



**UNIVERSIDAD
DE ANTIOQUIA**

Trabajo de investigación presentado como requisito
parcial para optar al título de:
Licenciada en Lenguas Extranjeras

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2023



Engaging Students in Reading Tasks Through the Shared Reading Strategy

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November 21, 2023

Abstract

This study is an action research project carried out with seventh graders at Institucion Educativa Javiera Londoño Sevilla; a public institution located in Medellín. The aim of this project was to enhance student engagement through the implementation of the Shared Reading strategy in reading tasks in the English class. The data collection methods included two student surveys, observations registered in the student-teacher's journal, two students' self-assessment tasks and a Cooperating Teacher interview.

Data were analyzed using the triangulation method with all the tools. The results showed that promoting reading as a collaborative experience through the Shared Reading strategy, allows students to increase their confidence to participate, interact and commit to reading tasks in the English class. It also can help create an enjoyable environment where students feel comfortable and where their interest in learning is enhanced.

Keywords: shared reading, student engagement, reading tasks, big books, predictable books.

Título en español: Fomentando el Compromiso de a los Estudiantes en Tareas de Lectura a través de la Estrategia de Lectura Compartida.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellín, Colombia.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the seventh-grade students at I.E. Javiera Londoño Sevilla for cooperating in the activities proposed in class. Furthermore, I want to thank my Cooperating Teacher for her guidance, invaluable support and dedicated commitment throughout the development of this research project.

I want to extend thanks to my family for their contribution in my academic journey and for believing in me. I want to specially express my deepest appreciation to my partner for her love, patience, words of encouragement and for serving as my most significant source of support and motivation behind my continued journey, which has significantly contributed to both my personal and professional growth.

Lastly, I would like to state my regards to the public university for equipping me with invaluable knowledge and skills, as well as for allowing me the chance to embark on my professional path.

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Preface

This work aims to determine how the use of the Shared Reading strategy in reading tasks enhances seventh graders' engagement at Institucion Educativa Javiera Londoño Sevilla. This project consisted of two stages developed between February and November 2023. The first stage was devoted to observation and familiarization with the context, while the second phase focused on addressing an identified issue within that context. During my observation stage I noticed a lack of commitment on students when participating in reading activities in the English class. This was attributed to the material used and the approach taken. For this reason and in order to improve that situation, by bringing to the classroom an interactive way to approach reading, students are expected to feel more enticed and motivated when engaging in reading tasks, given that this strategy fosters a cooperating, nonthreatening learning environment.

The following pages will provide a description of the influence of this strategy when applied in the EFL classroom. I trust that this work will be helpful for fellow English teachers seeking innovative approaches to engage their students in the process of learning a new language, particularly within the context of reading.

Description of the Context

The Institución Educativa Javiera Londoño Sevilla, is an official public institution located in the *comuna No. 4* of Medellín. This institution was founded in 1939 as a female school but currently is of coeducational character and offers education to children, teenagers and adults in the levels of preschool, primary and secondary school.

The school is composed of two physical structures. The first, attributed to the primary grades, and the second, assigned to the secondary grades. There, students have access to a wide range of educational and recreational spaces and the classrooms are equipped with a large blackboard, a desk for the teacher, individual desks for the students, and a few of them are equipped with a television for their use in academic activities.

The mission of the institution is to ensure the accessibility, permanence and promotion of its students through the development of basic skills. Their slogan is "*Working for human dignity*" (P.E.I., I.E Javiera Londoño Sevilla, 2017, p.1). In regards to its vision, the institution aims to position itself at the local level as an entity that is inclusive and innovative, strengthening the human, ethical, and social development of students through participation, leadership, and peaceful coexistence of the entire educational community. (P.E.I, 2017, p.10).

Concerning the Cooperating Teacher (CT), the English teacher in charge of the group in which this project took place, she graduated in 2011 from *Universidad de Antioquia* with a Bachelor Degree in foreign language teaching, and has an online master's degree in educational project management from *Universidad de Santander*. The CT has over 12 years of experience teaching in public and private institutions. The CT focuses on the holistic approach, which is used to support teaching through the development of the whole person and all its intercultural, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects.

The target group for this action research project is 7th-2 grade, a group of 35 students; 21 boys and 14 girls, between the ages of 12 and 15. Most of the students in this group live in

the *comuna No. 4* and other nearby neighborhoods of socio-economic level 1 and 2. Regarding their attitude towards the English class, around 80% of students (28) seem engaged with the language, activities and homework assignments proposed.

In the institution, English is taught as a foreign language with a weekly intensity of four hours. The English syllabus is guided by the fundamental rights of learning (DBA), settled by the Ministry of National Education (MEN) and for the school year, the English subject is divided into three periods: Health, Democracy and Peace, and Globalization.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is an activity that exposes students to many essential aspects of a language such as structure, grammar, and a wide range of vocabulary. Learning to read in the native language is complex, and getting used to doing the same in a foreign language represents a major challenge. In the Colombian context, in public institutions, students do not have enough exposure to English in their daily lives, and the materials used in class for the development of the reading skill, tend to be not enticing.

