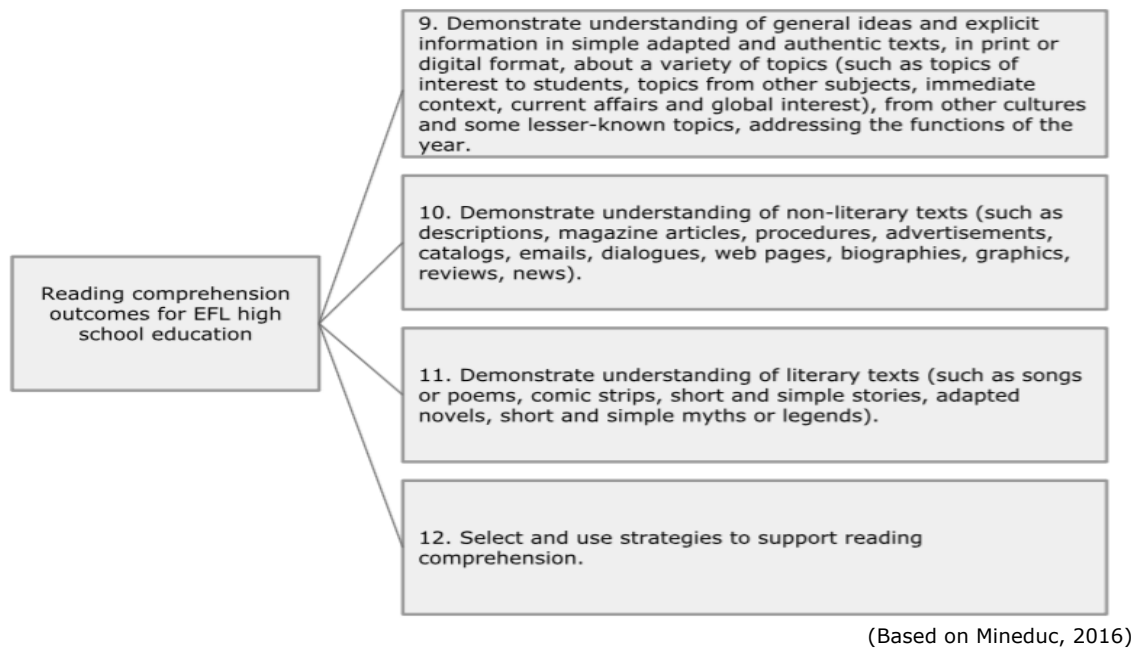


Figure 1: Reading comprehension outcomes

The curriculum also delineates pedagogical and didactic orientations to facilitate reading. In this sense, Chilean EFL educators are expected to scaffold the reading process through a cycle of pre-, while- and post-reading tasks (Mineduc, 2016). In each of these activities, teachers must gradually and systematically address different reading strategies to achieve learners' reading comprehension. For instance, in a pre-reading phase, teachers are expected to activate learners' prior knowledge to express their opinions or to make inferences about reading passages. During while-reading tasks, teachers should create opportunities for learners to interact with the text in actions such as confirming predictions, rereading, locating information, and establishing connections as they read. Finally, in a post-reading stage, teachers should basically engage learners in more complex tasks, denoting a higher cognitive involvement such as formulating questions, creating, and reflecting on information (Mineduc, 2016). Figure 2 summarizes the orientations expressed above as found in the English curriculum of Chilean EFL high school education.

