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**Planning Actions for reading: The use of reading metacognitive strategies of 4<sup>th</sup> graders from a bilingual school in Concepción.**

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## List of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter II: Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Young Language Learners	<b>13</b>
2.1.1 Young language learners' development of literacy	<b>13</b>
2.2 Reading in the EFL Classroom	<b>15</b>
2.2.1 Strategies in reading comprehension	<b>17</b>
2.2.2 Metacognitive strategies in Reading	<b>17</b>
2.2.2.1 Metacognitive strategies in Reading for Young Language Learners	<b>18</b>
2.2.2.2 Reading Metacognitive strategies, Performance and Self-Efficacy	<b>21</b>
<b>Chapter III: Methods</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Type of study	<b>24</b>
3.2 Description of participants	<b>24</b>
3.3 Research question and objectives	<b>26</b>
3.4 Research Problem	<b>26</b>
3.5 Stages of the Action Research	<b>27</b>
3.5.1 Procedure of Access Consent and Assent	<b>28</b>
3.6 Data Collection Techniques	<b>29</b>
3.6.1 Open-Ended Questionnaire	<b>30</b>
3.6.2 Checklist	<b>30</b>
3.6.3 Pre and Post Intervention Tests	<b>31</b>
3.6.4 Group interview	<b>32</b>
3.7 Data Analysis Techniques	<b>33</b>

<b>Chapter IV: Findings</b>	<b>35</b>
4.1 Specific Objective 1: To identify the most recurrent planning action used (predicting, text analysis and questioning) by fourth-grade students when facing a narrative text.	<b>36</b>
4.2 Specific Objective 2: To analyse the contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text.	<b>38</b>
4.2.1 Pre- and Post-Intervention Test	<b>38</b>
4.2.2 Self-reported performance Item	<b>41</b>
4.3 Specific Objective 3: To describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process.	<b>43</b>
4.3.1 Use	<b>44</b>
4.3.2 Role of the strategies aiding their learning process	<b>48</b>
4.3.3 Constraint towards the use of the strategies	<b>50</b>
4.3.4 Continuity	<b>52</b>
<b>Chapter V: Discussion</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1 Specific Objective 1: To identify the most recurrent planning action used (predicting, text analysis and questioning) by fourth-grade students when facing a narrative text.	<b>55</b>
5.2 Specific Objective 2: To analyse the contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the	<b>56</b>

pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text.

5.3 Specific Objective 3: To describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process.	57
5.4 Implications	60
5.5 Limitations	61
<b>Chapter VI: Conclusions</b>	<b>62</b>
6.1 Summary of main findings	63
6.2 Personal reflections and further recommendations	64
<b>References</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appendix A Open-ended Questionnaire</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appendix B Checklist</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix C Pre-Intervention Test</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix D Post-Intervention Test</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Appendix E Group interviews</b>	<b>79</b>

## **List of figures**

1. Figure 1: Stages of Reading in the EFL classroom (Maine and Shields, 2015)
2. Figure 2: Figure 2: Most frequent key concepts in publications about metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension of young language learners.
3. Most repeated words in the abstracts about metacognitive strategies in reading for young language learners.
4. Figure 3: Essential skills in metacognitive reading strategies (Ahmadi et al., 2013)
5. Figure 4: Main characteristics of the AR's participants.
6. Figure 5: Stages of the AR.
7. Figure 6: Stages of the procedure of consent and assent.
8. Figure 7: Example of the checklist used in the intervention.
9. Figure 8: Summary of the reported pre-reading strategies used before the intervention.
10. Figure 9: Frequency of Planning for Reading Metacognitive Strategies used as reported by the students in sessions 2, 3 and 4.
11. Figure 10: Overall frequency of the Planning for Action Reading Strategies used throughout sessions 2, 3 and 4.
12. Figure 11: Pre-intervention test score distribution by student.
13. Figure 12: Post-Intervention test score distribution by student.
14. Figure 13: Pre- and post-intervention test scores by student
15. Figure 14: p-value distribution in the pre-intervention test.
16. Figure 15: p-value in the post-intervention test.
17. Figure 16: Students' opinions on continuing using the strategies.

## **List of tables**

1. Table 1: Assigned score for the Pre- and Post- Intervention test's questions.
2. Table 2: Maximum and minimum score, Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) obtained in the Pre-intervention Test.
3. Table 3: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) obtained in the Post-intervention Test.
4. Table 4: Difference of mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) in the pre and post intervention test.
5. Table 5: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M), Mode (Mo) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Pre-Intervention Test self-reported performance item.
6. Table 6: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M), Mode (Mo) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Post-Intervention Test self-reported performance item.
7. Table 7: Mean (M) and Mode (Mo) of the pre and post-tests.
8. Table 8: Summary of themes and subtheme that emerged from the Thematical analysis of the group-interviews.
9. Table 9: Summary of subthemes, frequency and examples of the use of the strategies.

10. Table 10: Examples of feelings of calmness and easiness reported by the students.
11. Table 11: Summary of subtheme emerged regarding the aid these strategies had on the students reading comprehension process.
12. Table 12: Summary of subtheme emerged regarding the constraints these strategies had on the students reading comprehension process.

### **Acronyms**

AR: Action Research Study

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MINEDUC: Ministerio de Educación / Ministry of Education

Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR)

M: Mean

SD: Standard deviation

## **Abstract**

This report presents an Action Research Study conducted in an EFL context in a bilingual private school in Concepción, Chile. The purpose of this study was to explore the use of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage for supporting students' reading comprehension for specific information. 26 students aged between 9 and 10 participated in a 4-session intervention, where they were introduced to 3 Planning for Action metacognitive strategies. These children used the aforementioned strategies during different reading comprehension tasks. A questionnaire, small group interviews and pre- and post-intervention test were used as data collection techniques. Thus, content and statistical analysis were used to analyse the obtained data. Findings show that the use of planning for action metacognitive strategies impacted positively on students' academic achievement in regard to their reading comprehension for specific information, as well as their own self-perceptions about reading comprehension skills. Additionally, students' views towards the intervention were favourable since they participated actively and showed commitment in all the stages of the intervention. It is expected that these findings contribute to further understanding on how the continuous use of these strategies can be beneficial to support young language learners' reading comprehension, and help to further develop the use of strategies, particularly metacognitive ones in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: Young learners – metacognition – reading comprehension - EFL

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Children around the globe are learning English at a young age (Pinter, 2017). However, there is still a lack of trustworthy guidance on instructing this language to learners who have not developed reading and writing skills (Mourão & Ellis, 2020). Adults engaged in this educational process must adopt a comprehensive approach that considers the child's overall development, guaranteeing that their early language learning encounters establish a strong foundation for continuous language acquisition throughout their lives (Mourão & Ellis, 2020). Following the same line, Enever (2017) mentioned the importance of creating language-rich environments and integrating language learning into meaningful activities. Moreover, regarding the literacy process of young learners, this scholar advocates for authentic and meaningful writing experiences, and highlights the interplay between reading and writing instruction in supporting language development in L2 learners. Additionally, Enever (2017) emphasises the importance of instruction on strategies that integrate language learning into everyday activities and interactions, recognizing that children learn best when language is used purposefully and in context.

Learning strategies play an important role in the success of language learning and these strategies have become focus of interest since the mid-1970s (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Cohen and Macaro, 2007). Second language learning researchers have generally agreed that good language learners use a wide variety of effective techniques and tactics to perform their learning tasks in a given situation. (e.g.: Dörnyei et al., 2006; Raofi et al., 2014; Varga, 2017; Teng, 2020).

Similarly, research on metacognition indicates that metacognitive strategy is closely related to success in foreign language learning (Zeng and Goh, 2018; Sato, 2020; Teng et al., 2022). Particularly for young learners, it can enhance students' self-directed learning and autonomy and with the proper instruction can help to create a learner centred environment (Ellis and Ibrahim, 2017; Morali, 2019). Furthermore, it has been suggested that in order to enhance students' metacognitive knowledge, teachers should focus on both teaching language content and teaching the ways and processes of learning (Raofi et al., 2014).

In the Chilean context, public and private schools are required to follow the national curriculum for primary and secondary education. Many policies have been implemented regarding the subject English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) (Barahona 2017). Since its introduction at primary education in Chile (5<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade), English has gained increased importance across the entire school system. As a result, EFL now holds a prominent position as a subject in contemporary school system, leading to higher expectations for language development and increasing the aspirations of all students to learn English (Barahona, 2017). Additionally, in the year 2012, the Ministry of Education published the curriculum proposal for English instruction in the first cycle of elementary education (1<sup>st</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup> grade) (Ministry of Education, 2012a), with the purpose of becoming a developed and bilingual country supported by the view of English as a commodity to access economic development (Barahona, 2017)

Furthermore, the Curriculum for English as Foreign Language highlights the importance of developing reading comprehension skills. It is stated by the local Ministry of Education (2023) that by doing so, teachers will be able to complement and enrich student learning by incorporating different literary texts readings. It is also argued that this approach offers students valuable exposure to various and unique language usage examples, as well as a wide range of vocabulary.

Following the same line, the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has considered metacognition as an important aspect to be developed at school. Metacognitive assessment tends to be included at the end of some activities provided by the MINEDUC books and as an overall skill to be developed by students with the help of teachers (MINEDUC, 2023). However, in the Chilean context these strategies are not always present during the development of the lessons, particularly with primary learners. There is a prevalent misconception that young learners are unable to fully develop their metacognitive strategies. However, numerous studies have demonstrated that children do possess the ability to articulate their learning and thinking processes (e.g., Linda and Sutapa, 2015; Varga, 2017; Teng, 2020). Yet, the way in which researchers expect the articulation of those processes can be different from what children express or how they express it.

The present Action Research Study, hereafter AR, was carried out in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class (aged between 9 and 10) at a private bilingual school in Concepción, Chile. In this context, many different challenges have arisen regarding learners' autonomy, lack of self-confidence and the use of learning strategies when facing a reading comprehension task to support their reading process. Nonetheless, these challenges could be tackled by implementing the use of metacognitive reading strategies in the pre-reading stage since they can provide a better position for learners to self-regulate their own reading by choosing comprehension strategies that enhance their understanding of the text (Teng, 2020). In spite of the difficulties presented in the context, it is essential to assist English language learners, particularly young learners, in understanding the cognitive processes underlying reading to uncover features that may help students evaluate, manage and develop reading comprehension skills, as well as consider and explore the benefits of metacognition in helping learners understand the emotional processes while reading (Teng, 2020).

Therefore, this AR report aims to identify the most recurrent Planning for Action metacognitive strategies used by 4<sup>th</sup> graders, analyse their contribution on students' reading performance and describe students' perceptions towards them.

## **Chapter II: Conceptual Framework**

## **2.1 Young Language Learners**

The potential benefits of teaching English to young learners are widely recognized among researchers (Griffith et al, 2008; Pinter, 2017; Ellis and Mourão, 2019). Some of the benefits discussed in literature include its contribution for the cognitive development in children, the exposure to different cultures which enable young language learners to comply with the requirements of a globalized world, it can enhance the communicational skills in their L1 and L2 as well as improved literacy skills (e.g., Ellis and Ibrahim, 2017; Enever and Lindgren, 2017; Pinter, 2014). Having that in mind, it is also highlighted that the teaching must be 'appropriate to the social, psychological, emotional and cognitive needs of children' (Bland, 2019, p.6). There is a common conception that young learners are passive figures in social interactions, leaving little room for considering their perspectives on their own learning and life experiences (Pinter, 2014; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2008). Furthermore, the idea that young children are facile, even magically rapid, language learners is no doubt derived from how little language ability they need to possess to impress someone with their language abilities (Griffith et al, 2008).

Moreover, as stated by Wolf and Butler (2017), young learners' cognitive development is an important consideration when teaching a second or foreign language as their cognitive abilities impact their L2 development as well as their performance. Cognitive domains encompass multiple areas such as visual-spatial processing, working memory, short-term memory, metalinguistic awareness, attention, abstract reasoning/concept formation, and executive functions (Barac et al., 2014).

Research has shown that young learners' cognitive capacity is highly associated with their language development (Wolf and Butler, 2017). For example, Garlock et al. (2001) found that the young learners in their study (ages 6 and 7) demonstrated a strong positive relationship between working memory and language abilities in phonological awareness, vocabulary size, and reading. They also found that metalinguistic abilities also improved with the increase of cognitive capacity.

### **2.1.1 Young language learners' development of literacy**

For individual language learners there is typically some overlapping between natural acquisition and instructed learning (Pinter, 2017). When talking about foreign language learning, it is important first to review how children learn a first language and then use that process as a contrast to foreign language learning. For a starter, foreign language learners, even young ones, already have prior knowledge of language and its uses. In the process of learning a first language, they have determined what communication is all about and, furthermore, what particular

systems and styles of communication work in their immediate environment (Griffith, 2008).

However, unlike learning to speak, literacy is not acquired naturally. Children usually learn to read and write in their first or native language (L1) in school during early childhood. Whether students are learning these skills in English as their first language or an additional language, the process requires informed and deliberate instruction (Griffith, 2008).

Young learners' literacy is heavily contested; however, this has helped to contribute to the ever-increasing understanding of reading and writing as a dynamic and interactive process. Educators have been discussing and debating the effectiveness of phonics versus whole language instruction for years (Adams 1990; Goodman 2005; Maddox and Feng, 2013). Although this debate was grounded in first language literacy instruction, it has affected how practitioners understand teaching young language learners how to read and write in English as a foreign or additional language.

As described by Griffith (2008), the first trend mentioned follows a phonics approach in which the focus is on the sound-symbol relationship in order to decode written language. It is considered a bottom-up approach starting with building phonemic awareness, which helps discriminate sounds in English, and then moving on to learning the relationship between the sounds and letters in order to decode words. The second trend, a whole-language approach, focuses on top-down processing skills, which starts from children's knowledge of the world and experience with language and texts and builds strategies for making meaning from text and creating text.

Moreover, traditionally, literacy practices were shaped by cognitive or psycholinguistic perspectives and focused on skills like phoneme-grapheme correspondence or fluency (Griffith, 2008). However, sociocultural perspectives on literacy have become increasingly important not only as a theoretical framework but also in classroom practice (Ellis and Ibrahim, 2017). As stated by Gee (2001), language is always connected to social, cultural and political contexts.