After carrying out 1 month of observations of the English class of seventh graders at the I.E Javiera Londoño Sevilla, it was possible to identify that among the four communicative language skills promoted in the classroom, the one that represented the biggest challenges for students and where their motivation seems to decrease, was the reading skill. The activities related to reading were very limited, representing a problem because students had few practice opportunities. When they were faced with small texts, they felt frustrated and most preferred to use class time to do other things.

About this fact, I stated in my observation journal some comments when students were assigned a reading task: «Reading represents a challenge for students, just by looking at the text they make comments about the task being very difficult and boring» (Journal Entry 5, March 6, 2023), «Students are not interested in doing the reading activity, they prefer to talk,

play on their cell phones, listen to music and close the book without even trying to read. » (Journal Entry 8, March 27, 2023). On both occasions, students failed to complete the task. In addition, the texts provided for the reading practice are given in printed text format, without illustrations, visual aids or a guide on how to read, which can influence the way in which they receive them.

This issue was also evident in a survey carried out with the students during the first weeks of class as part of my teaching actions, as a student-teacher. I asked them some questions related to their personal perceptions and opinions about learning English. In the results, the reading skill received a few votes 14,4% (5) in the question about the most important aspect of English to learn. Also, only 14.9% (14) students chose reading as their preferred way to learn. Additionally, when students were asked about the difficulties they would like to improve, reading was the second most chosen skill, after vocabulary, with 35% of votes.

Furthermore, after having informal conversations with students on a few occasions and with the Cooperating Teacher (CT), students directly expressed the negative perceptions they have of reading tasks and the teacher agreed in the importance of motivating students to read: «I asked some students around me what they liked doing the least in class and they answered that reading. Two of them said that it was very difficult and another said that it makes them sleepy and it is boring. They also mentioned that they hate Spanish class because there they read a lot» (Journal Entry 12, April 21, 2023). «My CT told me that promoting reading is a good idea but that it has to be dynamic, by using big books, for example, since it lights a spark in them, it catches their attention and it can be a means for them to fall in love with reading» (Journal Entry 10, April 13, 2023).

Considering the previous sources, I concluded that most of the time students become lost and change their general positive attitude towards the English class, when presented to

reading tasks. As they consider them difficult or uninteresting, it is important to transform students' perceptions because reading tasks are a great opportunity to improve language proficiency. In my opinion, reading is fundamental in the acquisition of a language. There are many materials that we can employ where the target language is used in familiar contexts that the students can relate to, and it is also a means through which students can make connections and recollect language structures much faster.

Theoretical Background

In order to grant theoretical support to my research project and justify my intervention proposal, it is essential to discuss three concepts that constitute the full notion of this research work: Reading Tasks, Students Engagement and Shared Reading Strategy.

Reading Tasks

Reading is a complex exercise that plays an essential role in language learning. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading strategies aim to improve various aspects such as understanding the content, analyzing the text's structure, identifying key information, and inferring meaning from context. Following this idea, some authors from this field have talked about two different reading instructional approaches to reading: intensive and extensive.

First, according to Mart (2015), the intensive reading approach (IR) helps the reader perform a thorough analysis of grammar, vocabulary points, authors intentions, among other aspects of the text. This means that in this approach, reading is not limited to comprehension but also includes clear learning goals. Second, Hedgcock & Ferris (2018) pointed out that extensive reading (ER) is an approach in which students read for fun, to get general information and overall meaning. The main goal of this approach is to provide more enjoyable environments to improve the language proficiency and enthusiasm of the learners.

Hence, for the purpose of this research I will focus on the ER approach with the aim of helping unmotivated students to find excitement in reading while working together.

Furthermore, Leipzig (2001) defined reading as a multi-layered process that involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Based on this definition, it is important to understand how readers integrate these facets in their reading process and more specifically on reading tasks that, according to Anderson (2003), encompass specific activities or exercises designed to develop and practice reading strategies and skills. These tasks involve predicting outcomes, summarizing information, identifying main ideas, or making connections between the text and personal experiences. In the context of this study, reading activities have been focused only on identifying general main information from a text, preventing students from exploring different options to comprehend what is being read.

To make reading more efficient in foreign language acquisition, according to Ellis (2002), Task-based methodology is an approach to language teaching that focuses on the use of meaningful tasks to promote language learning and skill development through collaborative and communicative activities. This approach includes three phase procedures: pre, while, and post tasks. In reading, Toprak & Almacioğlu (2009) described these as follows: In pre reading, students are introduced to a particular text and are led to get appropriate background knowledge that will generate interest and preparation. Then, in while reading, students are given exercises to develop reading strategies, improve their control of the foreign language, decode problematic text passages while looking for details and develop their knowledge about the text. And last, in the post reading, students meet exercises to check comprehension, have a deeper analysis of the whole text and prompt reflection. These three stages of reading are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. They are all essential in facilitating effective comprehension, students' engagement, enhancement of learners' reading

proficiency, critical thinking skills, overall language development, and reading confidence, which are aspects that this study seeks to improve in the selected context.