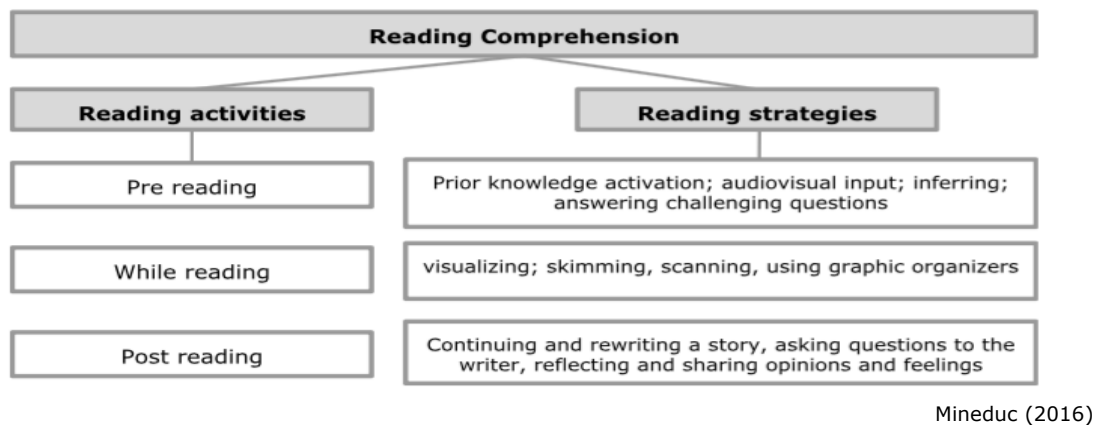


Figure 2: Reading activities and strategies to achieve reading comprehension

Overall, the English curriculum offers a comprehensive framework to teach reading in high school education which is not distant from the theoretical perspectives of the experts on reading who emphasize a grounded reading practice for the EFL classroom (e.g., Afflerbach et al., 2008; Akkakoson, 2013; Grabe, 1997; Graves & Graves, 2003; Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018). Nevertheless, the lack of empirical evidence at school level hinders the understanding of reading comprehension among Chilean students. Given this gap, and considering the potential benefits of teaching reading strategies, this study was designed to contribute

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to classroom research by implementing a reading strategy intervention aimed at supporting learners' reading comprehension in their English lessons. In the light this, this study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the reading comprehension of learners before and after the reading intervention strategy?
2. Is there a relationship between learners' reading comprehension and the use of reading strategies?
3. How do learners perceive the impact of the reading strategy intervention?
4. How do teachers perceive the reading strategy intervention?

## Methodology

### Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted in three secondary schools in the Ñuble region, Chile. Initial contact was established with several schools to present the purpose of the research. Three schools agreed to participate with their English teachers, who also became part of the study.

Although the study was originally designed for high school learners, it was later expanded to include the participating teachers. This decision was based on their active collaboration and interest, and it allowed for the incorporation of teachers' perspectives on the implementation and impact of the reading strategy intervention.

The student sample consisted of 62 tenth-grade learners (33 females and 29 males), aged between 14 and 16 years. All participants were enrolled in English classes taught by the three participating teachers. The intervention was implemented at the tenth-grade level, as this was the common teaching level across the three schools.

The teacher participants were three English teachers (aged 22–28) with between one and five years of teaching experience. Prior to the intervention, informal conversations were conducted to explore their experiences teaching reading comprehension. While two teachers reported challenges associated with students' reading abilities, particularly in the context of post-pandemic learning, one teacher indicated generally higher student performance, although some difficulties persisted among a subgroup of learners. During the implementation, classes were conducted under hybrid and face-to-face modalities, which resulted in irregular attendance and smaller-than-usual class sizes. Information about the schools and participants is presented in Table 2.

Schools	Teacher	School type	Total participants	Females	Males	Age group
School 1	A-female	Public subsidized	25	14	11	14-16
School 2	B-female	Private	23	12	11	14-16
School 3	C-male	Public subsidized	14	8	6	14-16