Nowadays, researchers and practitioners in the fields of first, second, and foreign language literacy promote taking a balanced literacy approach, which integrates aspects of whole language and phonics approaches (Ellis and Ibrahim, 2017; Herrera et al., 2015; Tompkins, 2014). Researchers such as Griffith (2008), recommend using an interactive reading process model, which proposes that readers use both bottom-up and top-down processing skills simultaneously during the reading process. This process utilises both schematic knowledge as well as decoding skills at the letter or word level to comprehend text (Herrera, et al., 2015).

According to Goodman (2005) literacy instruction should include three main cueing systems for students to create meaning from text:

- Graphophonic cues, which mean that students gain meaning by decoding (knowledge of sound – symbol relationships of language to make meaning from text).
- Semantic cues, which means that students gain meaning from text using their background knowledge.
- Syntactic cues, this means that students gain meaning from text using their knowledge of language patterns and grammar.

In addition, Tompkins et al. (2014), identified a set of literacy development components that students need to learn to become effective readers and writers:

- Alphabetic Code: Students learn phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling to understand our sound-symbol system.
- Fluency: Students learn to read fluently so that they have cognitive resources available for comprehension.
- Vocabulary: Students acquire a wide vocabulary and learn how to unlock the meaning of new words.
- Comprehension: Students learn to use strategies to direct their comprehension.

Children learn by doing and need to actively participate in literacy activities. This does not only mean participating in the actual reading and writing activities themselves, but also engaging in discussions about texts, comprehension strategies and the writing process (Porter, 2019).

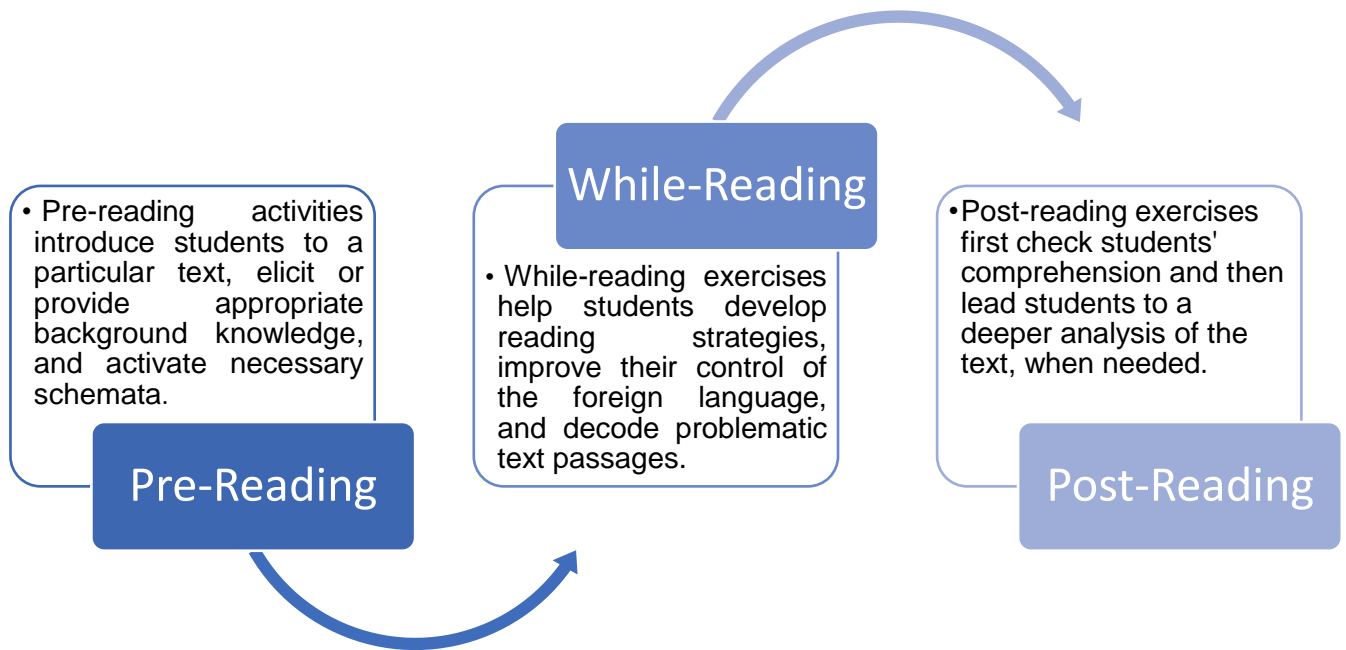
## **2.2 Reading in the EFL Classroom**

It is a common belief that reading is gaining meaning from the text (Harmer, 2008). However, the reader brings meaning to the text and interacts with the meaning that is encoded in the text. This comprehension is often based on making connections from the text to our own experience and background knowledge (schema) (Goodman 2005; Tompkins et al., 2014).

As stated by Karbalaei, (2010), research has demonstrated that in essence, reading in a foreign language is a dynamic and interactive process by which learners make use of background knowledge, text schema, lexical and grammatical awareness, L1-related knowledge, and real-world knowledge, as well as their own personal purposes and goals, to arrive at an understanding of written material.

Even though reading is an important receptive language skill, from a cognitive standpoint, this process is a problem-solving task that is conducted in knowledge structures of the reader's brain (Bernhardt, 2005). In order to do so, students need to be taught a set of procedures, or strategies that they can use on their own when they read text, especially when they encounter difficulties (Shen, 2003). Children are cognitively stimulated when offered opportunities for developing language-learning strategies, their curiosity and interest in languages are awakened (Porter, 2019).

Reading in language classrooms is an activity which is interactive and mostly it is directed by teachers. Different techniques can be used to make reading activity more meaningful. The literature suggests that the reading process can be handled in three phases to manage the task in an effective manner (Harmer, 2008). For example, Maine and Shields (2015) summarise these phases in: pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading, each of them has its own important role and are all necessary elements of a reading activity:



**Figure 1: Stages of Reading in the EFL classroom (Maine and Shields, 2015)**

### **2.2.1 Strategies in reading comprehension**

Strategic knowledge plays a significant role in second and foreign language acquisition (Raofi et al., 2014). There are different taxonomies of language learning strategies (Cohen, 2009; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford 2003; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). Two of these, Oxford's (2003) Strategy System and O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) Strategy Taxonomy have received abundant attention. Oxford's (2003) Strategy Taxonomy encompasses six categories which includes cognitive strategies, metacognitive, memory, compensatory, social and affective strategies. However, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have classified them into only three types, namely, cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. Numerous studies have contributed to both theory and practice by showing important results supporting the significant role of language learning strategies for successful language learning (e.g., Teng et al., 2019; Mitsea and Drigas, 2019; Pawlak, 2020). However, most research has so far mostly concentrated on adolescents and adults (for instance, Aghaie and Zhang, 2012; Akkakoson, 2012; Jafari and Ketabi, 2012; Salataci and Akyel, 2002), with fewer studies exploring language learning strategies in children at the elementary school level (e.g., Lan and Oxford, 2003; Nhem, 2019 Teng and Zhang, 2022).

As Griffith (2008) stated, young EFL learners need a variety of strategies to understand and interact with different texts. One way to help young learners build reading skills is to model the skills and strategies the students need to use. Some skills the teacher can model are previewing a text by focusing on visuals, headings, etc.; predicting what happens in the text; and highlighting text structures, such as the beginning, middle and end of stories or texts (Shin and Crandall, 2018).

In the literature on language learning strategies, a growing importance has been attached to metacognition. The current understanding of reading strategies, as one of the important facets of reading skill, has been shaped significantly by research on what expert readers do (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Ahmadi et al., 2013; Vargas, 2017; Teng, 2020). These studies show that successful reading comprehension does not occur automatically; rather, it depends on direct cognitive efforts, called metacognitive processing which consists of knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognitive processes (Jafari and Ketabi, 2012).

### **2.2.2 Metacognitive strategies in Reading**

Although there are numerous definitions of metacognition in the literature, all of the definitions share a common core which refers to individuals' awareness and management of their learning processes. What is noteworthy about the concept of

metacognition is that it is composed of two underlying components: metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategies (Raofi et al., 2014). Metacognitive awareness is the learners' knowledge about their learning, while metacognitive strategies refer to learners' regulation and management of their learning which encompasses a wide range of activities, such as: selecting the most useful strategies for a particular task; planning, monitoring, regulation and evaluation of learning (Schraw et al., 2006; Raofi, 2013).

The benefits of metacognitive instruction in English learning have been acknowledged in the literature, including listening (Goh & Taib, 2006; Zeng and Goh, 2018), word learning (Teng and Huang, 2018), writing (Teng, 2020; Teng & Huang, 2018) and classroom participation (Sato, 2020). Particularly in reading, Varga (2017) argues that metacognitive strategies are able to assist students plan, monitor and evaluate their reading process (Linda y Sutapa, 2015). Furthermore, Boulware-Gooden et al. (2007) described how the reading metacognitive strategies can aid students reading process in terms of 'think about thinking' before, during, and after they read.

Nevertheless, promoting high levels of literacy for learners is challenging; learners must apply a range of strategies when interpreting and evaluating what they read, drawing conclusions based on evidence, and developing higher-order thinking skills (Varga, 2017).

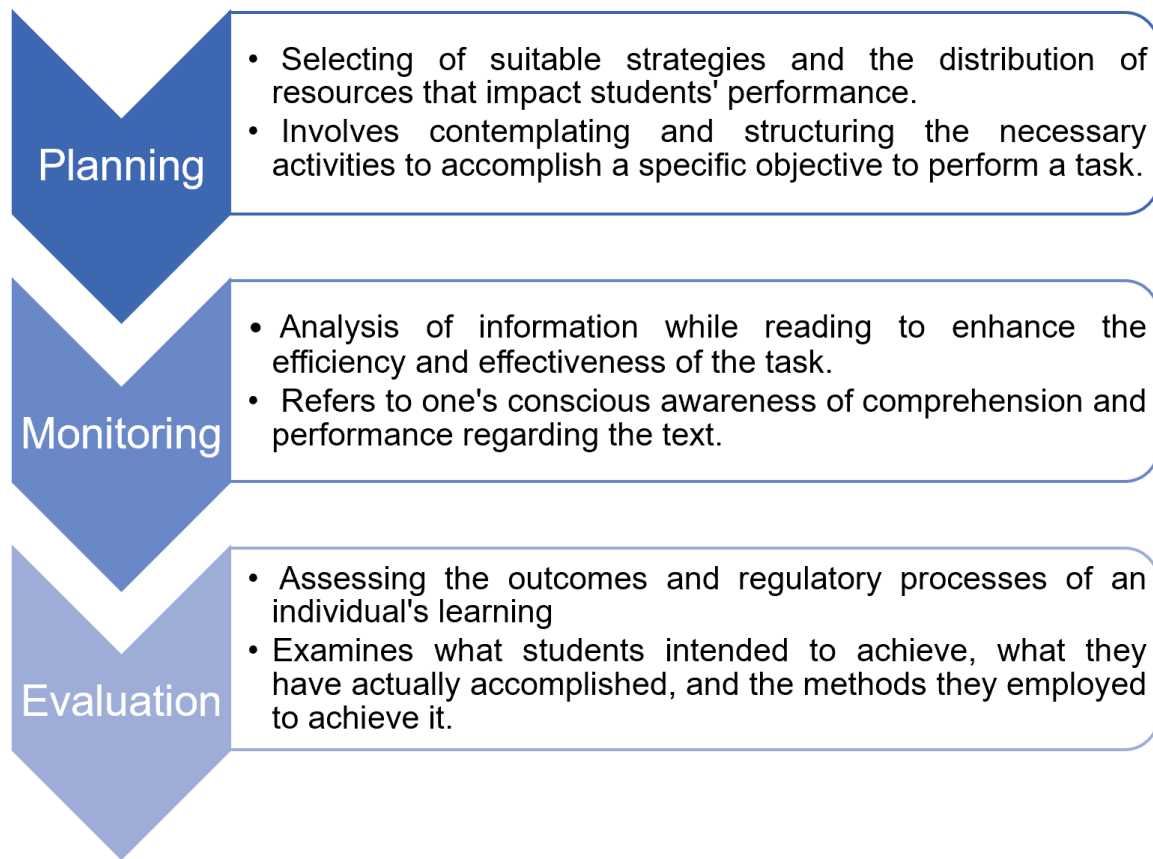
### **2.2.2.1 Metacognitive strategies in Reading for Young Language Learners**

While some researchers have argued that young learners lack metacognitive knowledge and skills, thereby rendering the benefits of metacognitive instruction ineffective (Williams & Atkins, 2009), it is suggested that this may be attributed to young children's limited executive functioning, which refers to the ability to coordinate multiple cognitive processes to achieve a specific goal (Kolaric, 2017).

Nevertheless, empirical research has substantiated the effects of metacognitive instruction on young learners' reading comprehension. In an early study (Brenna, 1995), data from observations and interviews revealed that five young L2 learners employed a variety of metacognitive strategies while reading. Their study demonstrated that young readers knew how to use metacognitive strategies of self-knowledge, task knowledge and text knowledge to repair comprehension (Mitsea and Drigas, 2020).



According to Ahmadi et al. (2013) following the guidelines provided by Jacobs and Paris (1987), metacognitive reading strategies have three essential skills:



**Figure 3: Essential skills in metacognitive reading strategies (Ahmadi et al., 2013)**

First, planning encompasses the selection of suitable strategies and the distribution of resources that impact one's performance. For instance, engaging in pre-reading predictions, arranging strategies in a sequential manner, and judiciously allocating time and attention prior to undertaking a task. Moreover, planning involves the cognitive process of contemplating and structuring the necessary activities to accomplish a specific objective. This mental process is vital in formulating and improving a plan, as well as integrating it with other plans. It entails anticipating future developments while simultaneously preparing alternative courses of action in response to them (Miller, 1985 as cited in Ahmadi et al., 2013).

Secondly, monitoring is a strategy that analysis of information while reading. Its purpose is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the task. Then executed effectively, monitoring serves as an invaluable tool for better control and ensures careful attention while reading, serving as a foundation for evaluation. It enables

students to assess whether the available resources are sufficient and utilized effectively, whether their abilities are adequate and appropriate, and whether they are accomplishing what they had planned (Slife & Weaver, 1992 as cited in Ahmadi et al., 2013). Therefore, monitoring refers to one's conscious awareness of comprehension and performance regarding the text.