Students' Engagement

Over time, the field of education has shown great interest in students' engagement, and teachers and researchers interested in improving teaching practices, have explored its meaning and have offered different definitions of this concept. For instance, Skinner et al. (1990) described engagement as "A student's initiation of effort, action, and persistence in schoolwork as well as his ambient emotional states during learning activities" (p.2). This definition, as a starting point, is appropriate for this research because it reflects both physical and emotional aspects which are part of the observed problem, described in the previous section.

Taking into account the complexity of the concept, it is crucial to delve into the different aspects that compose it. In this case, I will focus this study on the engagement model proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004), where they defined engagement as a construct that consists in three different dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. The first involves observable behaviors such as participation, following the rules, attendance, preparation, and discipline. The second dimension refers to students' investment in learning and involves aspects such as willingness, thoughtfulness and self-regulation. Finally, the third one touches on the students' positive and negative emotional reactions towards the school in general.

These dimensions of engagement are not isolated; therefore, this action research will include aspects of each one. First, within the behavioral engagement, this study will focus on participation actions such as discussion contribution, asking questions, paying attention, and concentration. Second, the cognitive engagement will be centered on students' willingness to learn, meaning their effort and energy put into their own learning processes. Finally, on the

emotional dimension and as the key point of the whole research, it will focus on how students are feeling about their learning experience within the reading tasks.

“Emotional engagement refers to students' affective reactions in the classroom, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety” (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993, as cited in Fredricks et al. 2004). The authors also suggested that exploring the emotional dimension of engagement can help students develop a sense of identification with and belonging to the school, value school outcomes, and feel their peers and teachers support them. In my opinion, the emphasis of this aspect is essential to counteract students' negative feelings towards reading tasks, which correspond to the observed dominant issue in the classroom, and on the contrary, it is likely to encourage interest, fun and a positive attitude in them when reading which translates in the whole point of this research.

Shared Reading Strategy

In search of making reading an experience to connect students and engage them in the process, the shared reading strategy will be used in the development of this project.

According to Dugger (2019) shared reading (SR) refers to “an interactive reading experience that takes place when students share the reading of a book with the help and assistance of a teacher.” (p.1). This strategy is relevant because, according to Holdaway (1979) through SR, students can associate feelings and experiences with the act of reading and lessons become instead a shared event. It is also an opportunity to read orally, make predictions and have conversations and discussions using the same text which is not happening in the group where this study will take place.

This strategy seems appropriate for this study because it is a way of showing students a different method of reading, it models strategies to read and can help learners find excitement in a process that currently represents a big challenge. As stated by Parks (2000),

among the purposes of shared reading is the interest to provide children with an enjoyable reading experience, entice them to want to be readers and teach children how to be readers and writers themselves. Moreover, this strategy allows students to learn from the teachers whose role is modeling, guiding and supporting them in reading a book. Consequently, it is likely that students will gain confidence to join in the reading activity; and by boosting their interaction and inspiring them to contribute with their knowledge, it may result in an increase of student participation, which is connected to the goals of this research.

The use of this strategy has shown positive results in previous research. For instance, Waterhouse (2014) and Altamimi & Ogdol (2023) stated in the conclusions of their thesis that while using SR with three different groups of young learners, it was possible to observe some positive changes in students' reading engagement and participation which were indicators of socio emotional and academic growth. The authors revealed that these results were directly linked to features of this strategy such as teacher guidance, prompting and scaffolding, along with the constant group interaction that allowed children to engage deeply with the different proposed texts and lead to an emotional investment of students in the overall reading process. These results are important because they indicate the possible outcomes that can be achieved with the implementation of the SR strategy in this specific study that has similar interest in behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement.

Shared Reading Materials

In order to bring shared reading into this 7th-grade classroom, the reading materials need to comply with certain characteristics. According to Smith (2009), some of the most important criteria for shared reading are predictability and illustration support. Firstly, illustration support helps readers to focus their attention and follow the story with the help of a visual representation of content that will give them an idea of how the story will continue.

Secondly, predictable texts encourage novice readers to memorize words and sentences and to use picture cues to understand unknown words.

Following this idea, the two most recommended materials in the shared reading strategy that meet these requirements and, therefore, will be used in this study are big books and predictable books. First, Strickland & Morrow (1990) defined big books as magnified or enlarged versions of children's books, usually narratives; they are considered to be one of the most effective ways of getting children involved with print. This type of books plays a major role in the acquisition of a foreign language because they contain simple language, illustrations and large letters that make it easier to recognize meaning. Among the advantages of big books are their large size and attractive contents because they are full of color and can catch learners' attention more easily (Novitasar & Nurfiqih, 2021).

Second, predictable books follow the previously mentioned characteristics, besides their size, but their major features are illustrations and how they support students by helping them decipher and predict what they are reading because usually pictures match the words. Further, according to Smith (2009) these books are also constructed to encourage readers to memorize simple words and allow students to quickly catch on word patterns and repetitive sentences they can use to join in the reading. The choice of these materials for the development of the study was focused on the fact that at school the participants do not have access to this type of books for the English class, hence bringing them different physical and virtual materials may increase their interest, thereby their participation as well as their positive attitude in reading tasks.