Table 2: Participants' data

### Design and instruments

This is an exploratory study that employed a mixed-methods approach. Data was collected sequentially beginning with a quantitative stage to gather information about the two dimensions essential for the research questions, and thus support the second form of data which was qualitative. On the one hand, it was imperative to have a threshold in terms of learners' reading comprehension which was acquired through of a pre-test. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a standardized reading test taken from the Key English Test (KET) (Capel & Ireland, 2000) was administered using an A2 level of proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and consisting of seven closed-ended questions. It was also of great importance for determining the reading strategies that learners used before the intervention to provide a baseline assessment of students' reading strategies and skills and monitor their progress after the intervention. To meet that end, Hedgcock and Ferris (2018) academic reading strategies survey was used. It consisted of 23 statements to which students reacted on a frequency scale from *not knowing* to *often use*. It must be noted that this survey was translated to Spanish to avoid misinterpretations (Appendix 1); the translation was performed by the researchers and the adaptation was validated by three experienced EFL teachers, working in different educational settings. The second phase of data collection, a post-test, used the same instruments, however a qualitative technique was added.

More specifically, a semi-structured interview on a focus-group modality per class group to collect the second form of data (Appendix 2).

### **Ethical considerations**

Given that participants were school students under the age of 18, both parents and students were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information from all data. Parents provided written informed consent, and students provided assent prior to participating in the study.

### **Reading strategy intervention**

Based on the information provided by the teachers and the results of the quantitative stage, the researchers started elaborating the intervention plan for the three schools and class groups. This plan was constructed in mutual collaboration with the participant teachers and included other initiatives to address the challenges faced by the teachers. Thus, each teacher participant received feedback during a weekly hour-long meeting, fostering collaborative lesson planning between the researchers and teachers for about two months. Moreover, these meetings served as a platform for the teachers to gain insights into the importance of adhering to didactic principles to enhance reading comprehension. These principles encompassed various reading activities (pre-, during-, and post-reading) and the presentation of reading strategies, as depicted in Figure 2. In addition to these meetings, the researchers maintained open lines of communication with the teachers, addressing any queries or concerns they might have had.

The reading strategy intervention lasted five weeks and began with one of the researchers taking over the classes of teachers A, B, and C for two weeks. During this time, the researcher taught and guided the student participants through pre-, during-, and post-reading activities to ensure the use of reading strategies included in the English high school curriculum. These strategies included three core ones: skimming, scanning, and visualizing. To simplify the evaluation of the strategies, the following simplified definitions were used:

*Skimming: "very fast reading. When you skim, you read to get the main ideas and a few, but not all, of the details" (Fry, 2000, p.1).*

*Scanning: "a reading skill you use when you want to locate a single fact or specific bit of information without reading every part of a story, article, list or document" (Fry, 2000, p. 40).*

*Visualizing: Visualizing takes place when readers "create pictures in their minds, or images" (Duffy, 2009, p.115).*

After this, the teacher participants resumed their classes and continued implementing the reading strategy intervention for three weeks with support from the researchers. Learners were encouraged to use other reading strategies such as making predictions about the content of the text, highlighting the main ideas or details found in texts, and using graphic organizers to retrieve information from the reading passages. The teacher participants used the multimedia and print resources specially designed for the study. The materials comprised a self-study video clip addressing reading strategies, videos for listening comprehension about speakers using the reading strategies addressed in the intervention, and three reading sheets fostering the use of graphic organizers to support reading comprehension. All materials were tailored to the study context, and the intervention was implemented under consistent conditions across the three schools, using the same set of materials. The participating teachers maintained a positive and cooperative attitude throughout the process, although, in some cases, the intervention required additional effort on their part.

### **Data Analysis**

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Quantitative data were analyzed using the software *jamovi* (Version 2.6). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated to summarize the data. In addition, correlation analyses were used to explore the relationship between reading comprehension and the use of reading strategies. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following an iterative process of familiarization, coding, and theme development. Data were first read multiple times to ensure immersion, after which initial codes were generated. These codes were then organized into broader themes that captured recurring patterns across participants' responses.

## Results and Discussion

To improve the clarity of the findings and to support future research efforts, the presentation of results is organized to correspond with each research question. This organization aligns with the mixed-methods approach of this study, where the first two questions involved quantitative data collection methods, and the remaining two incorporated qualitative procedures, offering a potential framework for future research.