Thirdly, evaluation entails assessing the outcomes and regulatory processes of an individual's learning. For example, evaluation involves re-evaluating personal's aims and conclusions. It examines what students intended to achieve, what they have actually accomplished, and the methods they employed to achieve it.

These processes (planning, monitoring, and evaluation) need to be emphasized in the learning process and would motivate learners to control their improvement in reading comprehension (Trainin and Swanson, 2005 as cited in Ahmadi et al., 2013).

Additionally, according to Thamraksa (2005), it is crucial to understand that facilitating self-directed learning, by using metacognitive strategies, requires students to assume greater responsibility for planning and regulating their own learning. The author puts great emphasis on the fact that teachers play a vital role in guiding students towards this goal by assisting them in setting learning objectives and devising plans for accomplishing tasks. Moreover, students should be equipped with the ability to thoughtfully select appropriate learning strategies for different situations. Farahian and Farshid (2014) discussed similar recommendations and argued that teachers should provide clear explanations of these strategies and their respective contexts, emphasizing that no single strategy is universally effective. Students must develop the discernment to choose the most suitable strategy for each specific learning instance (Thamraksa, 2005; Farahian and Farshid, 2014).

#### **2.2.2.2 Reading Metacognitive strategies, Performance and Self-Efficacy**

Metacognitive strategies may be considered more effective as they influence the effective use of reading strategies among readers whose metacognitive reading strategy awareness has been raised (Cohen and Macaro, 2009).

To illustrate this, Dabarera et al. (2014), conducted a study in Singapore to investigate the impact of teaching metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension among 67 ESL learners. They employed both quantitative data collection techniques and semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data on learners' experiences with metacognitive strategy instruction. The experimental treatment involved explicit instruction of metacognitive reading strategies using the Reciprocal Teaching approach. The study revealed a positive relationship between raising metacognitive awareness and enhancing reading comprehension. Additionally, Aghaie and Zhang (2012) examined the effects of explicit reading strategy instruction on EFL students' reading performance in an Iranian context using a quasi-experimental design. They found that explicit strategy-based instruction

improved both reading comprehension and reading strategy use, while also enhancing participants' autonomous reading behaviours. These findings align with previous studies (e.g., Akkakoşon, 2013; Macaro & Erler, 2008; Ruiz de Zarobe and Zenotz, 2018; Salataci & Akyel, 2002; Teng, 2020) that have reported the effectiveness of reading strategy instruction in enhancing metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and increasing strategy use.

Reading is influenced not only by cognitive processes but also by affective factors. One such factor is self-efficacy, which plays a role in students' reading skills. Reading self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to engage in reading activities successfully (Ferguson et al., 2016). Self-efficacy is known to determine behaviour choices in individuals (Schunk and Pajares, 2009) and has a significant impact on students' willingness to exert effort (Sakız, 2013; Schunk, 2003; Schunk and Pajares, 2009). Considering the effects of self-efficacy on behaviour choices and effort exertion, it becomes apparent that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in the reading process (Morali, 2019). For instance, Altunkaya and Ateş (2017) found that students who possess high reading self-efficacy demonstrate an advantage in setting reading goals and performing effectively to achieve those goals. According to these scholars, analysing the self-efficacy of foreign language reading yields valuable insights into the students' abilities and aptitudes related to the reading process. The authors argued that the language achievement levels of the students improve their competence perception for reading increases.

Some authors (e.g., Schunk, 2003; Ferguson et al., 2016; Morali, 2019) discuss that learners' self-efficacy sustains their motivation and promotes learning. During periods of self-reflection, they evaluate their progress by comparing their performances to their goals. Additionally, there has been an emphasis on using self-report techniques as a way of understanding individuals' metacognitive processes (Winne & Perry, 2000). Self-report interview or questionnaire methodologies are intimately linked to a theoretical model of metacognition as an essentially explicit and declarative set of processes and depend upon the respondents' ability to give reliable reports of their own mental experiences.

## **Chapter III: Methods**

### **3.1 Type of study**

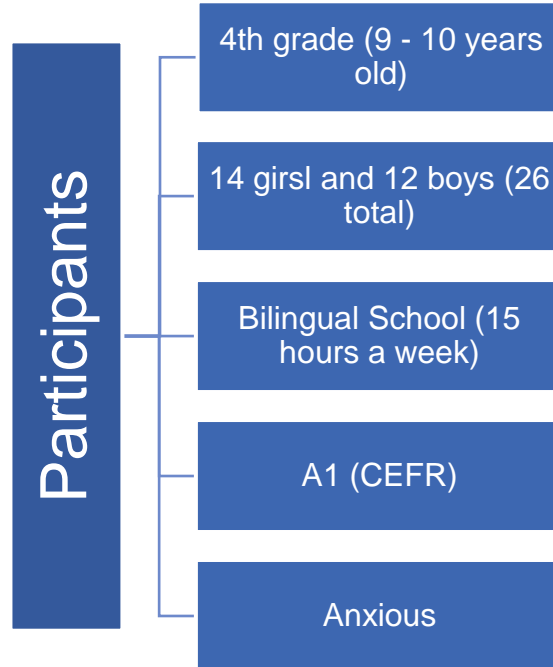
The current study is an Action Research that follows a qualitative approach. As the main purpose of this investigation is to gain an in-depth understanding of the 'meaning in the particular', it follows a qualitative approach thus, this research is focused on the participants' opinions, experiences and feelings so as to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Particularly, the design used for this project is an action research study since the purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding of the context where this investigation is carried out as well as improving teaching practices (Dornyei, 2021). According to Burns (2013), this type of research deals with a problem that is previously identified, and a solution is attempted on a small-scale sample. In this respect, the author emphasises that action research is a research approach that is grounded in practical action while at the same time focused on informing and gaining insights of theory. The main goal of action research is "to bridge the gap between the most effective ways of doing things and the actual ways of doing things in the social situation" (Burns, 2010 p.289). In other words, action research offers a means for teachers to become agents rather than recipients of knowledge about second language teaching and learning, and thus to contribute toward the building of educational theories of practice (Dornyei, 2021).

In this case, the focus of this action research is to explore the use of planning actions as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage for supporting fourth-grade students' reading comprehension.

### **3.2 Description of participants**

Having in mind the considerations of the context in which this qualitative research is taking place, the sampling process follows a non-random sampling method of convenience and homogeneous sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This is because the participants of the study are children who were most available and easily selected to participate in the research study and share similar characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), as they are all students for the same school and grade. The sampling methods used for this action research study allows the selection of cases to provide the information needed to address the investigation purpose.

In regard to the participant for this investigation, the sample consists of 26 students, 14 girls and 12 boys, from a bilingual school in Concepción, Chile. They are between 9 and 10 years old and are currently in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of junior high. The school has a bilingual program; thus, English is used as a means of instruction for other subjects such as: Social Studies, Science, Art and Technology; because of that, students have access to more complex and specific lexicon. They are not afraid to communicate in English or create new words in order to be understood, use their body language or their mother tongue.



**Figure 4: Main characteristics of the AR's participants.**

The majority of the students started their formal education in the same school, thus they have been exposed to English since kindergarten in a bilingual setting, as they are in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they have been exposed to the language for five years for 15 hours a week. Hence, the majority of the lessons and exchanges between teacher and students tend to be in English.

According to the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR) their level of English can be classified as an A1 level or beginner level since most of the students are able to communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters (Council of Europe, 2020).

In their curriculum, the school decided to add one pedagogical hour of reading sessions each week from first until fifth grade, which is when the bilingual plan starts and ends in the school. The main aim of these sessions is for students to be familiarised with different types of text and develop different skills through reading, such as vocabulary acquisition, fluency and comprehension. This is a great opportunity that allows students to learn more about different cultures, different approaches to different texts and face the language in a contextualised manner. However, this is the first year that these reading sessions have been implemented and thus students tend to feel anxious because they are not used to having time only

devoted to reading in English, apart from the reading comprehension tasks that the book suggests.

### 3.3 Research question and objectives

The research question of this study is:

**How does the use of planning actions for reading, as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage, support students' reading comprehension?**

This action research is guided by one general objective and three specific objectives, presented here:

**General Objective:** To explore the use of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage for supporting students' reading comprehension.

**Specific Objective 1:** To identify the most recurrent planning action used (predicting, text analysis and questioning) by fourth-grade students when facing a narrative text.

**Specific Objective 2:** To analyse the contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text.

**Specific Objective 3:** To describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process.

### 3.4 Research Problem

In Chile, reading is considered an important aspect of the language and one of the fundamental skills to develop in order to learn a foreign language. As it is stated by the English Syllabus for 4<sup>th</sup> graders by Ministry of Education (2018), the aim is to complement and enrich student learning by incorporating different literary texts readings, since these provide examples of different and original uses of the language and a variety of vocabulary. They can also encourage motivation, bring students closer to different cultures and promote critical and creative thinking.

Following the same line, another important aspect for students to develop while learning English is the use of strategies to become aware of their own difficulties with the language and searching for ways to overcome them (MINEDUC, 2023).

The school in which this action research takes place, follows the requirement of the national curriculum regarding the development of these language skills, and puts great emphasis in the development of the four skills.

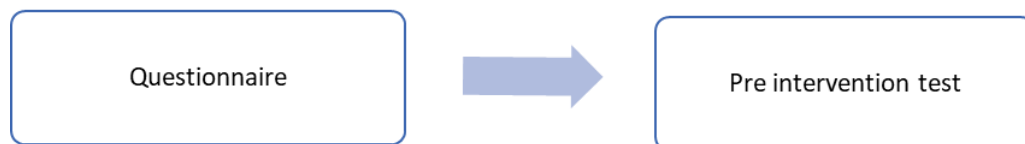
Because of that, this action research focuses on the development of metacognitive skills during the reading process, particularly in the pre-reading stage. Literacy research has begun to emphasise correlation between metacognitive instruction and reading ability in school students (e.g., Akkakoson, 2013; Ruiz de Zarobe & Zenotz, 2018; Salataci & Akyel, 2002; Teng and Reynolds, 2019). Furthermore, Teng (2020) has discussed the advantages of students, especially young learners, gaining insight into the cognitive processes involved in reading. This knowledge can assist students in assessing, handling, and enhancing their reading comprehension abilities.

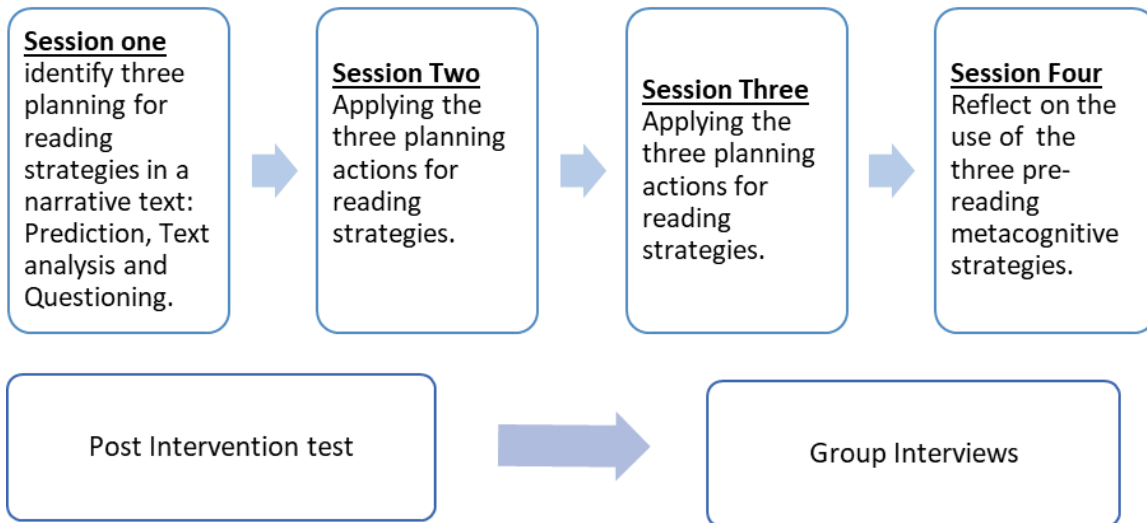
Regarding my context, the development of metacognitive strategies for reading can be highly beneficial since my students are anxious when they have to face a reading comprehension task and they tend to avoid doing these types of tasks or wait until a classmate or the teacher shares the answer. In addition, they tend to complain before doing the reading task because the text is too long or they do not understand English, however, once they start, they begin to feel less anxious. Concerning the use of metacognitive strategies, there are few opportunities where students can and are explicitly taught to develop these strategies.

In order to address this problem, through the implementation of metacognitive strategies in the reading process, learners can be guided towards cultivating their own metacognitive skills for reading comprehension (Teng and Reynolds, 2019). Moreover, even if young learners might possess a limited repertoire of metacognitive reading comprehension strategies, they have the potential to adopt new ones (Raoofi et al., 2014). Furthermore, these strategies provide a better position for learners to self-regulate their own reading by choosing comprehension strategies that enhance their understanding of the text.

### 3.5 Stages of the Action Research

Within a four -week time frame, the intervention for this action plan consisted of one session to identify three planning for reading strategies in a narrative text: Prediction, Text analysis and Questioning; two sessions for applying those three planning actions for reading strategies; and finally, the last and fourth session aimed for students to reflect on the use of the three pre-reading metacognitive strategies. Figure 1 describes the different stages of the AR.





**Figure 5: Stages of the AR.**

During the first session students were asked to discuss the use of strategies and were presented with the three strategies in which this action research focuses on: Predicting, Text analysis and Questioning. In order to assess if the goal of the lesson was achieved, at the end of the lesson students completed a checklist about the strategies presented.