Research Question

How does the use of the Shared Reading strategy enhance the 7th-grade students' engagement in Reading Tasks at I.E Javiera Londoño Sevilla?

Objectives

General Objective

To determine how the use of the Shared Reading strategy enhances the 7th-grade students' engagement in Reading Tasks at I.E Javiera Londoño Sevilla.

Specific Objectives

- To analyze students' perceptions about reading (emotional engagement) before and after implementing the Shared Reading strategy in the English class.
- To explore the different patterns of participation (behavioral engagement) that take place in the English class through the implementation of the Shared Reading strategy.
- To evaluate students' willingness (cognitive engagement) during the implementation of the Shared Reading strategy in the English class.

Action Plan

In order to conduct this research and after considering the Statement of the Problem, the Research Question, and the Specific Objectives already mentioned, I plan to carry out in the 7th grade English class, four reading tasks based on the Shared Reading strategy with two types of materials: big books and predictable books.

This action plan will be divided into two cycles (See Table 1). In the first cycle, students will be exposed to the shared reading strategy using two books focused on topics such as peace and sustainability taken from the second module of the English syllabus. In the second cycle, other two books will be used for the implementation, based on topics such as globalization and culture.

During the two cycles, the data collection will be done through observation and using the observation journal. This method was chosen with the purpose of monitoring students' participation, noting some visible changes in their emotional engagement during the development of the tasks, and these observational data can also provide insights into students'

willingness to engage by using indicators such as body language, energy and attitude. These actions correspond to the second, first and third specific objectives, respectively.

To complete the collection of data that responds to the first objective, I will carry out a student survey at two different times: before starting the cycles and when they are completed. The purpose of this survey is to know the initial and final perceptions of the students about reading and to provide unobservable data that allow analyzing the possible alterations in the emotional engagement of the students in both moments.

Table 1

Action Plan for the Development of the Project Proposal

Cycle	Activities	Time	Participants
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inform students and get consents. ● Initial students' perception survey. 	Start of August	Seventh graders CT Student-teacher
Shared Reading Cycle 1: Peace and Sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading book # 1 -#2: Pre, while and post reading. ● Students self-Assessment. 	End of August - Star of September	Seventh graders Student-teacher CT
Shared Reading Cycle 2: Globalization and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading book # 3- #4: Pre, while and post reading. ● Students SA 	End of September - Star of October	Seventh graders Student teacher CT
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final students' perceptions survey. ● CT Interview. 	Late October - November	Seventh graders CT Student teacher

Additionally, at the end of both cycles, I will administer a self-assessment activity following a rubric. This tool has the purpose of prompting students to reflect on their own levels of willingness and engagement and test their awareness of the actions they did or did not take when committing to complete the proposed reading tasks. This data collection will respond to the last specific objective. Further, at the end of the study, I will conduct an interview with my Cooperative Teacher (CT), who can provide valuable information from what was observed in the implementation of the tasks from a different perspective. This will help avoid bias in the process of analyzing data and will contribute to the collection of the data for all three objectives.

Development of the Actions

In order to explore the effect of the shared reading strategy in students' engagement in reading tasks, after some considerations, I focused this study on 15 students which were the ones who, together with their parents, gave their consent to participate in this research work.

The first action was carried out on August 25th where I socialized the research proposal with the students and the CT. I did this as a small discussion where students had the chance to get to know the purpose and objectives of the project, ask questions about it and were informed about the importance of their participation. At last, I gave each of them a consent letter that we first read together in class and then, I asked them to take home and sign it with their parents. Then, on August 28th, after receiving the signed consents, I implemented the first student's perception survey done through a printed physical format, and it was related to students' initial opinions and feelings toward reading as general and also inside the English class. The students' survey (see Appendix A) included the Likert scales types of questions proposed by Anderson (1998) giving students a three-point emotions scale they used to agree or disagree on. The design of this tool followed a simple format that students

were familiar with from previous surveys conducted in the course, and had the purpose of providing ease when responding.

In September, I carried out the first cycle. Due to time constraints with the schedule of the English class, this cycle took longer than expected; however, all actions were implemented. The first topic we focused on was Peace, and for the shared reading and the different re, while and post reading tasks, we used the book “The Peace Book” by Tood Parr (2004). Then, we explored the topic of Sustainability and the book chosen was “The Wind Blew” by Pat Hunching (1974). Both books were selected because they addressed the themes for each reading session and followed the characteristics of the shared reading material previously described. At the end of this cycle, I administered a student’s self-assessment (See Appendix B) where each participant in a printed format, had to assess their own performance, commitment and attitudes towards the implemented reading tasks. This format was also planned using Likert scale type questions and a five-point scale. It was created as a type of written survey with the goal of getting simultaneous self-report by all participants in a not time consuming way, which are characteristics of this sort of tool as described by Altrichter, H., Posch, P., and Somekh, B (1993). Also, it followed a similar structure used by the CT in previous self- assessment tasks which assures familiarity with such format.