### **What is the reading comprehension of learners before and after the reading intervention strategy?**

Descriptive analysis, in Table 3, revealed an overall increase in learners' reading comprehension following the intervention, with mean scores rising from pre-test ( $M=3.86$ ,  $SD=.52$ ) to post-test ( $M=4.97$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ). As seen in Table 4, this upward trend was consistent across the three schools, despite differences in initial performance levels. School 1 showed an increase from 3.22 to 4.05, School 2 from 4.14 to 5.38, and School 3 from 4.64 to 5.92, indicating that the intervention was associated with improved outcomes across diverse educational contexts. It is worth noting that due to absences, post-test data were available for 59 participants.

	Reading comprehension score, full sample	
	Pre	Post
Valid	62	59
Mean (arithmetic)	3.855	4.966
Std. Deviation	1.524	1.542
Shapiro-Wilk	0.936	0.912
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	.003	<.001

Table 3: Reading comprehension before and after the intervention

	Score pre-test			Score post-test		
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 1	School 2	School 3
Valid	27	21	14	20	21	13
Missing	0	0	0	7	0	1
Mean (arithmetic)	3.222	4.143	4.643	4.050	5.381	5.923
Std. Deviation	1.553	1.389	1.216	1.234	1.359	1.115
Minimum	1	1	3	2	3	4
Maximum	6	6	7	6	7	7

Table 4: Reading comprehension before and after the intervention by school

These results align with prior research findings (e.g., Akhmetova et al., 2022; Akkakoson, 2013; Küçükoğlu, 2013; Li et al., 2022; Munawaroh, 2022) as learners improved their reading comprehension after using reading strategies.

### **Is there a relationship between learners' reading comprehension and the use of reading strategies?**

Correlation analyses, in Table 5, revealed no significant relationship between learners' reading comprehension and their use of reading strategies at either the pre-test ( $\rho=-.03$ ,  $p=.849$ ) or post-test stage ( $\rho=.08$ ,  $p=.525$ ). These findings suggest that, although both reading comprehension and strategy use improved following the intervention, the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant.

<b>Spearman's Correlations</b>		<b>Spearman's rho</b>	<b>p</b>	
RS pre-test	-	RC pre-test	-25	849
RC post-test	-	RS post-test	84	525

Table 5: Reading strategies and reading comprehension correlations

Although no statistically significant relationship was found between learners’ use of reading strategies and their reading comprehension, the results highlight a clear improvement in both variables following the intervention. These findings align with previous research on the effectiveness of reading strategy instruction (e.g., Akhmetova et al., 2022; Akkakoson, 2013; Küçükoğlu, 2013; Marliasari, 2017; Li et al., 2022; Munawaroh, 2022; Par, 2020), suggesting that the benefits of strategy instruction may not be reflected in a direct linear relationship between strategy use and comprehension outcomes. Given this, it was essential to further explore the impact of the reading strategy intervention from students and their teacher perceptions, and whether their perceptions support the results of quantitative data.

**How do learners perceive the impact of the reading strategy intervention?**

Data from the qualitative analysis revealed that the reading strategies impacted learners positively in two dimensions namely, motivation and use (Table 6). Each of these dimensions are discussed separately to provide a comprehensive analysis of how the reading strategy influenced learners' attitudes and behaviors.