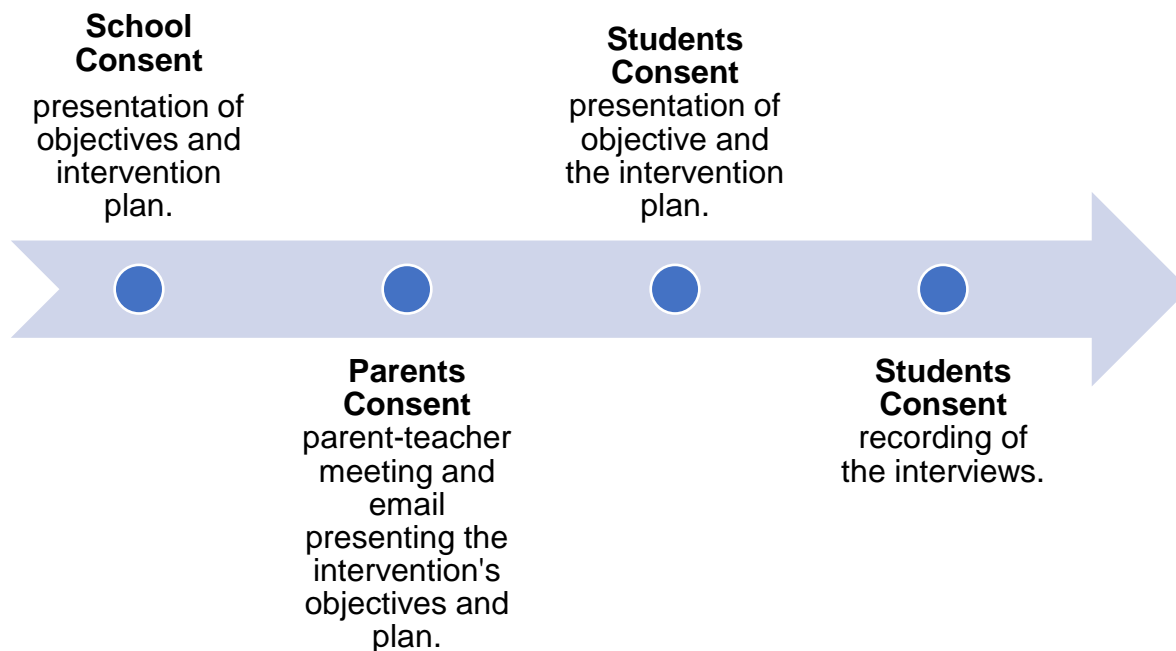
In the second and third session, students faced a reading comprehension task with comprehension questions. At the beginning of the lesson, they brainstormed about the strategies previously presented in session one and completed checklists before (second lesson) and after (third lesson) the reading comprehension to see which strategies they were planning to use, and which they actually used. Additionally, during the third session, students were asked to think of a goal they wanted to achieve regarding the planning for reading strategies for the next class.

Finally, in the fourth session, students completed a similar reading comprehension task with comprehension questions with no prompting of the strategies in order to see if they used any of them by themselves. Once they finished the task, they completed a checklist with the strategies they actually used during the reading task. To finish the lesson, a class discussion was carried out where students discussed goal accomplishment, how they perform before reading and how they organise their own steps.

### **3.5.1 Procedure of Access Consent and Assent**

First, the intervention project procedures and objectives were presented to the school, as well as the intervention and its stages. After the school granted the permission to implement the intervention, during the parent-teacher meeting, the

project was socialized to the parent of the students mentioning the objectives and stages.



**Figure 6: Stages of the procedure of consent and assent.**

During this meeting, it was explained that the intervention was a different approach to the “Reading Session” the students had, thus it was not interfering with the syllabus of the English class. Then, the parents were notified via email of the intervention. Finally, the students were consulted about their participation in the project, they were explained the different stages of the intervention and its goal. Once again, students were asked about their assent when they were recorded in the last stage of the intervention, the interview.

### **3.6 Data Collection Techniques**

Three data collection instruments were used in this study in order to achieve the three specific objectives proposed: open-ended questionnaire (Appendix A), checklist (Appendix B), pre and post intervention test (Appendix C and D) and group interviews (Appendix E).

In the case of the open-ended questionnaire and the group interviews, they were carried out in Spanish, students' L1. The reason behind this decision was because students could provide more in-depth, reliable and meaningful answers about their metacognitive process since, as Ellis & Ibrahim (2017) stated, young learners

sometimes do not have the level to express themselves in the target language, in this case English.

### **3.6.1 Open-Ended Questionnaire**

First and aligned with the specific objective of identifying the most recurrently used pre-reading metacognitive strategy such as predicting, text analysis and questioning, by the students in their reading comprehension sessions, the open-ended questionnaire was implemented before the class intervention (See appendix A). According to Johnson & Christensen (2014), a questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that is filled out by research participants and in the case of open-ended questions respondents provide answers in their own words. This instrument was selected in order to provide information, previous to the implementation of the intervention, about the different and most recurrent pre-reading metacognitive strategies used by the students because this instrument allows to measure participants' opinions and perceptions (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Additionally, this instrument can provide more anonymity by the respondents and has moderately high measurement validity if well-constructed and validated. The idea to include an open-ended questionnaire is based on that participants are not limited to a set of predetermined response categories, and they can answer in their own language (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The topics that guided the construction of the open-ended questions were metacognition strategies used in the pre-reading stages adapted from Linda & Sutapa (2015), since they included an aspect of planning actions for reading in the questionnaire they used. By doing so, it was expected to identify different types of pre-reading metacognitive strategies used by the students. Even though students were not presented with the pre-reading metacognitive strategies yet, the main focus was to observe if they implemented some of them without noticing and investigate to which extent they were used by the students (Appendix A).

### **3.6.2 Checklist**

Moreover, in order to identify the most recurrently used pre-reading metacognitive strategy such as predicting, text analysis and questioning, by the students in their reading comprehension sessions, a checklist was implemented during each intervention session in which students had to face a reading comprehension task. These checklists were given at the beginning of the intervention and students had to choose which strategies they wanted to use during the tasks as a way of reminding them of the planning for action metacognitive strategies. Additionally, and in order to obtain more insights on students' use of the strategies, they were also given at the end of the task and students had to complete the checklist with the strategies they actually used.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Mark with an "X" the strategies you want to use during this reading comprehension.**



- I read the title before the text.
- I looked at the images before reading the text.
- I tried to associate the title with something I knew.
- I tried to associate the images with something I know.



- I checked if the text was similar to another text I knew.
- I associated some paragraph with information I could find.



- I read the questions before the reading the text.
- I try to think where in the text I could find the answer.

**Figure 7: Example of the checklist used in the intervention.**

For this checklist, students were given a list of the planning actions for reading metacognitive strategies they could use to face the reading, namely, Text analysis, Prediction and Questioning. The participants, in this case students, can select the responses that apply to them (Johnshon and Christensen, 2014). Unlike other response formats, the checklist is a multiple-response format because participants are told to check all categories that apply to them. All the items included in the item were short, relevant to the student and in an affirmative form so as to avoid confusion from the students when reading the criteria (Johnshon and Christensen, 2014) (Appendix B).

### **3.6.3 Pre- and Post-Intervention Tests**

The second instrument to be used were the pre and post intervention test. These instruments aimed at analysing contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text, (See appendix C and D). As Johnson & Christensen (2014) stated, tests can aid the process of measuring aptitude, achievement and performance. In this case, the reason for using pre and post intervention tests was to obtain data in different stages of the investigation and compare the results obtained. These tests measure reading comprehension questions, completion of the test and timing and self-reported performance. For example, Craig et al. (2020) carried out a study about metacognitive self-report, where they found that students' self-reported performance is an effective way to monitor students' metacognitive abilities even if it does not correlate with students' performance.

Moreover, another positive aspect that was considered when selecting this instrument, was that it allows comparability of common measures of participants' responses. For the sake of the investigation, the pre intervention test was implemented before explicitly teaching metacognitive strategies and the post intervention test was given at the end of the intervention, when students have had at least four sessions to practise the use of pre-reading metacognitive strategies.

In regard to the content of the tests, it was important to consider the school requirements when choosing a text. Because of that, the pre- and post-intervention tests were fables and short stories taken from a website the school works with ([www.twinkl.com](http://www.twinkl.com)). Both readings were similar to the texts usually worked on the reading sessions. This means that the fables and the short stories are around 150 word-long and align with the requirements of an A1 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001).

The framework to elaborate the tests' questions was based on Feng's (2020) work. Thus, the type of questions used for this instrument were literal, inferential and evaluative questions that would help students to respond to factual recall, make inferences and give an opinion. According to the author, varying the types of required responses can also help the researcher discern whether metacognitive instruction influenced students' perceptions of task demands and strategy use (Appendix C and D).

### **3.6.4 Group interview**

The third instrument that was implemented to describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process was the semi-structured group interview (See appendix E). This instrument was chosen because children may be less intimidated by talking in a group than when talking individually to an adult (Lewis, 1992). Additionally, Brinkmann (2018) indicates that the purpose of semi-structured interviews is to obtain descriptions of the world of the interviewee to be able to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. Johnson & Christensen (2014) and Adler et al., (2019) suggest that between four and six participants should be interviewed. For the current action research, the groups consisted of four students and to group them, the criteria of familiarity was used (friendship) since children may feel safer and more willing to express their opinion if group members are familiar to them (Adler et al., 2019).

Moreover, group interviews were selected because they may generate richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another's views, may be used to verify research ideas or data gained through other methods and may enhance the reliability of children's responses (Lewis, 1992).

In this case, the framework for the questions of the group interview were based on an instrument implemented by Selamat & Sidhu (2020). In their research about students' perceptions on the use of metacognitive strategies for listening, they carried out group interviews to obtain said information about perceptions. For the

sake of this investigation, the questions were adapted to reading skills, particularly to the pre-reading stage, considering the dimension of feelings, students' sense of relevance and types of strategies, similar to the ones used by their researchers. (Appendix E).

### 3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The use of more than one data collection techniques allows the researcher to have a deeper insight and understanding of the picture, thus the data collected in this action research is quantitative (pre and post intervention test, questionnaire and checklists) and qualitative (group interviews).

Regarding the quantitative data, the first step in order to analyse the data was coding; this means that the answers were turned into numerical values in order to make statistical analysis (Hernández Sampieri et al. 2014). Additionally, it is important to assess how much the data values are spread out, thus the use of measure of variability in the quantitative data (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

For the open-ended questionnaire and the checklist, the focus of the quantitative data was descriptive statistical analysis, particularly the frequency of use of each planning action for reading metacognitive strategies. In regard to the questionnaire, it is important to make the difference between the data obtained of the strategies students said they were going to use and the ones they actually used at the moment of facing a reading task. For this, the data gathered was coded in numbers and from those numbers we obtained mean, media and mode (Burns, 2013).

Following a similar line of analysis, the data obtained from the pre- and post-intervention test was in the form of score. The pre and post intervention test consisted of five questions about recalling, making inferences and evaluating. The scores were given following this criterion: one point for recalling information each, two points for making inferences each and three points for creating; the reason behind the score assigned was according to the level of difficulty each question had. Therefore, the pre and post intervention tests had a total of 9 points. This is illustrated in Table 1.

<b>Assigned score for the Pre- and Post- Intervention test's questions</b>		
Question (Q)	Score for each question	Total Score
Q 1 and Q 2 = Recalling information	1 point	2 points
Q 3 and Q 4 = Make inferences	2 points	4 points
Q 5 = Evaluate	3 points	3 points
<b>Total score of the test: 9 points</b>		

**Table 1: Assigned score for the Pre- and Post- Intervention test's questions.**

This information was analysed considering the variation of the mean, media and mode (Burns, 2010). Additionally, at the end 3 self-reported questions were included in both intervention tests, the answers were “yes” and “no” and the assigned value was 1 for “yes” and 0 for “no”. These results were also analysed through descriptive analysis.

Concerning the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured group interview, the students' perceptions about the use of planning actions for reading were recorder, transcribed and then, thematic analysis was employed considering Braun and Clarke's (2006) stages: data familiarisation, coding, searching for themes, as well as theme review, definition and naming.

## **Chapter IV: Findings**

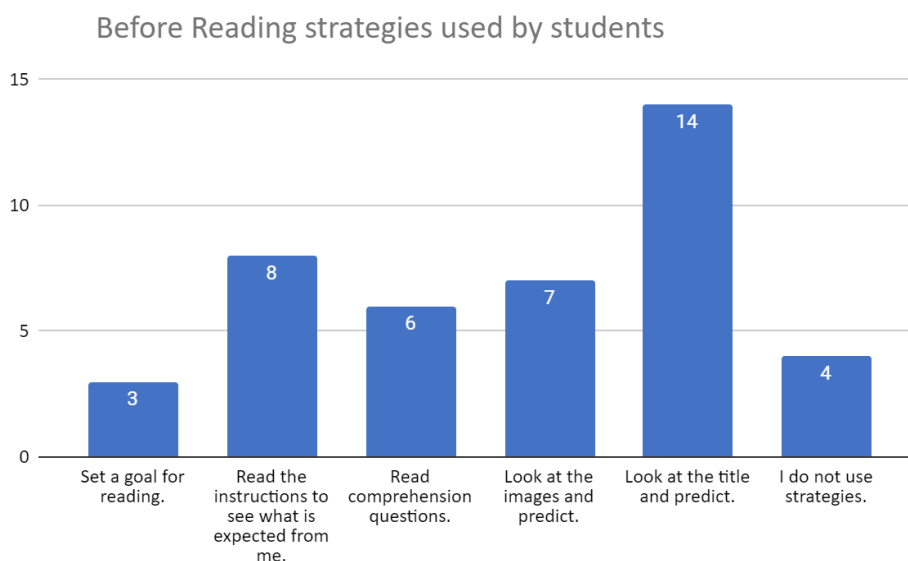
## Findings

This action research aimed at exploring the use of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage for supporting students' reading comprehension; therefore, this chapter presents the results according to each specific objective set for this investigation.

### 4.1 Specific Objective 1: To identify the most recurrent planning action used (predicting, text analysis and questioning) by fourth-grade students when facing a narrative text.

A questionnaire was applied before the intervention in order to observe whether students were familiarised with different types of reading strategies, particularly pre-reading strategies.

Regarding the actions that students carried out before reading (Figure 8), they reported knowing and using some of the pre-reading metacognitive strategies. The most used was looking at the title and predicting. Only four students mentioned that they did not use any strategy before reading.