Then, in October, I implemented the second cycle. Along this month, the time limitations increased because of extracurricular school events that caused significant reductions of our class time. To counteract this issue, I decided to focus only on the topic of Culture for both shared reading experiences and the shared reading materials selected related to this topic were the books “Same, Same But Different” by Jenny Sue KostECKI-Shaw (2011), and “Whoever You Are” by Mem Fox (1997). This means that the second topic of Globalization that was in the plan was discarded. At the end of the cycle, I executed the

second student's self-assessment using the same rubric with the purpose of collecting more evidence on students' self awareness during their learning process through shared reading.

During both cycles, I wrote a teachers observation journal entry after every shared reading task. I recorded what I observed in the teacher's observation format, designed following the descriptive system collection procedure proposed by Evertson & Green (1986) where observations were targeted to specific categories that in this case were chosen after Fredricks et al. (2004) three engagement dimensions that are the heart of this research work. The idea of this journal was to keep track of observable data through descriptions and reflections of the whole process and these entries provided me with useful information that I could later compare with the other tools used and identified possible changes in students' engagement.

After both planned cycles were done, in the first week of November I finished up my actions. First, I performed the second student's perception survey done in the same ways as the first one and it had the goal of getting students final perceptions about reading. This survey allowed me to compare students' insights before and after the implementations of the SR strategy in reading tasks and identify the effect of this strategy on students' engagement.

Second, I held an interview with my CT that I recorded, with the purpose of getting a second perspective and to know her opinions about the observed changes and effects of the project on students. The interview was focused on the semi-structure type of interview suggested by Adams (2015) as a relaxed dialogue where a blend of closed and open-ended questions were employed, accompanied by follow-up why or how questions that gave the interviewer the opportunity to go further. The questions were designed using as inspiration the CT interview format used by Zuluaga (2021) in his study and were modified to adjust to the goals of this research.

Data Analysis

This study was carried out following the action research method. Johnson (2019) defined action research in the field of education as “the process of studying a school, classroom, or teacher-learning situation with the purpose of understanding and improving the quality of actions or instruction” (p.255). Following this idea, the gathering process for this project was made through the use of four sources: Observations, two students’ survey, two students’ self-assessment tasks and a CT interview.

Once the data was gathered, I decided to undertake the analytic process through the four steps proposed by Creswell (2012): 1. organize and prepare data, 2. analyze and compare data, 3. report and code the results, and 4. interpret the results. Initially, I organized the raw data from all the sources by creating graphics and tables, I coded students (15) responses randomly from A to O and also transcribed and translated information from the surveys and the interview for easy reading access. Then, I grouped the most important and repetitive factors by highlighting them with different colors in order to organize them into common categories. Afterwards, using the triangulation approach by Patton (1999), I arranged the data from the four sources into categories in a different summary sheet, relating them to the objectives of this study with the purpose of staying focused on them. Later, I interpreted each category in order to respond whether the achievement of the proposed objectives was accomplished or not and to answer the research question.

Findings and Interpretations

The data analysis showed interesting outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of the shared reading strategy to increase the student engagement dimensions. Three main categories emerged from this analysis: Shared Reading and Emotional Engagement, Shared Reading and Behavioral Engagement and Shared reading and Cognitive Engagement.

Shared Reading (SR) and Emotional Engagement

The data analysis revealed that through the use of SR, there was a positive progress in students' perceptions about reading and that their confidence towards the reading tasks increased during the implementation of the strategy. According to Fredricks et. al (2004) emotional engagement focuses on the extent of positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, or school. About this, I wrote in my observation that as the reading tasks progressed, I noticed students were leaving behind their negative perceptions towards reading in English and were enjoying being in contact with new materials (September 25th, 2023). A month later, I also mentioned in my journal the evident improvement in students' reactions when reading because they were so interested in the stories and I especially highlighted their excitement about sharing their point of view about the books and topics studied (October 23rd, 2023). The positive improvement in their emotions was also perceivable in the student's mood tracker, part of my journal, that I filled out at the end of each shared reading section with the help of the students. The scale was composed of 5 five emotions: Angry (1), upset (2), neutral (3), happy (4) and excited (5). During the first session all students agreed on emotion 3, in the second and third session they chose emotion 4, and in the final session they picked emotion 5. Taking these results into account, the average emotion during the use of the SR was happiness (4), which suggests that students were generally content with the reading activities, it can also indicate there was at growth in their liking toward reading and that they overcame the negative feelings they expressed to have before starting this project.

Furthermore, on this same topic, the 15 students participating in this study had the opportunity in the student's self-assessment to rate their attitude during the implementation of the reading tasks. Regarding their positive attitude towards learning, after the first cycle 80% of students (12) responded affirmatively with 8 responses in excellent and 4 in good. At the

end of the second cycle, these numbers increased to 100% with 11 responses in excellent and 4 in good. This was also supported by some comments left by students at the end of the self-assessment from September 25th and October 30th, 2023, where they indicated they liked the reading classes because they learnt new things. For instance student C said “*Me gusta la clase de lectura porque son divertidas y se aprenden cosas nuevas*” and student F who stated “*Me encantaron los libros porque aprendí cosas nuevas en inglés*”.