Themes	School A	School B	School C
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More motivated to learn English.</li> <li>• Expresses intention to use the strategies next year.</li> <li>• Commits to continuing the use of strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finds reading 'cool.'</li> <li>• Reports learning more words in English through strategies like marking, defining, and paying more attention.</li> <li>• Feels motivated to read.</li> <li>• Enjoys using reading sheets to contrast information.</li> <li>• Likes the reading sheets.</li> <li>• Recognizes the value of learning the names of strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the motivation to do better in reading.</li> <li>• Expresses hope for improved reading skills.</li> </ul>
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports that the intervention helps in reading exercises faster.</li> <li>• Discusses the ability to predict text information through initial reading.</li> <li>• Recognizes the usefulness of the strategies in other subject areas.</li> <li>• Benefits from answering questions faster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses the strategy of looking at the text first to understand unknown words in context.</li> <li>• Highlights the practice of rereading for better comprehension.</li> <li>• Emphasizes the importance of identifying key words in questions.</li> <li>• Underlines the organizational benefits of these strategies.</li> <li>• Expresses an intention to use the strategies in other classes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges the value of these strategies in locating information faster.</li> <li>• Desires to identify the names of each strategy during use.</li> <li>• Recognizes the potential to use these strategies in language and social studies classes.</li> </ul>

Table 6: Data and themes identified in learners’ focus groups: Motivation

Within the theme of motivation, the findings indicated that students’ engagement was closely linked to their sense of empowerment through the use of effective reading strategies. Evidence from the first data source suggests that strategy instruction fostered a sense of purpose in students’ reading practices. Students also showed willingness to read and apply the strategies, with one student even describing reading as 'cool', illustrating how they had begun to derive pleasure from reading. This finding aligns with existing empirical-based research such as Grabe and Stoller (2013) and Seymour and Walsh (2006), which emphasizes the advantages of motivated learners to achieve higher levels of reading comprehension.

A further motivation-related finding concerns learners’ increased engagement with English language learning. One student said that reading strategies increased their interest in learning more about English, while another mentioned that their vocabulary was improving due to marking and looking up words or paying closer attention to words in texts. These observations support the idea that the explicit teaching of effective reading strategies can yield benefits for learners, not only in terms of their reading achievement (e.g., Küçükoğlu, 2013; Li et al., 2022; Marliasari, 2017; Munawaroh, 2022; Par, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2017), but also in strengthening their confidence when approaching reading tasks (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Fayazi-Nasab & Ghafournia, 2016; Katims & Harmon, 2000). Lastly, the pedagogical materials created for

the intervention were positively assessed by the students. In particular, the reading sheets were especially acknowledged by the learners from School B. They expressed their enthusiasm for using them to transfer elements of the reading onto these scaffolds. This finding suggests that even when teaching and engaging in the practice of using reading strategies, distinct resources or variations are needed (Duke & Pearson, 2002) as repeated use of strategies may become tiring for both students and teachers (Ali & Razali, 2019).

Use

The use of reading strategies emerged as the second theme in the students’ data. All three groups of students reported that following the reading strategy intervention, they adopted various approaches when doing reading tasks. Students in all three groups reported having identified improvements in their reading speed. This discovery holds particular significance as it shows full agreement with the first source of data as learners improved their reading comprehension when using reading strategies, in agreement with prior qualitative studies (e.g., Küçükoğlu, 2013; Li et al., 2022; Shih & Reynolds, 2018). In addition student groups also expressed that reading strategies were not only beneficial in the English class, but also for other subjects. This finding is relevant for cross-disciplinary reflection since reading is a complex process which is not necessarily automatic, as it requires the previous knowledge of effective strategies not only in one particular subject area, but across the school curriculum (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018).

Some students reported satisfaction with their ability to identify appropriate strategies for different tasks. This specific finding is in line with the curricular objectives for Chilean students in their English class, as they are encouraged to 'select' reading strategies as the context demands, as outlined in the Mineduc (2016) curriculum. Another noteworthy observation was that learners expressed confidence both in understanding the concepts behind these strategies and in their practical utilization.

**How do teachers perceive the reading strategy intervention?**

Teachers’ insights were collected through a focus group conducted at an online meeting. Regrettably, Teacher C was unable to participate in this stage due to the expiration of his contract with the school before the focus group took place. The responses from the teachers were transcribed verbatim and subsequently arranged into Table 7. Based on their answers, it could be concluded that teachers’ perceptions of the reading strategy intervention were positive for learners and to improve educators’ abilities to develop reading comprehension.

Teacher A	Teacher B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized the importance of reading sheets in the intervention.</li> <li>• Reported increased student independence.</li> <li>• Observed enhanced motivation and focus on lessons.</li> <li>• Noted a positive change in students' attitudes towards reading.</li> <li>• Expressed a desire to continue using the intervention strategies due to their positive impact on students.</li> <li>• Planned to introduce reading strategies in lower-level classes.</li> <li>• Highlighted the practical benefits for professional development.</li> <li>• Acknowledged students' application of reading sheets in other subjects like Social Studies and Science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticed improved motivation and participation among students.</li> <li>• Reported low proficiency students showed increased effort in reading and the use of highlighting.</li> <li>• Observed students' ability to differentiate reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and visualizing.</li> <li>• Reported the use of different colors for information highlighting.</li> <li>• Found students were motivated not only to read, but also to learn English as a whole.</li> <li>• Credited the intervention strategies for providing organization.</li> <li>• Saw benefits in the class group where the intervention was implemented.</li> <li>• Emphasized the significance of reading sheets being used in all subjects.</li> <li>• Viewed the experience as impactful on teaching knowledge and skills and shares lessons learned with colleagues.</li> </ul>

Table 7: Teachers’ responses

On analyzing the responses, several common themes emerged, shedding light on the positive impact of the reading intervention. Both educators noted a marked improvement in their students' motivation, independence, and attitudes toward reading as well as for English language learning. Additionally, the versatility of the intervention strategies was addressed by both teachers, reporting that students applied

these techniques not only in the English class but also across subjects like social studies and the sciences, highlighting the practicality and cross-subject applicability of the strategies. Furthermore, both teachers recognized the professional development benefits of the intervention, with Teacher A emphasizing practical advantages and Teacher B noting its impact on teaching knowledge and skills. This finding is congruent with previous qualitative types of inquiries (e.g., Farrell, 2001; Küçükoğlu, 2013) in which it is possible to appreciate educators' insights on reading strategy instruction that they experienced. Moreover, the desire expressed by both teachers to continue using the intervention strategies emphasizes their commitment to sustaining the positive impact and benefits that this experience has brought to their classrooms, echoing the favorable insights addressed by previous research (e.g., Akhmetova et al., 2022; Farrell, 2001; Küçükoğlu, 2013; Shih & Reynolds, 2018).

## Conclusion

Overall, the reading strategy intervention implemented in this study yielded positive results. In the quantitative phase, participants' reading comprehension scores increased following the intervention, suggesting that the teaching of reading strategies can support reading development. This finding was congruent with the second phase of the study which delved into the perceptions of learners and teachers regarding the impact of the reading strategy intervention.

Students' feedback highlighted the positive influence of the intervention on their motivation and the practical use of reading strategies, even beyond the English class. Such engagement was not anticipated in only five weeks of intervention. Prior to the implementation, there were some concerns about overwhelming the students, yet as the intervention progressed the learners became more enthusiastic. This led us to the possibility that the learners' motivation and actual use of the reading strategies might have been influenced by the various reading activities and reading strategies as well as the print and multimedia resources elaborated for the intervention. It is likely that learners had perceived this as positive variation or dynamic to which they were not accustomed.

The teachers' perceptions of the intervention were in alignment with the students' feedback, emphasizing improved student motivation, independence when using the reading strategies, and a more positive attitude towards reading and English language learning. Furthermore, teachers identified professional growth after the intervention. This finding holds special relevance for English education programs in terms of equipping prospective teachers with a strong theoretical and practical knowledge on developing reading comprehension. It is recommended that these teaching programs place special emphasis on the curricular orientations of the English class as they may play a fundamental role not only in the learning outcomes of the EFL classroom, but also its didactical components. Within the scope of this study, the reading strategy intervention was basically planned with the reading activities and strategies found in the English curriculum as presented in Figure 2, yielding favorable results. Thus, the curriculum cannot be overlooked for both pre- and in-service teachers. Although the context of implementation was very specific, it is hoped that these findings have practical implications for future researchers facing settings similar to the one portrayed in this investigation. Likewise, it is hoped that this reading strategy intervention encourages pre-service and in-service teachers to use a methodical cycle of pre-, while- and after-reading activities that promote the use of various reading strategies including skimming, scanning, and visualizing, among others. Additionally, as experienced in this study, it is crucial to teach the different reading strategies and explain their purpose, and even model their use for the enjoyment and conscious use of reading strategies, especially in EFL groups or those grappling with reading comprehension. Finally, the authors aspire to inspire future researchers to further enrich the body of knowledge on reading comprehension in a school setting, as this is a domain that requires greater attention and investigation in Chile.

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## Appendix 1

### Reading Strategies Questionnaire

#### Estrategias de lectura para la lectura en inglés

Lee atentamente las afirmaciones de la 1-23. En el contexto de la lectura en inglés, marca con una **X** el número que mejor represente tu respuesta, según los siguientes criterios:

- 0=No tengo conocimiento acerca de esta estrategia.
- 1= Nunca
- 2=A veces
- 3= Frecuentemente

	0	1	2	3
1. Antes de leer, <u>identifico</u> un propósito u objetivo para comenzar a leer.				
2. Antes de leer, <u>planifico</u> los pasos que daré para entender el texto.				
3. Antes de leer, doy una mirada general al texto.				
4. Antes de leer, hago predicciones acerca del contenido del texto.				
5. Mientras leo, verifico mis predicciones comparándolas con lo que dice el texto.				
6. Mientras leo, me hago preguntas sobre el texto.				
7. Mientras leo, encuentro respuestas a las preguntas que he hecho.				
8. Mientras leo, conecto lo que ya sé con la nueva información del texto.				
9. Mientras leo, resumo partes del texto.				
10. Mientras leo, identifico las ideas principales basadas en lo que dice el texto.				
11. Mientras leo, trato de entender cómo están vinculadas las partes del texto.				
12. Mientras leo, noto la organización de la información en el texto.				
13. Mientras leo, si es necesario vuelvo a leer información para asegurarme que comprendo.				
14. Mientras leo, uso el contexto del texto para comprender palabras o frases desconocidas.				▼
15. Cuando es necesario, <u>busco</u> palabras desconocidas en un diccionario o glosario.				
16. Mientras leo, <u>presto</u> atención a las palabras y frases que señalan nuevas ideas.				
17. Compruebo mi comprensión a medida que avanzo en un texto.				
18. Cuando no entiendo parte de un texto, trato de identificar lo que me impide comprenderlo.				
19. Si entiendo mal un texto, identifico mis errores y los corrijo.				
20. Cuestiono al autor y a veces lo critico.				
21. Cuestiono el texto y a veces lo critico.				
22. Después de leer, verifico si he cumplido mis propósitos o metas de lectura.				
23. Después de leer, pienso en lo que he aprendido leyendo.				

Traducido y adaptado de Hedgecock & Ferris (2018). *Teaching readers of English. Students, texts and contexts.*

## Appendix 2

### Focus Group Questions

#### Focus group questions - students

1. How did you feel about the reading strategy activities introduced in your English classes?
2. Do you think the reading strategies helped you understand texts better? How?
3. Can you describe the strategies you have used and how you felt about them?
4. Did you observe any changes in your English lessons after using the reading strategies?

#### Focus group questions - Teachers

1. What are your overall impressions of the reading strategy intervention?
2. Did you observe any changes in students' reading comprehension? Can you provide examples?
3. How did you experience implementing these strategies in your classroom?