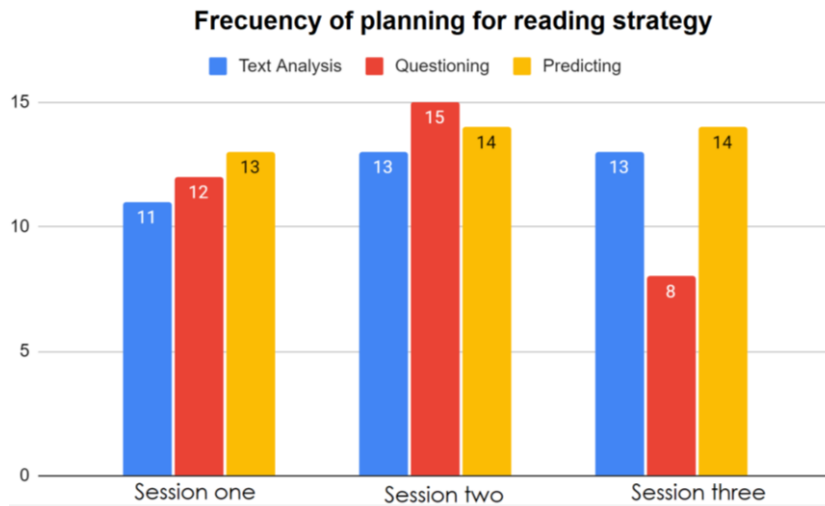


**Figure 8: Summary of the reported pre-reading strategies used before the intervention.**

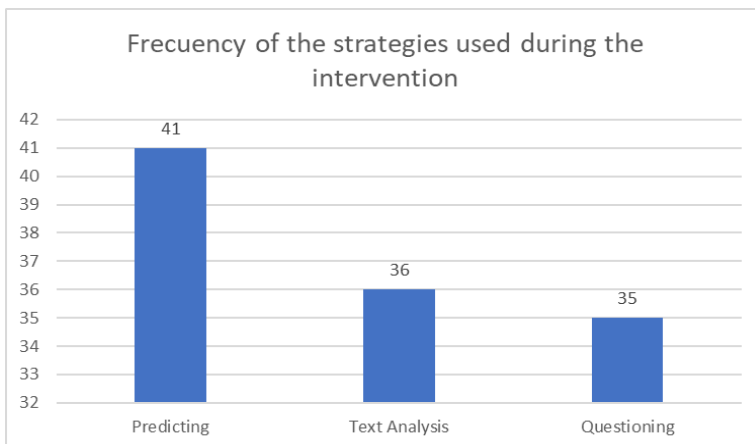
During the intervention, students had one session to become familiarized with the different strategies presented. Then, during the following three sessions students had to do a reading comprehension task in which they were asked to complete a checklist. In this checklist, they had to select the Planning for Action strategies they use when they performed the reading comprehension task. In the last intervention session students were asked to reflect on the use of these strategies.

During the sessions where students were asked to complete the checklist, the frequency in each session is represented in Figure 9 below. As it is shown, during

session two and four the most recurrent strategy used was predicting, and in session three was questioning.



**Figure 9: Frequency of Planning for Reading Metacognitive Strategies used as reported by the students in sessions 2, 3 and 4.**



**Figure 10: Overall frequency of the Planning for Action Reading Strategies used throughout sessions 2, 3 and 4.**

Predicting was the most frequently used strategy throughout the intervention, as shown in Figure 10. This indicates that students preferred to use this strategy the most in two out of three sessions. Additionally, during the session that predicting was not the most used, it was the second most used pre-reading strategy. This strategy was used a total of forty-one times in the three sessions.

By analysing the results obtained in the questionnaire before the intervention and in the checklists while the intervention, it can be said that most of the students were familiar with the use of strategies and even if they did not know the names of said strategies, they still were used. As it was said by the students, the most Planning for Action strategy used before the intervention was “prediction” (both, text and pictures)

and it can be observed that after each of the intervention, it was still the most used and the one with the highest frequency in overall.

In regard to the other strategies presented (text analysis and questioning), they were not mentioned by the students in the questionnaire however, they were used during the intervention. "Text analysis" was the strategy that increased the most regarding the number of users and the use of the strategy "questioning" was the one that varied the most, since in one session was the second most used but in the last session was the least used.

## **4.2 Specific Objective 2: To analyse the contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text.**

### **4.2.1 Pre- and Post-Intervention Test**

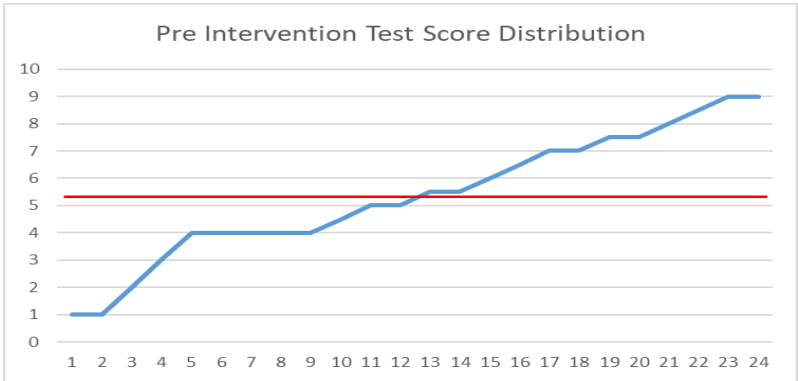
Regarding the pre-intervention and post-intervention test both had the same format, and the only difference was the text provided, which had the same level of difficulty and number of words.

The pre-intervention test was implemented one class before the introduction of the Planning for Action strategies. The test consisted of five comprehension questions and the ideal score was nine. The score was given according to the complexity of the question. As the results show, only one student was able to obtain the highest score. On the other hand, two students obtained the lowest score. Following the same line, the mean score was 5.3 with a standard deviation of 2.3, all these results are illustrated in Table 2.

<b>Pre-Intervention Test</b>	
Maximum	9 points
Minimum	1 point
Mean (M)	5.3
Standard Deviation (SD)	2.3

**Table 2: Maximum and minimum score, Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) obtained in the Pre-intervention Test.**

Figure 11 shows the distribution of student score, in which the red line represents the mean for the pre-intervention test.



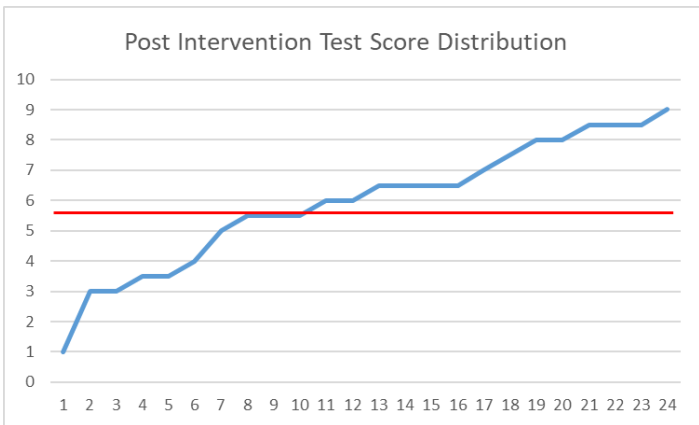
**Figure 11: Pre-intervention test score distribution by student.**

Once the intervention was over, students were asked to take a post-intervention test. This test consisted of five questions and the maximum score was nine points. The highest score obtained by the students was nine, which was only achieved by one student and the lowest score obtained was one point, which was achieved by only one student. Regarding the mean (M) obtained by the students in the post intervention test was of 5.8 and the standard deviation (SD) was 2.097, as it is shown in Table 3.

<b>Post-Intervention Test</b>	
Maximum	9 points
Minimum	1 point
Mean (M)	5.8
Standard Deviation (SD)	2.0

**Table 3: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) obtained in the Post-intervention Test.**

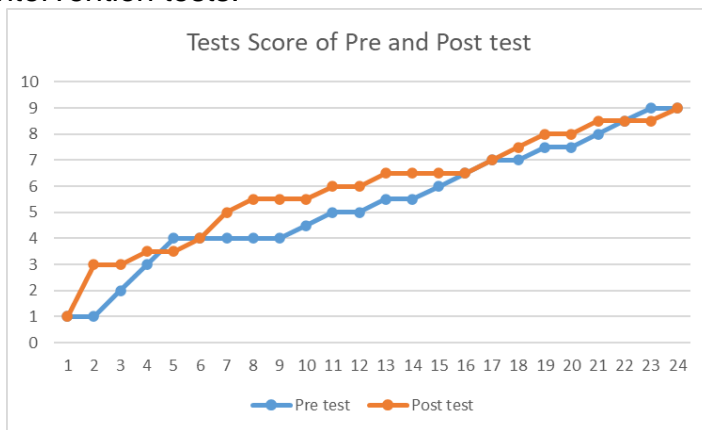
These results are shown in Figure 12 below, in which the red line represents the mean for the pre-intervention test.



**Figure 12: Post-Intervention test score distribution by student.**

By looking at the results, it can be said that in both tests at least one student was able to achieve the maximum score, however, regarding the lower score we can observe that in the post-intervention test only one student obtained the lower score whereas in the pre-intervention test two students had the lower score. Also, it is worth mentioning that the mean (M) obtained by the students varies around 0.5, being the number obtained in the post intervention higher. In addition to that, the standard deviation is higher in the pre-intervention test, this means that the results obtained are more disperse in relation to the mean of the student than in the post intervention test, which is lower by 0.3.

In terms of the score, we can see in Figure 13 the scores of the pre- and post-intervention tests.



**Figure 13: Pre- and post-intervention test scores by student**

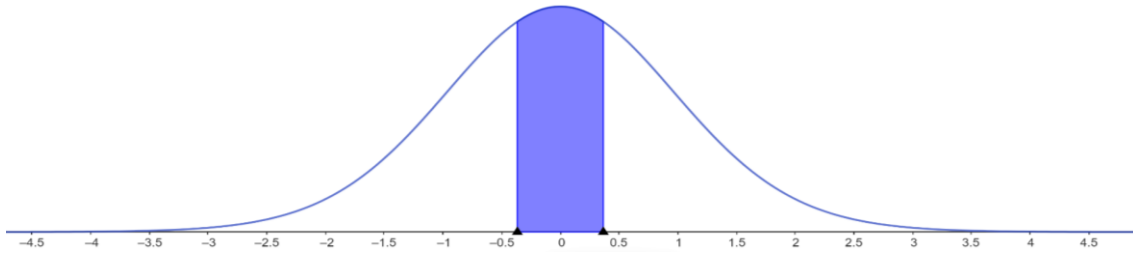
As we can observe, fifteen students obtained a higher score in their overall performance in the post-intervention test.

Following the same line, Table 4 shows the difference in the mean of the pre and post intervention test (0.541). Additionally, when comparing the standard deviation, it is shown that the results are more homogeneous in the post-intervention test (SD 2.09)

	Pre-Intervention Test	Post-Intervention test	Difference
Mean (M)	5.354	5.895	0.541
Standard Deviation (SD)	2.328	2.097	

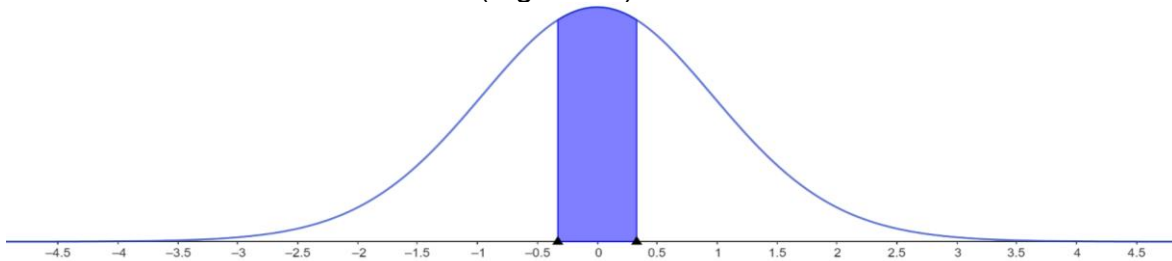
**Table 4: Difference of mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) in the pre and post intervention test.**

In order to check the normality of the results, the Shapiro-Wilk test was run over the score obtained by the students in the pre-intervention test. As p-value (0.363) was greater than 0.05, it can be said that it follows a normal distribution (Figure 14).



**Figure 14: p-value distribution in the pre-intervention test.**

In addition, the Shapiro-Wilk test was run over the score obtained by the students in the post test as well. As p-value (0.329) was greater than 0.05, it can be said that it also follows a normal distribution (Figure 15).



**Figure 15: p-value in the post-intervention test.**

As the population follows a normal distribution, a parametric test was used to reassert if the pre- and post-intervention test results show a statistically significant difference between them. The T-test showed that p-value (0.366) was greater than 0.05 and consequently, the distribution does not show evidence of a significant difference between the results of both tests.

#### **4.2.2 Self-reported performance item**

In addition to the comprehension question the pre and post intervention test had an item of self-reported performance.

Regarding the pre-intervention test, in this item each statement had three points in which students assessed their own performance in the test. The maximum score was nine and the minimum score was zero. Respecting the pre-test results, the mean (M) was 6.37, the mode (Mo) was 9 (repeated nine times) and the standard deviation (SD) was 3.28, as illustrated in Table 5.

<b>Self-reported performance in the Pre-Intervention Test</b>	
Maximum Score	9
Minimum Score	0
Mean	6.37
Mode	9
Standard deviation	3.28

**Table 5: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M), Mode (Mo) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Pre-Intervention Test self-reported performance item.**

Concerning the self-reported performance item in the post-intervention test, similarly to the pre intervention test, the maximum score was nine and the minimum score was zero. Regarding the results obtain, the mean was 7.08 the mode was 9 (repeated 11 times) and the standard deviation was 2.65, as illustrated in Table 6.

<b>Self-reported performance in the Post-Intervention Test.</b>	
Maximum Score	9
Minimum Score	0
Mean	7.08
Mode	9
Standard deviation	2.65

**Table 6: Maximum and Minimum score, Mean (M), Mode (Mo) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Post-Intervention Test self-reported performance item.**

When comparing the self-reported performance from the pre- and post-intervention test, we can observe that even though the mode in both were the same (9), more students chose to assess themselves with the highest score in the post intervention test. Moreover, there is also a change in the mean of the score obtained by the students, with the score of the post- intervention test being slightly higher than the pre-intervention test. This information is illustrated in Table 7.