These findings can also be confirmed through the perception surveys conducted at the beginning and the end of the study. In these, a change in the emotional engagement of the students was evident, going from a mostly negative collective perception of reading in English to a final positive perception after the implementation of the study in items such as: Opinion about Reading in English, Opinion about Reading Tasks in English class, and Reading something new in English. These items are illustrated in Figure 1 where the decrease of the negative perception is shown in percentages. The responses obtained indicate the following data: in the first item, before applying the SR strategy, 80% of students felt bad (10) and average (2) when reading in English, but at the end of the project, 66.7% students improved that feeling with 10 agreeing that they liked reading in English. In the second item, initially 66.7% of the students responded that they felt average (6) and bad (4) about the reading tasks in English class, while at the end, 80% (12) stated they felt excited about these tasks. Finally, in item 3, initially 80% of the students said they felt bad (7) and average (5) when reading something new in English, but at the end 66.7% of students (10) said they felt excited when reading something new.

A second part of the perception survey showed additional interesting results corresponding to some factors that influenced the change in their perceptions about reading in English. These were: Reading Techniques, Simultaneous Reading and Materials used: Print and Illustrations, as shown in Figure 2 by number of students. Regarding the first, second and

third factors, 80% of the students (12) agreed on liking when in reading tasks: they are taught techniques to read and pronounce better, they can read together with their classmates and when the books have short sentences, respectively. In the fourth factor, 86.7% (13) claim to like and feel encouraged to read when the class books have images or illustration support.

Figure 1

Perception survey comparison in SR

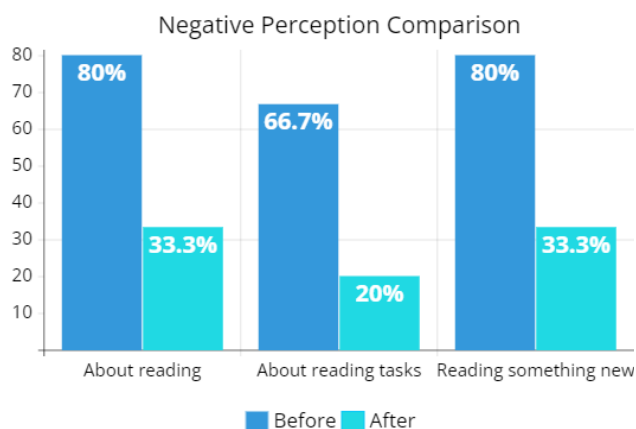
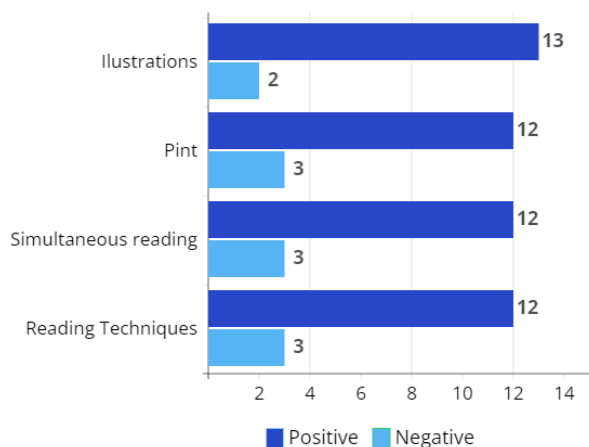


Figure 2

Perception survey: influential factors in SR



The evident positive changes in the student’s emotional engagement, demonstrated the significant impact that the application of shared reading as a class strategy had. These results suggest that the characteristics of this strategy mentioned by Dugger (2019), such as the teacher's guidance and the interaction of the students when simultaneously sharing the reading of the books, are paramount when seeking to enhance students' perceptions toward the reading tasks. Furthermore, it suggests that the materials used are also a powerful means to increase positive feeling to reading since they were composed of short sentences and repetitive structures and illustrations that led to the prediction of the text and a better understanding of what was being read, as established in the definition of big books and predictable book by Novitasar & Nurfiqih, (2021) and Smith (2009). This theory is also supported by the CT when in the interview conducted, she expressed that from her point of view the SR strategy gave students more confidence and changed their perception since they

first had the opportunity to listen to the teacher read and then did it themselves which allowed them to dare. Also, she said this happened because the books always had a similar structure that allowed students to feel confident after mastering the most repeated sentence, and pushed them to try reading even if they did not know what was next because they had the images as support (November 2nd, 2023).

Shared Reading and Behavioral Engagement

The findings that emerged from the analysis of the data collected, revealed positive enhancement of student's behavior during the implementation of the SR strategy. According to Fredricks et al. (2004), behavioral engagement refers to students' way of acting, as well as students' commitment and participation in tasks and school activities. Based on this and for the sake of this study, I focused this engagement dimension on identifying 1. whether the level of students' participation increased and 2. the most common participation patterns observed in the class.

The use of SR positively increased desired behaviors in class such as participation. About this topic I commented in my observation journal of October 30th, 2023, that participation was excellent and almost everyone (except one student) assumed their reading roles seriously, answered and asked questions throughout the class and the interactions between them were fluid, resulting in very interesting and enriching spaces for reflection. In support of this idea, the CT commented in the interview that she observed a significant increase in class participation and she related the fact to the advantages of SR, she said that *“Assigning students an active reader role and also the change in the dynamics of the class, showed students that learning is not only possible through the board but that a book also teaches them vocabulary, grammatical structures and other aspects of the language”* (November 2nd, 2023). These suggests that prompting collaboration and interaction among

students when reading lead participation to grow and to increased students' interest in the overall reading session.

Regarding the observed participation patterns among students, three types of participants emerged from the data obtained: Active Contributors, Occasional Contributors and Non-Verbal Contributors. The first type of participant identified and the most frequent in every SR activity was the active contributor. This may be connected to the application of one of the principles of this strategy established by Holdaway (1979) which indicates the importance of making learners take part of the reading at their own pace. At the beginning of the implementation, I decided to distribute the participation turns equitably to ensure the interaction of all participants at least 2 times in each reading session through reading and questions about insights and understanding of the material. Nevertheless, from the second SR session it was not necessary to continue doing so because students began to participate by their own free will, which I noted in my journal entry "This shared reading session got the best participation of all the cycle with the active participation of 14 out of 15 students" (October 23rd,2023).

The second type of participant identified was the occasional contributor which refers to the students who answered questions and made comments from time to time. During the four sessions, I kept a record in my journal of the number of students who followed this pattern: 6 for the first session, 5 for the second session, 1 for the third session and 4 for the fourth session, resulting in an average of 4 students (26.6%) during all the study. This information provides insights into the varying levels of participation among the sessions, with a notable portion of students participating occasionally rather than consistently but remaining in positive terms.

The third type of participant identified was the nonverbal contributor, attributed to students who participated through nodding in agreement, using body language, raising hands

but who did not answer questions or make comments unless they were directly addressed. It was evident in the self-assessment formats where students with honesty rated their participation in both cycles, and the results showed 3 students (20%) and 1 (6.7%) in each cycle, respectively, who indicated not participating orally in activities related to the SR tasks. Although this type of participant was present throughout the implementation of the project, the percentage in the last cycle decreased, which suggests that the majority of students reached favorable levels of participation and joined the previous two types of contributors resulting in an overall positive participation of 93.9% by the end of the study.

Shared Reading and Cognitive Engagement

When addressing engagement in the classroom, Skinner et al. (1990) stated that aspects such as willingness, effort, action and persistence of students should be taken into account which are part of the cognitive dimension. About this matter, the findings that emerged from the data analysis suggest a direct correlation between the reading tasks developed through the SR strategy and students' disposition for reading.

The student's self-assessment supports this finding when in the question about the effort and disposition when carrying out the different reading activities, the majority of responses were positive with 80% of the students (12) in favor at the end of the first cycle and 93.3% (14) at the end of the second. In addition, there were some comments left by students in the same tool where they expressed their effort and commitment to the tasks; for example, student A said "*Leyendo así me esfuerzo por usar inglés durante la clase*" and student J who said "*Las actividades me ayudaron a entender mas y a concentrarme en la clase*". There was also evidence of this in my observation journal where I noted on October 25th, 2023 that students attention was captured from the pre-reading task and that was essential to have their commitment throughout the SR session. Also in the October 30th, 2023 entry I commented that with the pre-task students seemed more confident in reading and carrying out the other

while and post tasks, since they were able to know the vocabulary that would be used later and also make use of their background knowledge about the topic.

These findings may indicate that the beneficial effect on students' willingness was thanks to the connection and order of the activities planned using the task-based approach that Ellis (2002) defined as the use of meaningful collaborative and communicative activities developed in three phase procedures: pre, while, and post activities. This suggests that when students had different objectives during the development of SR, which are not isolated but interconnected, they felt greater willingness when reading. This idea can be supported with some comments provided by the CT in the interview where she said that the disposition of the students was notable since they knew that after reading, they had an outcome, she commented "When they knew that after reading they had a product, that made them more willing to read" (November 2nd, 2023). In this way, it was not reading for the sake of reading. Reading had a meaning and the meaning was to develop the related tasks. In my opinion students' disposition can be positive as long as there is an objective in reading and that was evidenced by doing the SR through this type of reading tasks.

Conclusions

This action research project aimed at determining how the use of the Shared Reading strategy could enhance the emotional, behavioral and cognitive dimensions of students' engagement in an English class. The findings demonstrated the positive effect that this collaborative reading strategy had in the development of reading tasks and in the increasement of students' positive perceptions towards reading, class participation and students' willingness.