	<b>Mode and mean in the Pre and Post Self-Reported Performance</b>		
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Mode</b>
Pre-intervention Test	6.37	2.3	9 (N=9)
Post- intervention Test	7.08	2.0	9 (N=11)

**Table 7: Mean (M) and Mode (Mo) of the pre and post-tests.**

**4.3 Specific Objective 3: To describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process.**

In order to gather students' perceptions about the use of Planning for Action metacognitive strategies, the twenty-two students that were present the day of session 5 were gathered in groups of three and one group of four to answer orally four questions in an open-ended interview. The transcriptions of these interviews were done manually, and different subthemes arose regarding the part these strategies had during the intervention period. Students discussed the use and role these strategies had in their learning process and the continuity these strategies could have in their reading comprehension sessions in the future. A summary of these themes is presented in Table 8.

<b>DIMENSION</b>	<b>THEME</b>	<b>SUB-THEME</b>
Use	Awareness	Prediction Questioning
	Connection to background	Images L1
	Comprehension	Calmness Easiness
	Aid	Confidence Autonomy Opportunity to help others.

Reading Process		More resources available.
	Constrain towards the strategies	Uncertainty Time-consuming Opposition to change. Purpose
Future use	Continuity	Yes Sometimes No

**Table 8: Summary of themes and subtheme that emerged from the Thematical analysis of the group-interviews.**

#### 4.3.1 Use

In this section the way in which students use the different strategies during the intervention process will be shown. In order to achieve a deeper analysis of the information provided by the students, the information was coded into themes and subthemes that will be useful, with the help of the examples, to analyse and group students' answers and comments in similar categories to have an overview about their perceptions towards the use of these strategies. A summary of the use that these strategies had in supporting students' reading comprehension is presented in Table 9.

Dimension	Theme	Frequency	Example
	Awareness of the strategy	10	Predicting - sense of anticipation - <i>Yo creo que la que más me sirvió fue la de predecir porque así viendo el título ya puedes saber de qué se puede tratar (PST 7)</i> Questioning – Focus on what's expected. - <i>porque así te enfocas por ejemplo si te preguntan qué rol tenía pepita en la historia</i>

Use			<i>yo me voy a concentrar en quien es pepita (PST 10)</i>
	Connection to Background knowledge	7	- <i>ya viendo esa información puedes ver de qué se va a tratar o si conoces esa historia. (PST 21)</i>
	Comprehension	10	- <i>La más útil para mí fue leer las preguntas, como había dicho antes se me facilitaba más entenderla ya que el texto en general puede ser muy largos, y como algunos no saben tanto inglés se le puede complicar. (PST 4)</i>

**Table 9: Summary of subthemes, frequency and examples of the use of the strategies.**

In terms of the reasons students use these strategies three themes were recurrent. The first one was the *awareness of the strategy*, and this theme was mentioned when describing the strategy of “predicting” and “questioning.” Student said predicting was useful because of the sense of anticipation it provides. These are extract from the interview that illustrate this theme.

Predicting - sense of anticipation

- *La más útil fue predecir porque es más fácil saber que texto voy a leer y con las imágenes que pueden pasar en el texto (PST 8).*
- *La más útil fue la de las imágenes porque mirando las imágenes se puede ver como de que se va a trata (PST 14).*
- *las imágenes fueron las útiles porque en algunos textos se puede ver lo que pasa en las imágenes (PST 15).*
- *Yo creo que de las más útiles fue la de leer el título porque ya puedo empezar a pensar que me pueden preguntar porque prácticamente adelantarme a la de las preguntas y poder empezar a entender el texto con más facilidad (PST 18).*
- *La más útil fue predecir porque es más fácil saber que texto voy a leer y con las imágenes que pueden pasar en el texto (PST 9).*

According to students, *Questioning* was useful because it helped them to focus on what was expected from them to do in the text. The following quotes shows this point.

Questioning – Focus on what’s expected.

- *ya sabes cuales son las preguntas y después solamente ves en el texto si están las respuestas (PST 13).*
- *mí también me sirvió la de las preguntas porque es como ya saber las preguntas que te van a hacer del texto debes saber que te van a preguntar porque te puedes enfocar en algunas cosas (PST 7).*

- *yo creo que primero (la más útil) la de las preguntas porque puedo encontrar las respuestas (PST 16).*

It is important to mention that throughout the intervention students commented on *how* they use these strategies as a reason to use it. This means that students were able to develop a sense of metacognitive awareness by describing/articulating in their own words the process of using the strategy they were discussing in the interview.

The second use students give the strategies was to *connect with their background knowledge*. During the interview, students commented on how “predicting” allowed them to make connections between what they knew with what they were seeing. These are extract from the interview that illustrate this theme.

- *Por ejemplo, uno de los textos que leímos fue el de la caperucita roja que el titulo decía algo que no se entendía (Red Riding Hood) entonces viendo las imágenes pude ver de qué se trata (PST 2).*
- *Concuero porque ver imágenes y titulo yo puedo decir “ah, esto trata sobre la ricito de oros” (PST 3).*
- *ya puedo empezar a pensar que me pueden preguntar porque haciendo eso ya podía hacerse referencia (viendo una liebre y otra tortuga) de los cuentos que conoció y por eso fue más útil. (PST 17).*
- *ya viendo esa información puedes ver de qué se va a tratar o si conoces esa historia. (PST 21).*
- *yo creo que predecir del título porque así puedes ver de qué se puede tratar y quizás ya conoces la historia. (PST 20).*
- *Para mí la que más me sirvió fue ver las imágenes y el texto porque es que si se me olvida veía el titulo y ya me acordaba (PST 11).*
- *Para mí la más útil fue la de ver las imágenes porque por ejemplo yo cuando veo las imágenes, me gusta más ver las imágenes que leer, ahh esto se trata de ricitos de oros y ya sé de qué se trata la historia. (PST 12).*
- *no se si la dijo usted o los compañeros, pero era la de cuando no sabes una palabra relacionarla con algo en español (PST 22).*

Finally, students also commented on how using these strategies allows them to better comprehend the text and the task they are facing. These are extract from the interview that illustrate this theme.

- *porque, aunque te hagas un spoiler puedes entender que pasa en la historia. (PST 22).*
- *La más útil para mí fue leer las preguntas, como había dicho antes se me facilitaba más entenderla ya que el texto en general puede ser muy largos, y como algunos no saben tanto inglés se le puede complicar. (PST 4).*
- *las estrategias como inferir con las imágenes que me facilitan mucho más leer y me siento mejor (PST 3).*
- *antes yo leía un texto y me perdía, pero ahora entiendo un poco más el contexto. (PST 3).*

- quizás en algún momento tenga que leer un texto, no sé, muy largo y no lo entienda bien y puedo utilizar esas estrategias. (PST 8).
- nos pueden ayudar a comprender más un texto (PST 10).
- me ayudaron a entender mejor los textos. (PST21).
- Si las juntas te ayudan a entender más el texto y así enfrentar mejor el texto (PST20).
- Entiendo más el texto, leo las preguntas y después busco las respuestas en el mismo texto (PST 16).
- Creo que cambio como comprendía el texto porque los comprendía más rápido (usando las estrategias) (PST 14).

Closely related to the comprehension aspects, checking students answers throughout the interview, it can be said that the use of the strategies is closely related with two feelings students mention repeatedly in the interview: *calmness and easiness*.

It is shown in Table 10 the examples of students describing these feelings when referring to the use of these strategies.

Sub-themes	Frequency	Examples
Calmness	5	- me sentía más relajada al leer, como segura de que iba a entender todo. (PST 6)
Easiness	4	- la verdad es que con las estrategias como inferir con las imágenes que me facilitan mucho más leer y me siento mejor y eso. (PST 3)

**Table 10: Examples of feelings of calmness and easiness reported by the students.**

During the interview, students discussed how these strategies made them feel a sense of relief when facing a reading task. These are extract from the interview that illustrate Calmness.

- Yo creo que más relajado para así como para entender ya al tiro de lo que se va a tratar y pensando en el traductor y dejar todo el texto solo para entenderlo (PST 7).
- Yo me siento más relajada y como que es más fácil para mi comprender el texto (PST 9).
- Como lo mismo. para mi me siento más tranquila al leer el texto porque con las estrategias como que entiendo mejor el texto (PST 8).
- Como más aliviada de saber otras estrategias (PST 21).

Additionally, students also commented that because they understood more the text, they did not necessarily felt challenge and anxious about the reading task. These are extract from the interview that illustrate Easiness.

- *Era más fácil con esas estrategias porque al momento de leer las preguntas yo me guio por donde yo ya lo leí, o donde puede estar las respuestas y ver las imágenes más o menos (PST5).*
- *fue más fácil, sobre todo la de primero leer las preguntas y poder leer en ingles fue más fácil (PST13).*
- *Al principio yo no comprendía, pero después sí comprendí, se me hizo un poquito más fácil (PST14).*

#### 4.3.2 Role of the strategies aiding their learning process

In this section I will describe the role these strategies had, according to the students, in aiding their learning process. The students mentioned that these strategies provided them with confidence, autonomy, the opportunity to help others, have more resources available to face the different challenges presented and to perform better in tests. A summary of this is presented in Table 11.

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency	Examples
Aid the reading process	Confidence	7	- capaz es algo psicológico, pero como que yo me sentí preparada al ver las estrategias, aunque algunas ya las conocía, me sentía más preparada. (PST10)
	Autonomy	3	- Ayudan a aprender mejor y no tengo que preguntarle tanto a la miss (PST17).
	Support others	2	- Yo también creo que sí porque así le puedo enseñar a otra gente que también le cuesta (PST9)
	Pool of resources	4	- Si las juntas te ayudan a entender más el texto y así enfrentar mejor el texto (PST20).
	Improve test performance	4	- yo creo que sí porque me facilitaría más entender los textos en inglés y así hacer que me vaya mejor. (PST 18).
	Time efficient	2	- Yo creo que son valiosas porque pueden ayudarte a terminar más rápido y ayudarte en la prueba. (PST 16)

**Table 11: Summary of subtheme emerged regarding the aid these strategies had on the students reading comprehension process.**

When referring to confidence, students highlighted in the interview the way they felt more prepared to face the challenges of the reading comprehension tasks because they understood the texts. These are extract from the interview that illustrate the subtheme Confidence:

- *Cuando las empecé a usar (las estrategias) me sentí como más segura de leer en inglés porque así entendía más. (PST2).*
- *yo antes leía, así como más nerviosa pensando en que nunca iba a entender lo que leía, pero ahora entiendo más lo que leo y siento que las personas cuando leo en voz alta entienden cuando leo (PST12).*
- *yo sentía que podía leer un poco más con esas estrategias (PST11).*
- *Yo creo que es diferente porque me siento más seguro para leer porque puedo saber y entender mejor el texto (PST 18).*
- *me sentía más relajada al leer, como segura de que iba a entender todo. (PST 6).*
- *Yo si seguiré usando estas estrategias porque igual que ahora se me van a hacer más fácil comprender el tipo de texto como dije antes las preguntas y todo eso (PST 5).*

In terms of autonomy, students commented on doing the different reading tasks by themselves because they have the tools to do so. These are extract from the interview that illustrate the subtheme Autonomy:

- *Yo las seguiría ocupando sobre todo en las pruebas para salir más rápido y no quedarme pegado en las preguntas. Podría decir, ah se esta estrategia que me enseñó la miss y así utilizarla (PST 7).*
- *Entiendo más el texto, leo las preguntas y después busco las respuestas en el mismo texto (PST 16).*

These are extract from the interview that illustrate the subtheme Support Others:

- *(Puedo) ayudar a la gente que no sabe mucho inglés a poder comprender más el texto y esas cosas (PST 9).*

Also, students also discussed the idea that by using the different strategies they were going to be able to perform better in the reading tasks. These are extract from the interview that illustrate the subtheme Improve test performance:

- *Yo creo que son valiosas para utilizarlas en momentos estratégicos como una prueba o algo importante (..) porque necesito entender mejor el texto para poder entender las preguntas y que me vaya bien. (PST 18).*
- *(En) una prueba por ejemplo se te olvida algo puedes usar las estrategias para salvarte de algo que no entiendes por eso son importantes. (PST22).*
- *Yo creo que son valiosas porque pueden ayudarte a terminar más rápido y ayudarte en la prueba. (PST 16).*

Students also commented on having more resources available to use and face the different reading tasks. These are extract from the interview that illustrate the subtheme Pool of resources:

- *en una prueba por ejemplo se te olvida algo puedes usar las estrategias para salvarte de algo que no entiendes por eso son importantes. (PST22).*
- *me siento un poquito mejor porque si no entiendo algo tengo varias opciones para usar. (PST 22).*
- *Me siento como más aliviada de saber otras estrategias (PST 21).*

This is another example that illustrate the subtheme Time efficient:

- *(Con el uso de las estrategias) como comprendía el texto porque los comprendía más rápido (PST 14).*

### 4.3.3 Constraint towards the use of the strategies

Regarding the reservation students had when using these strategies, some of them mentioned some concerns regarding uncertainty, time-consuming, opposition to change and lack of purpose. This is illustrated in Table 12.

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency	Example
Constraint toward the strategies	Uncertainty	4	- Porque a veces puede que haya otro personaje parecido en otro texto o puede ser como distractores. (PST 4) -
	Time-consuming	3	- gastas mucho tiempo en eso y si te lo preguntan en las preguntas puede que sirva, pero no siempre preguntan eso. (PST 6)
	Pointless	8	- sí vamos a ver el texto y no leerlo es como para qué (con qué propósito) (PST 7)
	Opposition to change	4	- porque nadie dice “necesito ver la pregunta 8 porque me dijo que eso se trataba de tal cosa” ó sea no es tan natural o normal hacerlo. (PST 1)

**Table 12: Summary of sub-themes emerged regarding the constraints students had towards the use of the strategies.**

When referring to uncertainty, students talked about predicting and questioning because even though the strategies sometimes worked, they could be misleading and the picture/title or the question could be about something that would not necessarily be related to the actual text so they could not trust that strategy blindly before reading the text.

This also can be observed in the following quotes taken from the interview:

- *Ver las imágenes porque a veces no representan mucho las expresiones y eso. (PST 5).*
- *porque si no uno está pendiente de responder las preguntas, no le prestas mucha atención a lo que estás leyendo. (PST 19).*
- *La menos útil es la de las preguntas porque quizás puede haber una pregunta que te diga, no sé, ¿la caperucita roja de color era su caperuza? entonces eso ya no es del texto (PST 2).*

In regard to the time-consuming aspect of the strategies, this pop-up when describing the three strategies. Even though some students once again talked about how the strategies could be helpful in their comprehension process however, using the strategies required a lot of time. This also can be observed in the following quotes taken from the interview:

- *Igual por temas de tiempo son un poco que retrasan el tiempo. (PST11).*
- *Yo igual encuentro que se retrasan porque, por ejemplo, yo las ocupe cuando sabía que tenía hartó tiempo para leer (...) Si alguien lo ocupa, así como ocupar todas las estrategias para leer todo el texto en una prueba se va a demorar un montón, pero si sirven, pero son un poco demorasas. (PST12).*

Concerning the purpose, a considerable number of students commented this aspect of the “text analysis” strategy. As it can be observed, student felt no motivation to look at the text before reading it because they will have to eventually read it. This also can be observed in the following quotes taken from the interview:

- *porque de alguna u otra manera lo tengo que leer si o si entonces es como inútil (PST 9).*
- *porque es como ver el texto y entender un poco, pero para eso están las imágenes y las preguntas, no le encuentro mucho uso. (PST 11).*
- *la que menos me sirvió, al menos a mí, fue la de ver el texto. Para mí no importa si es largo o corto con leerlo está bien (PST 10).*
- *yo creo que la menos útil fue la de ver el texto porque no me da mucha información (PST 21).*
- *Con solo verlo no voy a saber de qué se trata la historia. (PST 8).*
- *no lo encuentro muy útil porque no me ayuda a entender nada (PST 22).*
- *a que no es la mejor es la de mirar el texto porque como que no sirve tanto porque no te ayuda a entender de que se trata. (PST 16).*

Respecting the last subtheme “opposition to change”, some students throughout the interview commented on how they have their own system when facing a reading task

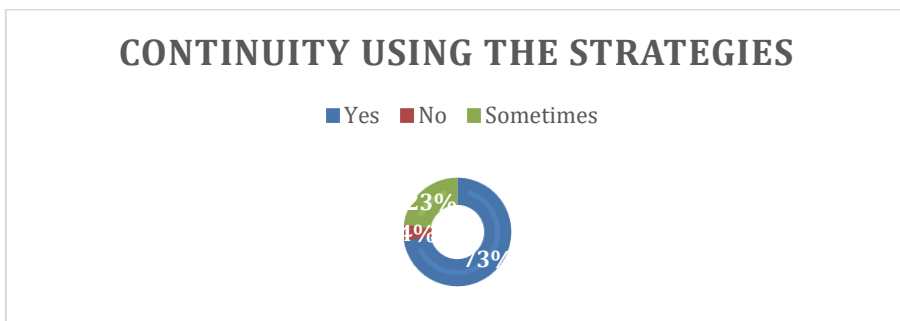
or are used to it differently thus they did not use some of the strategies or were reluctant to do so.

- *porque yo tengo un sistema de leer el texto y luego las preguntas y luego vuelvo al texto y ahí busco la parte que necesito. entonces ese sistema yo ocupo entonces no ocupe mucho la otra (PST 12).*
- *porque siento que primero debería leer el texto para entender mejor. (PST 15).*
- *las estrategias que uso las uso constantemente y estas no las he usado tanto, de hecho, en el último texto no me acorde de usarlas entonces se me van olvidando (PST 22).*

#### 4.3.4 Continuity

A theme that emerged from the data was the willingness to continue using these strategies. Despite the reservations some students manifested, many of them mentioned in the interview their willingness to continue using these strategies. The reasons provided were explained in the previous section, but a summary is presented in Figure 10.

This shed light on how many of the students interviewed believe that the strategies can be useful in the future and their willingness to continue using them.



**Figure 16: Students' opinions on continuing using the strategies.**

In case of the students that said yes, they mentioned the following:

*Si porque como yo ya las había aprendido antes me acostumbre a utilizarlos entonces casi siempre las voy a utilizar cuando tenga que leer algo en inglés. (PST 1)*

*Yo si seguiré usando estas estrategias porque igual que ahora se me van a hacer más fácil comprender el tipo de texto como dije antes las preguntas y todo eso. (PST 5)*

The student that said no, provide the following reason:

*Yo creo que no porque las estrategias que uso las uso constantemente y estas no las he usado tanto, de hecho, en el último texto no me acorde de usarlas entonces se me van olvidando. (PST 22)*

Finally, the students who answer sometimes mentioned the following:

*Yo creo que solo algunas, la de ver el titulo y las imágenes porque ya la había utilizado antes y se me hace más fácil usarla. (PST21)*

*Yo creo que a veces cuando se me haga un poco difícil entender el texto. No lo creo necesario otras veces. (PST 15)*

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

## Discussion

In this chapter, the findings presented in the previous chapter will be discussed in light of each specific objective set for the current Action Research. Additionally, limitations, implications and suggestion for further investigation will be provided.

### **5.1 Specific Objective 1: To identify the most recurrent planning action used (predicting, text analysis and questioning) by fourth-grade students when facing a narrative text.**

The findings regarding this objective shown that the most recurrently used strategy was planning, specifically forty-three times in the three sessions in which students face a reading task. Nevertheless, it is of high importance to highlight the fact that students were able to identify and articulate the use of different metacognitive strategies throughout the intervention in their own reading process.

Young ELF learners need a variety of strategies to understand and interact with different texts (Griffith, 2008). Because of that, it is important to present a variety of different strategies and make them explicit so that they can familiarize themselves with such strategies. Something that it is important to highlight from the current study findings is that students already have used Planning for action strategies but sometimes they were not aware of them. Similarly, Crandall and Shin (2017) support the idea that it is very beneficial for EFL young learners that their teacher models and guides the use of those strategies.

Because the use of metacognitive strategies can assist young EFL learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their reading process (Varga, 2017), it is relevant to encourage students and promote the use of these strategies. In the current study, firstly, students commented on using different metacognitive strategies before being introduced to them, mentioning strategies such as: setting a goal, anticipate what it is expected from the text and predict, among others. Secondly, particularly regarding this specific objective, students were able to identify the planning for action strategy that they were using when facing different reading tasks; later when students were asked in depth about their perceptions, they were also able to articulate the reasons behind their choices. In a similar study, Mitsea and Drigas, (2020), demonstrated that young readers knew how to use metacognitive strategies of self-knowledge, task knowledge and text knowledge to repair comprehension.

In a revision of 27 studies on the teaching of reading strategies (particularly cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies) for ESL/EFL learners conducted by Ali & Razari (2019), it was found that most of the students used predicting as a recurrent strategy in reading comprehension tasks. These findings are similar with the current action research, in which predicting was continuously used by the students even though it was not the most used in the revision carried out by Ali and Razari (2019).

Additionally, during this action research, students, commented in the questionnaire using metacognitive strategies and other students, when they were presented with the strategies during the intervention, commented on already using or knowing some of the strategies. As discussed by some researchers (e.g., Kolaric; Teng 2020), young learners' metacognitive awareness begins at quite an early stage, but in a way that does not always comply with the expectations of the researcher.

## **5.2 Specific Objective 2: To analyse the contribution on students' reading performance of planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage when facing a narrative text.**

Regarding the findings of this specific objective, they can be divided into two categories: Test performance and Self- Reported performance.

Concerning test performance, before students were presented with the strategies, one student was able to achieve the maximum score and two students got the minimum score. After the intervention, still one student was only able to achieve the highest score but only one student obtained the lowest score.

Following the same line, during the pre-intervention test, the mean score was 5.3 with a standard deviation of 2.3. On the other hand, during the post-intervention test, after the students practice the use of the strategies the mean score was higher (5.8), and the standard deviation varied in 2.0.

This can be since the use of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension can aid the learning process and students might become more proficient in reading by using these strategies (Teng, 2020). Additionally, some researchers suggest (e.g., Sato, 2021; Teng and Reynolds, 2019; Ahmadi et al, 2013) that after regularly using and practicing the use of metacognitive strategies, they can positively affect students' improvement in their comprehension tests.

Because of the comparison of the students' tests results obtained pre- and post-intervention, it can be argued that there is a positive contribution in terms of better academic performance for the students after being presented and regularly practice the use of the Planning for action metacognitive strategies.

Different studies have suggested that the use of metacognitive strategies inside the EFL classroom can positively affect young learners' academic achievement in different areas. For example, regarding listening comprehension (Goh, 2018), comprehensibility of oral production (Sato and Dussuel, 2020), metacognitive awareness (Zeng and Goh, 2018) and in reading comprehension (Teng, 2020).

Having discussed how the use of these strategies supported the test performance, now the effect that the strategies had on students' self-reported performance will be addressed.

It can be said that there is a difference in self-reported score between the pre and post intervention test. The mean of the post-intervention test is higher by 0.7 and more students chose to assess themselves with the highest score in the post intervention test. These results show that students believe that after the intervention they did better on the test; this means that students self-perceived their own performance in a more positive manner. It is also important to highlight that for some student this is not only perception since they improved their score in the post intervention test.

The fact that students believe that they performed better on the test follows a similar pattern as the ones discussed in Morali's (2019) study, where it was concluded that the perception students have of themselves can affect their reading process and performance. Likewise, Altunkaya and Ateş (2017) show in their study the connection between a high self-reported performance and the planning part of the metacognitive process. Additionally, they discuss the connection between language achievement level and the reading self-efficacy. As the language achievement levels of the students improve their competence perception for reading increases.

Moreover, in a similar study conducted by Fathi and Afzali (2020), it was found a positive relationship between the use of metacognitive reading strategies and the self-perceived performance of students similarly to the results found in this AR.

Additionally, the implementation of the self-reported item in tests could be very beneficial for the development of the planning for action metacognitive strategies since during periods of self-reflection, students evaluate their progress by comparing their performances to their goals (Woolley and Wolley, 2011). It is of high importance to consider that learners' positive self-perceived performance sustains their motivation and promotes learning (Schunk and Pajares, 2009). Thus, the implementation of self-efficacy can aid the metacognitive awareness or development by providing instances of self-reflection, to aid students to evaluate their progress by comparing their performances to their goals.

### **5.3 Specific Objective 3: To describe students' perceptions towards planning actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage to support their reading comprehension process.**

As far as students' perceptions is concerned, the analysis of the results will be discussed according to the themes and subthemes that emerged. In regard to the use, students talked about their awareness, the connection to their background

knowledge and comprehension. Then, they discussed how the strategies aid and/or constrain their reading process and finally discussed their future use.

There is a common conception that young learners are passive figures in social interactions, leaving little room for considering their perspectives on their own learning and life experiences (Pinter, 2014; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2008). However, in this AR and in other investigations (e.g., Sato, 2021; Teng, 2020; Morali, 2019; Ellis and Ibrahim, 2017) it has been shown how students, particularly young learners, are able to articulate and show, in their own manner, their own opinions and view about different topics and approaches in their learning process, in the case of this AR, about their reading comprehension process.

In terms of the use, student discussed and described thoroughly the way in which they use the strategies. For example, when referring to the strategy that suggested reading the questions before the text, student describe the actions they did but they also explained that using that strategy was useful because it allowed them to focus on what was expected from them to do in the text. This action gives us insight into their thought process and shows the way in which they use and are aware of their own metacognitive processes. An important part of developing metacognitive awareness is being able to describe what they plan to use or how it will be used. As described by Boulware-Gooden et al. (2007) to 'think about thinking' before, during, and after they read.

Following the same line, different studies on young learners' metacognitive processes have been carried out and the findings are consistent with the current AR. For example, empirical research has substantiated the effects of metacognitive instruction on young learners' reading comprehension. In an early study by Brenna (1995), data from observations and interviews revealed that five young L2 learners employed a variety of metacognitive strategies while reading. Moreover, a study conducted by Whitebread (2010) provided evidence of self-regulation and metacognition in children aged three to five years old. The study aimed to determine if using more suitable and engaging research methods would lead to the earlier development of metacognitive abilities in children, even before the age of eight. The study suggested that self-regulation and metacognition may emerge at earlier ages when employing appropriate research approaches for studying young children.

Moreover, in the current AR study the use of these strategies student value the use of these strategies as they provide tools to face the text. These tools to face the text have been described and discussed in the literature regarding metacognitive strategies as self-knowledge, task knowledge and text knowledge, and used by learners to repair comprehension (Mitsea and Drigas, 2020). The evidence shows that students in the task were able to use them because they later articulated them

in the interview. Finally, many students agreed on the fact that they use the strategies to better understand the text they are facing. As stated by different studies (Swanson and De la Paz, 1994; Ahmadi et al, 2013; Fathi and Azali, 2020; Teng, 2020), this supports the idea that there could be a relation between the use of metacognitive strategy and improvement in reading comprehension.

In terms of how these strategies can aid the learning process, students commented that they bring them confidence. This point could be linked to the previous section when student reported their own performance, and how having a better understanding of their reading process helped them to feel they performed well (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; Morali, 2019).

Another positive aspect discussed is autonomy. Students commented in the interviews feeling more capable of facing the reading task. Thamraksa (2005) discussed that a key aspect in metacognition is to help student to assume increasing responsibility for planning and regulating their own learning. Likewise, Johnson and Davies (2011) suggest that self-regulation through the use of metacognitive strategies can aid the constant attempt to maintain concentration and the achievements of certain goals. Thus, this intervention allowed students to think and make conscious decisions about the appropriate (metacognitive) learning strategies to be used when solving learning tasks.

Finally, this insight on the benefits of metacognitive strategies is particularly important because the positive feelings students articulate are relevant in their learning process, since it can aid the attitude to which students face the reading comprehension tasks.

In general, students, found that through the continuous use of these strategies they had a pool of resources, they could perform better in test and use time more effectively. Similar benefits have been found in other studies such as Thamraksa (2005), Morali (2019), Fathi and Afzali (2020), Teng (2020), and Sato (2021).

Nevertheless, in contrast to some of the positive aspect on how these strategies can aid the learning process, during the interview students also described some constraints regarding the use of these strategies.

Some students comment that using these strategies was time consuming and pointless. On previous studies, such as Griffith (2008), Crandall and Shin (2017) and Teng (2020) the relationship between continuous instruction on the use of strategies and consistency in use are discussed. Furthermore, a reason for this could be the lack of continuous training and the fact that the strategies were taught and use during

a short period of time during this AR could contribute to the constraint mentioned by the students.

In their study, Thamraksa (2005) encounter similar constraints and mentioned that it is difficult for students to become self-directed when learning is planned and monitored by someone else. Thus, it is suggested that teachers should give clear explanation about these strategies and when to use them.

In the same line of thought, another constraint mentioned by students is that they felt uncertainty using some of the strategies. This could be because these strategies were new to them, but also it worth highlighting that students should be able to make their own decision regarding the use of the strategies and use the ones they feel can aid them according to the task at hand. Because students can choose from a variety of strategies, it is important to show them as many as possible considering that their choice can be affected depending on their language proficiency and familiarity of the task (Teng, 2020).

Finally, most of the students interviewed commented that they will keep on using the strategies because of the reasons already discussed. This shed light on the positive impact these strategies had not only in their performance, but also on how students felt using these strategies. Once again, it is important to mention that these strategies can not only aid the learning process in terms of score, but also in motivating students and promoting their learning by giving them the opportunity to think critically about their learning process and choices.

#### **5.4 Implications**

The implications of this AR for the teacher-researcher practice have significant importance. In the first place, it was shown that this type of intervention provided students with an array of different strategies for them to use not only when facing a reading task in the English lesson, but a new perspective into their metacognitive development. In this intervention students were able to clearly articulate their metacognitive processes and benefit from the new opportunities these strategies present. Because of that, this AR sheds light on how these students were able not only to demonstrate their metacognitive abilities but also to discuss and learn about them. This AR can be very helpful to some teacher-researchers out there who believe in providing autonomy to their young students and strongly believe that students are the centre and main participants in their own learning process.

Secondly, this AR can help other teacher researchers out there to implement the metacognitive strategies in their lessons, particularly in reading comprehension tasks to bring students the opportunities to use them, they work when used consistently. However, teachers should make it clear to students that no single

strategy will work in every instance; hence, students must know how to choose the strategy and the importance of allowing practices instances in the classroom. Therefore, for the teacher-researcher, it is important to understand these findings under that light and allow students to choose their preference.

Finally, this AR not only did allow for a better understanding of my students and their thought processing, but it also helped me to try different and new approaches to teaching. It is very important for us, teacher-researchers, to realize that our role is to aid the learning process by giving students different opportunities to explore, make mistakes and learn alongside them. One of the fundamental skills teachers can help to master to young English learners is the comprehension and management of the cognitive and metacognitive processes. Mastering this skill supports the development of independent learning among young learners.

As teacher and as a life-long learner I can realize the importance of reflecting upon my own practices and implement what I have learned in this AR in my classes.

## **5.5 Limitations**

While this AR's findings provide relevant insights into the development of students' use of metacognitive strategies, some limitations should be addressed.

Firstly, in order to help students to feel less anxious, the texts selected for the intervention were short stories and fables which students were familiar with; because of the familiarity aspect it is not clear if students' prior knowledge helped them significantly to answer the intervention questions. For future research it would be interesting to see how students face different types of texts.

Secondly, due to time constraints, the class devoted to teaching and practicing the strategies were only three; therefore, more practice could have been useful in order to see the long-time effects of the intervention.

And finally, this AR was implemented in a bilingual context, in which students have exposure to the language in a considerable amount. Therefore, the results obtained for this research might not be the same for other EFL teaching contexts. Studying the impact that metacognitive strategies can have in students reading comprehension in other EFL contexts would nourish the understanding of how different variables such as hours of exposure to the language, number of students per class, among other factors.

## **Chapter VI: Conclusion**

## Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary of main findings

This AR aimed at exploring the use of Planning Actions for reading as an explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategy in the pre-reading stage for supporting students' reading comprehension.

Firstly, it can be said that before the intervention, students already used some of the different metacognitive strategies; however, they were not aware of those strategies name or that they were strategies. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire answer by the student show that, during the intervention, all of the students used Planning for actions metacognitive strategies and the most used throughout the intervention was predicting.

Secondly, regarding students' performance it can be said that even though the results did not show evidence of a significant difference between students' score in the pre- and post-intervention test, when comparing the standard deviation (SD) and mean (M), students performed better in the post intervention test, this is because more students achieved a better performance and most of the students got a higher score in the post-intervention test. Additionally, the scores obtained in the post-intervention were not as spread as the pre-intervention test.

Considering the self-perceived performance, students answer in written form in the self-reported performance item that they performed better in the post-intervention test. Moreover, they commented during the interview on performing better after using the planning for action metacognitive strategies.

Thirdly, regarding students' perceptions, they commented that the strategies were valuable for most of them. Students were able to articulate the way in which they were using the strategies and how these strategies helped them to overcome the different reading comprehension tasks, particularly in having a better comprehension of the text. During the interview, they mentioned that the strategies allowed them to have more resources available to better understand the reading comprehension tasks, and also, they have aided their reading comprehension process by giving them confidence, autonomy and opportunities to help others. Nevertheless, some students showed opposition to change, since they refused to use the new strategies as they already knew others. In addition, some students commented that the strategies were time-consuming, purposeless and gave them a sense of uncertainty. Notwithstanding this, the majority of students expressed their intention to persist in using the strategies, with only one student expressing a reluctance to continue using them.

Finally, considering the aforementioned findings, it is possible to argue that the use of planning for action metacognitive strategies impacted positively on students' academic achievement as well as their own self perceptions. Moreover, the continuous use of these strategies can be beneficial to support students reading comprehension and help to further develop the use of strategies, particularly metacognitive ones in the EFL classroom. It is of high importance to highlight that

the strategies were also perceived as a valuable method to support reading comprehension by the young participants of this study.

## **6.2 Personal reflections and further recommendations**

From a personal standpoint, the development of this AR has been an exciting and enriching experience. Firstly, this opportunity has allowed me to develop and put into practice high order thinking skills throughout the whole process. By trying to help my students to understand and develop their own metacognitive processes I had the opportunity to explore mine as well. This has given me amazing insights on my own processes as a teacher but also as a person and a life-long learner. For me, keeping learning from different sources is crucial in my development as a person and teacher, so I am very grateful for this opportunity.

This process has allowed me to dedicate time to research and implement different ideas inside the classroom. Thus, it is of high importance to keep on designing effective teaching and learning experiences, where learners are the protagonist of their own learning experiences. I was able to reflect upon my own practices and realise the importance of implementing and promoting the metacognitive development for young learners inside the English classroom. The role of the teacher is fundamental in aiding this process by reflecting on how reflective demands from lessons and tasks could facilitate the integration of metacognition into the aims of daily teaching practices.

Secondly, I also reflect on the impact that this AR had on my students. The way in which they still are using these strategies and the positive feelings that arose from them by having the opportunity to participate in a research study. It made me realize even more how much they have to say about their own learning process. I think it is important to reflect on how valuable their insights are, how able they are to articulate their own metacognitive and decision-making processes and how willing they are to learn.

Thirdly, even though this process was challenging and made me step out of my comfort zone and provided me with the necessary tools to continue making decisions that positively impact my students based on their needs, while also seeking innovation to facilitate their learning process.

Regarding this matter, I would recommend teachers and teacher-researchers to assist young English learners in acquiring the comprehension and management of cognitive and metacognitive processes. Proficiency in this skill fosters the growth of independent learning capabilities among young learners.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

#### Encuesta: ¿Qué pienso cuando leo?

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Instrucciones: En la siguiente encuesta encontrarás preguntas relacionadas a las actividades de



lecturas que realizamos en el colegio.

Es importante que respondas todas las preguntas de la encuesta. Si no entiendes alguna de ellas, puedes levantar tu mano y preguntar.

Recuerda responder de forma honesta ¡esto no afectará tus notas! 😊

1. Cuando realizas una actividad de lectura en inglés, usualmente ¿Qué es lo que más se te dificulta al momento de leer?

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2. ¿Utilizas alguna estrategia para leer? Si es así, ¿Cuál/Cuáles? Por favor, descríbelas.

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3. ¿Qué acciones realizas antes de leer para comprender un texto en inglés? Encierra todas las actividades que has realizado.

- a. *Antes de leer establezco metas u objetivos para la lectura.*
- b. *Antes de leer el texto, leo bien las instrucciones para saber que se espera de mí.*
- c. *Antes de leer el texto leo las preguntas de comprensión-*

d. *Antes de leer miro las imágenes y pienso sobre qué puede tratar el texto.*

e. *Antes de leer miro el título y pienso sobre qué puede tratar el texto.*

f. *Antes de leer realizo otra acción. Por favor, descríbela*

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g. *Antes de leer no realizo ninguna acción.*

4. *De las estrategias que se mencionaron ¿hay alguna que te gustaría aprender? ¿Por qué?*

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## Appendix B Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Mark with an "X" the strategies you want to use during this reading comprehension.



- I read the title before the text.
- I looked at the images before reading the text.
- I tried to associate the title with something I knew.
- I tried to associate the images with something I know.



- I checked if the text was similar to another text I knew.
- I associated some paragraph with information I could find.



- I read the questions before the reading the text.
- I try to think where in the text I could find the answer.

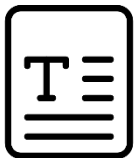
What strategies did I use before reading?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Mark with an "X" the strategies you actually used during this reading comprehension.



- I read the title before the text.
- I looked at the images before reading the text.
- I tried to associate the title with something I knew.
- I tried to associate the images with something I know.



- I checked if the text was similar to another text I knew.
- I associated some paragraph with information I could find.



- I read the questions before the reading the text.
- I try to think where in the text I could find the answer.

## Appendix C Pre- Intervention Test

### Pre intervention test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



#### Instructions:

Read the text carefully.

At the back, you will find some questions to answer.

Remember! This is not graded but it is important that you complete all the questions



## The Lion and the Mouse



One day, a lion was asleep in the wood. A mouse came along. The mouse didn't see the lion and ran across the lion's nose.

The lion woke up. He was cross with the mouse. "You woke me up!" he roared.

The mouse was scared. "Please let me go!" said the mouse. "If you let me go, I will repay you one day!"

"You are funny!" said the lion. "How could a mouse help a lion?"

The lion laughed and let the mouse go home.

Some days later, the lion was caught in a hunter's net. He couldn't get out.

The lion roared in anger.

The mouse heard the lion and ran to the net.

The mouse saw the lion and had an idea. She chewed on the net until it broke and the lion fell out. The lion was free.



"Even a mouse can help a lion!" said the mouse.

From that day, the mouse and the lion became friends.

**A kindness is never wasted.**



Answer the following questions. If you don't know a word, you can use *Spanglish*.

1. What did the mouse do to free the lion?

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2) Where did the lion get trapped?

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3) Was the mouse scared when the lion woke up? Why?

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4) Why did the lion and the mouse become friends?

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5) In your own words, what's the message of this story?

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Now, you are going to assess yourself. Mark with an X the most suitable answer according to your performance.



	Yes (3)	I need to keep working on it (2)	No (1)
My answers are correct.			
The text was easy to read.			
I was able to understand most of the text.			

## Appendix D Post Intervention Test

### Post intervention test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Instructions:

Read the text carefully.

At the back, you will find some questions to answer.

Remember! This is not graded but it is important that you complete all the questions 😊.

## The Ant and the Grasshopper

One day, a grasshopper was relaxing in a field, eating as much grass as he could. When his tummy was full, he began to play some music. He was having a great time in the sun.



Then, an ant walked by. The ant was carrying some corn.

"Come and sing with me!" said the grasshopper. "No," said the ant. "I am busy getting food for the winter."

"Don't worry about the winter!" said the grasshopper. "We have lots of food and it is sunny today."

But the ant went on his way and carried on collecting food.

"What a silly ant!" said the grasshopper. "He can worry about winter when it is winter!"



When winter came, the grasshopper had no food. The ant and his family had plenty to eat.

"Please can I have some of your food?" said the grasshopper. "No!" said the ant. "You said I was silly!"

The grasshopper was hungry all winter. He learnt a very hard lesson.



**Work hard today to get ready for tomorrow.**



**Answer the following questions. If you don't know a word, you can use *Spanglish*.**

1. What was the grasshopper eating?

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2. What was the ant doing?

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3. Why was the ant worried about winter?

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4. Why did the ant have plenty of food to eat during winter?

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5. In your own words, what's the message of this story?

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**Now, you are going to assess yourself. Mark with an X the most suitable answer according to your performance.**

	<b>Yes (3)</b>	<b>I need to keep working on it (2)</b>	<b>No (1)</b>
My answers are correct.			
The text was easy to read.			
I was able to understand most of the text.			

## Appendix E Group Interview

Group interview: Group \_\_\_\_

Students' Name:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Warm up:

- Greet the students and ask for permission to tape the conversation.
- Explain the reason for the group interview and assure them the information is confidential.
- Encourage students to talk as freely as they want.

Questions:

1. How do you feel about reading in English? Is this the same or different after using the strategies you were presented with? (feelings)
2. What do you think about these strategies? Is there any relevance in them? (relevance for the students)
3. Would you use these strategies when you have to face another text? (usefulness)
4. Which one do you think was the most useful /least useful? Why? (usefulness and types of strategies)

Preguntas:

1. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando lees en inglés? ¿Recuerdan que les presenté unas estrategias o claves para planificar su lectura? ¿Cómo se sintieron al momento de leer el cuento después de conocieron las estrategias que puedes usar antes de leer? ¿Leer es igual o diferente ahora que conocen estas estrategias nuevas?
2. ¿Qué te parecieron estas estrategias/claves? ¿Creen que son valiosas para preparar las lecturas antes de leer? ¿De qué forma?
3. ¿Les gustaría utilizar/ Creen que seguirás utilizando estas estrategias cuando tengas que leer un texto en inglés nuevamente? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Cuál de todas las estrategias que les presenté creen que fue la más útil? ¿Y la menos útil? ¿Por qué?

(Adapted from Selamat & Sidhu, 2020)