The findings suggest that providing an interactive reading experience helped students to increase their confidence which was a factor that influenced the ways students view reading along with the growth of participation. It improved students' feelings, commitment

and disposition in regards to reading tasks thanks to some characteristics of the strategy such as teacher guidance, providing reading techniques, giving students an active reader role, prompting simultaneous reading and the use of interactive appealing materials. Results also demonstrated that the way on which the reading activities were approached, following the three steps of reading task (pre, while and after), turned a situation that represented a big challenge for students, into an opportunity to learn together in a non-threatening environment while acquiring language, cooperative, communicational and social skills.

These results are relevant because they indicate that students' engagement may be influenced by factors that go beyond themselves and their choice whether to engage or not in the class. Those factors are the different teaching strategies, approaches and techniques that can be used in the different aspects of teaching, as the one used during this study. Therefore, it is important to recognize the big responsibility educators have when choosing how to approach teaching, since it definitely has a great impact on students' engagement.

Despite the general positive results of this project, it is necessary to mention that there were some limitations related to the participants, time constraints and material that affected the outcomes of this project and that under different conditions could result in different findings. This project was carried out with a selected group of 15 students who gave their consent to participate in the study. In my opinion, if it had been implemented with the entire group of 35 seventh graders, the results would have been different due to the size of the group. Moreover, throughout the project, many problems arose in terms of time that reduced classes significantly, rushing the reading activities and reducing the spaces for reflection and sharing of students' outcomes. Shared reading is a strategy that requires time and continuous actions to foster significant changes, therefore, although the short implementation of this project gave positive results regarding the use of SR as a classroom

strategy, the question remains whether when implemented in a more extensive way can influence students' engagement outside of class as independent readers.

Finally, during the project the materials used were combined between physical and virtual materials, however bringing physical books to the class and allowing students to manipulate and interact with them in real time makes a big difference that can also affect differently the three dimensions of engagement studied.

Reflections

This practicum experience has represented a significant challenge for me on both a personal and professional level. Venturing into teaching for the first time has provided me with a valuable opportunity to assess my strengths and areas where I need improvement, supporting my growth as an educator and an individual. It also significantly expanded my understanding of the challenges faced by educators in our country, particularly within a public educational context, where factors such as limited opportunities, resource constraints, violence, and poverty persist as ongoing obstacles in the field of education.

Despite the various difficulties I encountered in terms of lack of materials, time constraints, social issues and other unexpected challenges, I am genuinely grateful for the learning I have gained throughout this entire journey. While teaching at the school, even though it was far from a straightforward task, the connections I fostered with both my Cooperating Teacher and my students reassure me that every effort has been worthwhile, and I am truly happy to have been able to spend this time with them.

Additionally, the research process was very enriching because it was a continuous process of growth and discovery of my own skills and even though it was quite taxing, every obstacle represented an opportunity to improve myself as a teacher-researcher, to seek strategies to be better and to keep taking the risk of teaching.

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Perception Survey

Nota: Apreciado estudiante, el propósito de esta encuesta es obtener información acerca de tus percepciones finales sobre la lectura, después de los ejercicios de lectura compartida. Recuerde que no hay respuestas acertadas y puede contestar con total honestidad. Los resultados obtenidos serán completamente confidenciales y usados con fines académicos.

Nombre: _____ **Fecha:** _____

Usa esta escala de emociones para indicar cuál representa mejor tu punto de vista en cada una de las siguientes declaraciones:



De acuerdo Neutro Desacuerdo

Ahora que has tenido la experiencia de hacer lectura compartida....

1. Me gusta leer en inglés.



2. Me siento bien cuando otra persona me lee en inglés.



3. Me gustan las actividades de lectura en la clase de inglés.



4. Me siento emocionado(a) cuando debo leer algo nuevo en la clase de inglés.



5. Prefiero que los libros de clase no tengan imágenes o ilustraciones.



6. Me gustan los libros que tienen frases cortas como los usados en las clases.



7. Cuando los libros para la clase tienen imágenes o ilustraciones me siento más animado(a) para leer.



8. Me gusta cuando en la clase de inglés me dan técnicas para leer y pronunciar mejor.



9. Me gusta leer junto con mis compañeros en la clase de inglés.



10. Prefiero leer solo en la clase de inglés.



Appendix A

Students' Perception Survey

Appendix B

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Califica de manera responsable, objetiva y sincera tu compromiso en cada una de las situaciones enunciadas a continuación.

Usa una X para marcar tu valoración siguiendo esta escala:

1 2-3 4 5
Deficiente **Regular** **Bueno** **Excelente**

	1	2-3	4	5
Participo oralmente en la lectura de los libros traídos a clase.				
Hago preguntas y/o intervenciones relacionadas con el tema intentando hacer uso del Inglés.				
Realizo todas las actividades propuestas en clase relacionadas con los libros leídos.				
Me esfuerzo por usar inglés durante la clase.				
Estoy atento a las indicaciones de clase y sigo las reglas establecidas.				
Demuestro respeto al escuchar a mi profesora y compañeros.				
Entrego de manera completa las actividades propuestas.				
Mi actitud en clase es positiva y siempre estoy dispuesto a aprender.				

Comentarios extras:
