DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I ALEMANYA

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF THREE
PREREADING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING
COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS
OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT.

LUCÍA OSA MELERO

Aquesta Tesi Doctoral va ser presentada a València el dia 12 de juny de 2009 davant un tribunal format per:

- Dra. Esperanza Román Mendoza
- Dra. Noemí Domínguez García
- Dr. Francisco Zayas Martínez
- Dr. José Francisco Fernández Sánchez
- Dr. Barry Pennock-Speck

Va ser dirigida per:
Dra. Carmen Gregori i Signes
Dr. Antonio Hidalgo Navarro

The Dissertation Committee for Lucía Osa-Melero certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF THREE PRE-READING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

Committee:

_____

Carmen Gregori Signes, Supervisor

_____

Antonio Hidalgo Navarro, Supervisor

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF THREE PRE-READING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

by

Lucía Osa-Melero, B.A.; M.A.; M.A.T

Presented to the Faculty

of the Graduate School

of Universitat de València

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Universitat de València

2009

Dedication

To Austin, for offering me all that a city can possibly offer,

and even more.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF THREE PRE-READING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

Publication No._____

Lucía Osa-Melero, PhD

Universitat de València, 2009

Supervisors: Carmen Gregori Signes and Antonio Hidalgo Navarro

Reading and understanding complex texts about history and/or socio-political topics has become a difficult task for intermediate-high level second language students, due to the fact that most of the times these students lack the background knowledge to understand the intricacy of the text. It has been proved that when presented with historical and socio-political texts, many students feel frustrated, discouraged and anxious.

As the literature confirms, many studies have shown that cooperative activities, with the required guidance and structure, facilitate the process of learning in different disciplines; whereas non-guided and non-structured traditional groups activities do not enhance learning as cooperative activities do. In search of strategies that may help the students improve their reading comprehension, three different types of pre-reading activities have been examined: guided and structured cooperative; traditional learning

groups, and textbook-based individual.

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to compare and evaluate the effects of the three different types of pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension of second language intermediate-high university students of Spanish in an English-speaking environment. The research questions that led the study investigated the effects of guided and structured cooperative; traditional learning group; and textbook based individual pre-reading activities on the students.

The participants of this semester-long quantitative research study are the teacher-researcher, four instructors, and 117 students of Spanish fourth-semester at the University of Texas at Austin. The measurement tools employed to collect the data are multiple-choice tests and recall protocols. The mean scores obtained by both measurement tools after the implementation of the pre-reading treatments are compared using a test for paired data.

Findings indicated that cooperative pre-reading activities have a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension when implemented following the required guidelines. These guidelines include a specific structure of activities, and guidance by the instructor during the completion of the activities. The study also showed that textbook-based individual pre-reading activities enhanced the students reading comprehension when compared with those scores from traditional groups with no guidance and fixed structure. Therefore, the results suggest that cooperative pre-reading activities must be carefully implemented in order to be beneficial to the students' reading comprehension. When cooperative activities are not correctly implemented and become traditional group activities with no guidance or structure, the scores achieved by the students are lower than those obtained from textbook-based individual treatments.

Table of Contents

x

xi

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the possible differential effects of three distinct types of pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension of Spanish as a second language (L2) in intermediate-high university students whose native language is English. The activities performed by the students are grouped into three different approaches. The activities are guided and structured cooperative activities, in which the students follow fixed structured guidelines and intellectually and socially cooperate to complete the activities; the second set of activities is traditional groups, in which students sit in groups and complete the activities without the instructor's guidelines or support; and the last set is textbook based individual pre-reading activities, in which the students follow the exercises written down in their textbook and complete the activities individually at home. By researching the effects of these different types of pre-reading activities on intermediate-high students of Spanish, I intend to determine which of the three types of pre-reading models generates greater improvement in the reading comprehension of historical and socio-political texts.

1.1 RATIONALE AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1.1 Reading

As Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt, & Kamil (2003) state, reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought; an activity that consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. On the one hand, word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. On the other hand, comprehension is the process of making sense of the words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with the text, and other strategies to understand written text. As Wells (1986) asserts, reading is an interactive act that involves the text, the reader's prior knowledge, different contexts (including linguistic, situational and attitudinal), and the task itself.

Following Wells' argument, Bernhardt (1991) points out the importance of text factors in the reading comprehension process. For Bernhardt (1991) "the text is no longer characterized simply by its linguistic elements (semantics and syntax), but also by its structure, pragmatic nature, intentionality, content, and topic" (p.15). Readers engage in the process of reading by taking an active role (and not a passive one, as it was traditionally believed). Readers take the initiative to change and make decisions about the text and its meaning. "Readers make individual decisions about

what is important in texts and make sense of it or reconstruct it according to those decisions." (Bernhardt, 1991, p.15).

Earlier conceptions of reading as a simple word decoding process are contradicted by the concept of reading as an interactive act. Nowadays, reading is not only seen as a cognitive process, but also as a social and interactive one (Bernhardt, 1993). The reader is now perceived as an essential part of the reading process, and what the reader brings to the act of reading is believed to determine the success of comprehension.

In the foreign language (FL) curriculum, reading, and especially the reading of authentic texts, is considered a genuine source of input for the language learning process (Bernhardt & Berkemeyer, 1988). A wide body of research supports the idea that reading authentic texts leads to language learning, an idea based on the notion that authentic texts are more comprehensible than simplified texts (Tse, 1996). Nonetheless, authentic texts present the reader with challenges that might interfere with the comprehension process and lead the reader to misinterpret or misunderstand the message. As Adams and Bruce (1986) point out, when the cultural backgrounds of the author of the text and the reader differ, the reader might make inappropriate schemata[1] connections since the schemata needed to understand an L2 text are not

---

[1] Schemata referes to the plural form of schema. Parviz (2003) defines schema as a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in the memory, similar to a type of framework, plan, or script. Schemata are created through experience with people, objects, and events in the world. Schemata can be seen as chunks of organized background knowledge, which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse.

very well grounded or contain inaccurate information for the L2 setting (Aron, 1986).

Despite the challenges mentioned above by Adams and Bruce (1986), and Aron (1986), it is important to point out the impact of the cognitive strategies that the reader might implement to the process of reading the moment s/he starts reading an authentic text, such as the activation of his/her own personal experience to formulate a hypothesis of the text content, and the use of clues provided by the text, such as title, subtitles, and pictures.

It is a fact though, that some factors embedded in the authenticity of the text that might make its presentation, comprehension and reflection accessible to the reader or more complicated for both teacher and students. When the comprehension and reflection of the text does not become accessible the reading of authentic texts in FL, as well as in English as a second language (ESL) classes should be carried out through an appropriate methodology or approach that systematically prepares and guides students' development of the skills necessary to interact with texts (Adair-Hauck, 2000; Harper, 1988). For that purpose, reading preparation tasks include pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies with the only objective of increasing students' reading comprehension, which continues to be a major aim of schooling. Additionally, Hosenfeld, Cavour, Bonk, Baker, and Alcorn (1993) recommend open instruction of reading strategies, as well as, an appropriate selection of the texts to help readers with their comprehension process.

1.1.2 Pre-reading

Pre-reading activities are defined as reading strategies whose objectives are to set the purpose for learning, monitor the learning process, and facilitate text comprehension. The underlying goal in the use of all pre-reading strategies is to help along the interactive process of reading comprehension (Searls, 1983). The pre-reading phase involves several processing techniques that focus on meaning, such as skimming, scanning, predicting, anticipating, and hypothesizing. This phase is especially important for FL learners (Phillips, 1984) to activate background knowledge, strengthen necessary vocabulary, and identify text genre (Schulz, 1983). The pre-reading process is a way to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown to enhance readers' comprehension (User, 1993). A fundamental feature of all pre-reading activities is to tap into students' prior knowledge (Mallow and Patterson, 1999).

Several studies have shown the benefits of pre-reading activities in the native language (L1) and the target language (Song, 1997). Research has suggested that inducing readers to activate and make connections between the prior knowledge they bring to a text and the text can facilitate reading comprehension (Denner, Rickards, & Albanese, 2003; Lee & Riley, 1990). If the reader lacks background experiences and a rich knowledge of language, it is reasonable to anticipate that comprehending the message of text will become a challenging difficult task.

Aaron (1997) offers seven key features to promote effective reading comprehension, four of which have also been replicated by the Denner, et al. (2003) study and found to be effective in improving reading comprehension. These are (a) activating relevant schemata, which helps the readers to approach the text they are about to read in a more familiar way (Jenks, 2002); (b) developing sensitivity to the passage structure; (c) predicting future material and (d) monitoring comprehension. Denner, et al. 's (2003) key features should be accomplished during the pre-reading stage, however, since pre-reading activities are not currently a priority in our curricula, and some educators use them only if there is sufficient time in class, the above features are rarely performed in class. In many instances students' first contact with the text takes place at home without any warm-up, pre-reading or appropriate contextualization. An accepted procedure for teaching reading in the FL classroom has been to have students read the passage silently or aloud in class and then respond to comprehension questions, usually in writing (Hague, 1986). In line with Hague, User (1993) agrees that traditional methods of teaching reading have ignored students' background knowledge, relying primarily on a "read-first-discuss later" process. According to Bauso (1988) "the read first discuss later" method leaves students struggling fruitlessly to understand the text, therefore Bauso (1988) strongly recommends the use of discussions preceding the reading of a text. When reading was thought to be the simple decoding of words, the above process may have made sense. Currently however, since reading is conceived as an interactive process between the

text and the reader, scholars recommend that teachers prepare the students for this interaction before the students are immersed in it.

Empirical evidence has shown that in most L1, as well as L2, reading classrooms, students receive inadequate instruction on reading strategies leaving the students facing the texts with no adequate tools (Miller & Perkins, 1989, cited in Zhicheng, 1993, p. 2). This poor connection between the preparation of the reading and the reading itself can lead to frustration and anxiety from the readers' perspective. Several authors (Arcuri, 1990; Eskey, 1997; Lee & Riley, 1990; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001) assert that pre-reading activities encourage the students to use their background knowledge. Moreover, several studies have found (Alfferbach's, 1990) that readers with prior knowledge are more likely to construct the main idea of a text with less difficulty than readers with no prior knowledge. However, just having background knowledge is not enough to improve reading comprehension: the knowledge must be activated. (Pearson, Roehler, Dole & Duffy, 1992).

Mitchell and Swarbrick (1994) contend that in FL and ESL classrooms, teachers need to be conscious that they are teaching people to read in another language. It is a mistake to assume that students will transfer their reading skills automatically. From this perspective, FL students need guidance and help to interact with L2 texts. Pre-reading activities might offer the readers the support they need for the reading interaction process, and even though pre-reading activity strategies may fall short in providing all the information needed by a FL student to completely

understand the text, a considerable amount of data is provided to accurately adjust literacy differences that benefit the linguistically diverse audience (Jenks, 2002).

1.1.3 Cooperative / Collaborative Learning Approach

College and university faculty have recently discovered that two or more students working together may learn more than individual students working alone. This work format received the name of cooperation or collaboration in a learning setting (Bruffe, 1995). Cooperation has been described by Johnson and Johnson (1999) as the act of working together to accomplish shared goals: within cooperative situations individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. In general terms, cooperative learning (CL) is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning.

Although cooperative learning is considered a more structured and more prescriptive approach to teaching than collaborative learning (Oxford, 1997), most of the studies about cooperation and collaboration in L1 and L2 use these terms interchangeably. "…In a practical sense, collaborative and cooperative learning are two sides of the same coin". (Horwitz, Bresslau, Dryden, McLendon, & Yu, 1997)

Research studies associated with CL suggest that it effectively promotes academic achievement and social skills development (Stevens & Slavin 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1982, 1978). Due to its potential to increase students' academic achievement and social skills development, researchers have advocated for school

reform hoping to improve the teaching/learning situation (Johnston, 1983; Stevens &
Slavin, 1995). This educational reform would give instructors teaching guidelines and
tips that could help improve their students' performance. The implementation of
cooperative theories in classroom practices was designed to target all types of
educational settings and disciplines. Unfortunately, most of these studies have been
done in disciplines other than FL, such as math, the sciences and English (Frances &
Eckart, 1992). There are also comparative studies that contrast CL to other teaching
approaches in L1, suggesting that practices centered on CL found more positive
results in terms of increasing achievement (Frances & Eckart, 1992). Regarding L1
reading, some experts, such as Stevens and Slavin (1995) proved the effectiveness of
CL to improve reading comprehension and enhance the use of reading strategies.

1.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

The effectiveness of CL exercises on pre-reading activities is an arena that has
not been explored yet in L2. The challenges that FL students encounter when they
read authentic texts in FL classes are still an issue that concerns instructors, language
program coordinators, and students in every level. The different types of difficulties
that authentic FL texts entail usually dissuade the readers to continue with the reading
task, creating a sense of frustration and lack of reading ability.

The next chapter provides the reader with a review of the literature related to
the use of CL approach, traditional groups, and textbook-based individual pre-reading
activities. There will be a section dedicated to specific findings from previous

research studies done in the area of pre-reading activities in L1 and L2 classrooms, as well as in the area of cooperative teaching/learning approach in each setting.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a review of the theoretical framework used in this study, as well as a presentation and review of the key concepts and theories that support it, such as reading, pre-reading, background knowledge, schema theory, and in-group learning theories. The studies reviewed in the first section of the literature review are devoted to the concept of reading, including the most important theories of reading comprehension, reading comprehension measurement tools, their main implications, and research about the most common reading challenges presented by FL students. The second section of the literature review will present an overview of the pre-reading notion followed by a list of the most common pre-reading activities and a series of studies supporting the importance of L2 pre-reading activities before the readers face the actual text. The last section will be dedicated first to cooperative learning and its pedagogical implications. Secondly, it includes a detailed description of the traditional learning group approach and its implications. The end of the section will discuss the pedagogical and social benefits of cooperative practices supported by learning theories such as Vygotsky's. The CL studies listed in this chapter have been divided according to the language used in the CL activities, such as L1 or L2; the studies are also grouped according to the subject or discipline in which the studies were conducted.

2.1 READING

For both children and adults, the ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables us to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature, and do everyday things that are part of modern life, such as reading the newspapers, job listings, instruction manuals, maps and so on (Pang et al., 2003). Most of us have learned to read in our L1 without difficulty as children, but some of us have to learn as adults, which requires additional assistance. When it comes to L2 reading, research has shown that there is a considerable amount of transfer from the learning process used to read in L1 to the learning process used to read in L2 (Pang et al., 2003), that is the reason why reading in an L2 cannot be considered as learning to read as children do during their early stages. In the following section the intricacies of the reading process in L1 will be discussed, along with the commonalities and differences between L1 and L2, making special emphasis on the L2 reading comprehension process and the challenges that readers usually encounter.

2.1.1 Reading process

Since the 1960s, the reading process has been viewed as a psycholinguistic or cognitive-constructive process that promotes an interaction between the reader and the text, making the reader an active participant in the creation of meaning (Coady,

1979; Goodman, 1968; Kramsch, 1985). In line with the previous definition, Barnett (1989, p. 2) notes that reading is now seen as "communication, as a mental process, as the readers' active participation in the creation of meaning, as a manipulation of strategies, as a receptive rather than as passive skill". As mentioned in chapter one, reading is about understanding written texts; it is a complex activity that involves both, perception and thought and consists of two related processes; word recognition and comprehension (Pang et al., 2003). In line with Pang et al. (2003), Henry (1990) brings to the discussion the "active role of the reader", by stating that reading is a complex process affected by many factors, particularly prior knowledge; all reading activity presupposes that the reader has some degree of background knowledge on a subject. The author however does not have the concession of controlling the quantity and type of background knowledge that the reader brings to the text.

2.1.2 Different reading processes

The process of reading, according to the specific purpose, has been divided in two specific types. Phillips (1984, p. 284), while reviewing the works of Munby (1979) described these two types as: extensive reading and intensive reading. On the one hand, extensive reading is "often for pleasure, requires speed, skill in getting the gist, and reading for specific information". According to Omaggio (1993, p. XX) students do not necessarily need to understand all the details of the text, but they need to be skilled in "getting the gist" of the reading. Defenders of extensive reading claim

that this type of reading can promote incidental vocabulary learning and motivation (Krashen, 1989), which is of crucial importance in FL classes. On the other hand, intensive reading "demands closer attention to detail and to text, and it continues to be the focus of most second language instruction" (Phillips, 1984, p. 288). One of the supporters of intensive readings, Munby (1979), points out that the reader needs to understand linguistic as well as semantic details and pay close attention to the text. Intensive reading might also be subdivided into four types depending on the objective of the reader: (1) understanding the plain sense, or factual, exact surface meanings in the text, (2) understanding implications, which involves making inferences and being sensitive to the emotional tone and figurative language, (3) understanding the relationship and linkages between paragraphs, and (4) being able to relate the reading material to one's own knowledge and experience (Phillips, 1984).

Due to the need to attend meaning, and because testing –which defeats the purpose of extensive reading— is an imperative requirement of this project, and the class curriculum, intensive reading will be required in the present study. However, this does not mean that students are not encouraged to use extensive reading to complete their reading tasks; in fact, the instructors personally recommended that the students complete a first extensive reading in which they get the gist of the story, and subsequently intensive reading to obtain more details and understand the implications of the text. In the next section the focus will be on the act of comprehending the text and how the reader makes sense of all the written data and the information that s/he brings to the text.

2.1.3 Reading comprehension models

The most important skill in reading is comprehension; it creates meaning out of text. Before the 1960s reading comprehension was viewed as an "approximation" to the text being read (User, 1993). The reader was considered passive and the text was considered active; the meaning was believed to be in the written words of the text. However, as explained in section 2.1.2.1, research has proved that reading comprehension is an interactive process between the reader and the text, and the text is perceived as a blueprint for meaning, which enables readers to incorporate their own experiences. In an attempt to support the process of reading as an interactive one, Pearson and Tierney (1984) argue that no text is ever fully explicit, and reading is not passive; it is an active, constructive process in which the reader utilizes all available resources to construct meaning, being the reader's background knowledge, the most important resource,

In favor of reading as an interactive process, Clements-Davis & Ley (1991, p. 45) highlights that "the concept of comprehension refers to the fact of building bridges between the known and the unknown. The old idea that words on a page lead to comprehension has been eschewed by many studies that have shown that comprehension comes from the interaction between the reader (what the reader brings to the text) and the written text. To support this idea, Bauso (1988) states that the words on a page do not lead to comprehension, but instead the readers hook these words to a network of prior knowledge that is stored in their heads.

Experts in L2 acquistion, such as Barnett (1989) and Tse (1996), have claimed that there is no doubt that reading comprehension leads to some degree of language learning, not only in L1, but also in L2. In the same line, Young (1999) takes the discussion a step further and suggests that the text-reader interaction and creation of meaning are basic for FL acquisition, clarifying that if the purpose of the reading activity is language-oriented, simplifying the authentic text may increase the number of individual words that the readers understand, but it does not guarantee that the readers will make the appropriate conceptual connections between the words. If we want the readers to understand the general idea or the important information, Young (1999) suggested that there is no need to simplify the texts, in fact, simplifying the text could prove to be counterproductive for this purpose.

Besides the significance of reading for the acquistion of a FL, it is important to highlight the positive impact of the listening and speaking abilities as fundamental aspects to develop a solid FL proficiency. On the one hand, with a perspective less focused on the reading skill, Mohan (1986, cited in Oxford, 2001) affirms that in segregated-skill approaches, the mastery of discrete language skills such as reading and speaking is considered the key to successful learning. On the other hand, Oxford (2001), within a more integrative parameter, places emphasis on the inter and intra connections of the four skills. Oxford (2001) supported, the idea that any foreign language teacher should integrate the four language skills so learners would be able to use the foreign language effectively for communication.

16

Back to the reading skill, Pang et al. (2003) and most researchers in the reading field have asserted that reading comprehension is the process of making sense of the words, connecting, and relating to sentences in a text. The process of reading comprehension has spurred several reading models and patterns that attempt to explain the complicated procedures involved in the reading comprehension process. The following section includes a discussion of several reading comprehension models and points out the contributions to FL research.

2.1.4 Common reading comprehension models

As Omaggio (1993) highlights, Barnett presents a very comprehensive and helpful review of many reading comprehension models in both L1 and L2 reading. Barnett (1989) categorizes the reading models into three basic types; bottom-up[2]; top-down; and interactive models. The bottom- up reading comprehension models are more "text driven". The reader tries to decode letter-by-letter, words by word, and phrase by phrase to construct comprehension in a linear manner from the data in the text. Top-down models are considered more "reader driven", which means that the background knowledge or schemata that the reader brings to the text drives the comprehension.   The last group, the interactive, refers to the interaction between the reader and the text: high level decoding and sampling from the textual features

---

[2] Bottom-up reading models emphasize the written or printed text, states that reading is driven by a process that results in meaning (or, in other words, reading is driven by text), and it proceeds from part to whole. It is also commonly known as the part to whole model.

happen concurrently and in a cyclical fashion. Pearson and Tierney (1984) added a variation to the interactive model: "composing model" or "reading in L1", which considers comprehension as the act of creating a new version of the text for an inner reader (Barnett, 1989, p. 31). Most of the L1 reading models described in Barnett's review place the reader, rather than the text, in a more central position as opposed to reading comprehension models utilized in the past.

Another reading comprehension model is the one described by Swaffar, Arens and Byrnes (1991). Their model is designed to deal with practical issues in L2 reading, although it is derived from theoretical perspectives in the L1 reading (Omaggio, 1993). Their model shares a hypothesis common to all interactive models: reading involves an array of processes – bottom-up, as well as top-down. (Swaffar et al., 1991, p.73). Unlike theoretical models that are frequently labeled text-based or reader-based, this is more a pragmatic sequence that identifies both features, from the text and from the reader processing. Theoretical models predict reading processes, while procedural models guide the reader's behavior. As Swaffar et al. (1991) maintain, the procedural model assumes two sets of top-down and bottom-up processes; one set that is attributable to the reader and another set that is attributable to the text. The practical distinction between these two sets is that the reader brings exploratory meanings to understand any given subject, while the text focuses and informs those explorations. After resolving these divergences between reader and text, comprehension, which has been defined as the synthesis of the text and reader views, occurs.

An important feature of the Swaffar et al. (1991) model is the fact that textual language is defined as only one of many features that convey textual meaning. The text depends on the reader, as well as the reader on the text. They are both independent factors but they need each other for successful reading comprehension. "The best analogy to this feature is that of a driver and a car. The reader drives and the text transports. During the journey text factors will dominate, indeed dictate, successful reader behavior. However, at the end of the trip the reader dominates again. The initiator and concluder of the interaction between text and reader is the reader" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 74). Swaffar et al.'s model shares the following essential foundations of its theoretical counterparts (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 75):

1.   As long as it is reasonably well written from a rhetorical standpoint, the text is the basis for ascertaining integrated information, not isolated pieces of information.

2.   The language of the text communicates specific messages in a particular context (parole), not abstract language potentials (langue).

3.   The reader must assemble and consider all factors of the text – its cultural context, its author's intent, its arrangement, and its degree of linguistic complexity (i.e. how the lexicon, semantics, and syntax of the text suits its topic and message).

4.   Reading leads to an active reconstruction of both sense and language of the text. Anything short of reconstruction will impair aspects of the text's meaning.

 After explaining the premises of the theoretical L1 reading models and describing detail with the most common reading models, we will place Omaggio's concern. Omaggio (1993) asserts that L1 reading models cannot be applied directly to L2

reading, especially for adult learners who are already literate in their L1, although most of the insights from L1 reading have been used to gain an understanding of L2 readers processing the text. For the moment there is not a specific model or type of model sufficient to explain what happens when an L2 reader tries to comprehend written texts (Omaggio, 1993). It is clear from all the models that the reader is an active participant in the comprehension process, and is the one who perceives and selects features of text and features of the world at large for processing and for synthesizing. In the same line as Omaggio, Bernhardt (1991) argues for an approach that reconciles the strengths of all the different types of models and acknowledges their different insights.

 To conclude this section I will point out the support and explanation that L1 research has provided to L2 research in reference to reading models, even though L1 research cannot explain every detail in the L2 reading process. The experts have to decide to what extent the L1 models can be implemented in L2 teaching classes.

 The next section is a more in depth discussion of the reader's role during the reading process and the type of knowledge that s/he brings to the text while initiating the comprehension process. The activation of the prior knowledge is the foundation of the "active reader" concept in more recent reading models.

2.1.5 Prior/Background knowledge and schema theory

 More than 200 years ago, Kant (1781) claimed that new information, new concepts, and new ideas have meaning for an individual only when they can be

related to something the individual already knows (Carrell, 1984a). In the 18th century, Kant commented on the innate structures that organize our world. Recently Anderson et al. (as cited in Carrell, 1984a) have adapted Kant's notion of innate structures, adding that every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well. Current research in schema theory has proved the accuracy of both, Kant's and Anderson el al.'s remarks.

On the other hand, according to Casanave (1988), and Parviz (2003) the concept of schema is frequently attributed to Barlett (1932) who defined it as the way that people's understanding and remembrance of events is shaped by their expectations or prior knowledge, and how these expectations are presented mentally in some sort of schematic fashion. The vagueness of his definition and the predominance of the behaviorism isolated most of Barlett's ideas. It was not until the 1970's, when a return to more naturalistic approaches occurred and Barlett's ideas were heard, explained and respected. Many theorists, such as Bernhardt (1991) developed interactive theories, which present the reader and the knowledge that the reader brings to the text as two vital elements of the reading process. The interactive theories, which draw heavily on schema theory, as Parviz (2003) states, dominate reading research and strongly influence teaching practice.

The next two sections will explain in detail the concept of background knowledge and schema theory and the relationship between them.

2.1.6 Background knowledge

The use of the correct term to describe prior or background knowledge has presented some challenges to the experts. With the purpose of resolving the challenge, Strangman, Hall and Meyer (2003) point out that finding consistency in the use of these terms is a recognized problem; and the best way to understand this challenge will be to reflect on the subtle and dramatic differences that exist between different people's definitions of the same term.

Nowadays, the terms background knowledge and prior knowledge are normally used interchangeably. On the one hand, Stevens (1980) defines background knowledge as what one already knows about a specific subject. On the other hand, Biemans and Simons' (1996) definition of background knowledge is slightly more complex than just the knowledge that one already has, it refers to all knowledge that a student posses when entering a learning environment that is relevant for acquiring new knowledge. Schallert (1982), and Dochy and Alexander (1995) provide a more elaborate definition, describing prior knowledge as the whole of a person's understanding, including explicit and tacit knowledge, as well as, metacognitive and conceptual knowledge. As it can be observed, while the definitions above are worded differently, they describe the same concept. Therefore, prior and/or background knowledge are umbrella terms for more specific knowledge dimensions, such as conceptual and metacognitive knowledge. Subject knowledge, strategy knowledge, personal knowledge, and self-knowledge are all specialized forms of prior/background knowledge. In this study, the concept of background knowledge

22

will refer to the umbrella concept of prior/background knowledge. These two terms will then be used interchangeably.

The importance of prior knowledge as a factor mediating reading comprehension has been subject to extensive research (Carrell, 1983; Spencer & Sadoski, 1988; Zhicheng, 1993). An example of the importance of cultural and background knowledge in FL settings is evidenced by Pakenham (1986, as cited in Spencer & Sadoski, 1988). His study, carried out in an ESL context, confirmed that students' comprehension could therefore be impaired by problems of insufficient background rather than, language differences. Due to the fact many ESL students come from different cultures, the culture embodied in the texts presented in American schools, becomes a central issue in language and reading instruction. Spencer and Sadoski (1988) found out that the inclusion of pre-reading activities that activate ESL students' background knowledge appears to lead to higher scores on literal comprehension tests, independent of cultural knowledge; therefore, in the absence of pre-reading activities, cultural effects can be more prominent.

Successful activation of relevant previous knowledge and the use of that knowledge to understand the text is an indication that distinguishes proficient readers from poor readers (Smith, 1967). Another example of the effectiveness of the use of background knowledge is the study carried out by Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz (1977), whose results showed that the background knowledge and readers' interest greatly influenced their interpretation of ambiguous passages. The first text could be interpreted either as a wrestler hoping to break an adversary's hold or as a

prisoner trying to escape from prison. A second passage could be read either as an evening among friends playing cards or playing musical instruments. The participants in the first group were a group of physical education students and in the second group music students. Results showed that the interpretation of the texts was highly related to the background knowledge and expertise of the students. The researchers deduced that high-level prior knowledge determines how discourse is understood.

To conclude this section, I would like to emphasize the fact that "…having additional prior knowledge generally aids reading comprehension, including knowledge of the world, cultural knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and linguistic knowledge" (Pang et al., 2003, p. 14). Reader's interest also plays an important role in the process of building prior knowledge.

2.1.7 Schema Theory

Schema theory also encompasses various definitions, as with the concept of background knowledge. Parviz (2003) defines schema as a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in the memory, similar to a type of framework, plan, or script. Schemata are created through experience with people, objects, and events in the world. Schemata can be seen as chunks of organized background knowledge, which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse.

Almost a century ago, Barlett (1932) provided an explanation of the schema theory phenomenon, claiming that understanding occurs when new information is interpreted according to already learned patterns, also called scripts or schemata. If the input received does not match the reader's schemata, comprehension and recall suffer. Barlett's (1932) studies on memory, proved that people adjust their memories of a culturally unfamiliar story to fit a "schema" that is more consistent with their own culturally familiar knowledge of the typical content and structure of stories. This theory greatly impacted the disciplines of cognitive psychology and cognitive science in 1970s and 1980s.

Another definition of the concept schema has been given by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), who describe schema theory as a theoretical model that explains and formalizes the role played by background knowledge in language comprehension. In the same line, Aron (1986, p. 136) explains, "…schema theory research has provided evidence of the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension. Specifically, content schemata are previously established patterns of background knowledge existing in the mind of the reader and are used to create meaning from the text."

As Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978), and Pearson and Tierney (1984) clarify, the reading process is basically a process of linking the new information to the old acquired from the reader's previous world knowledge. Placstina (1997, as cited in Parviz, 2003) explains that the main features of schemata are flexibility and creativity. Schemata are flexible in the way that they undergo a cyclic process within

changes that are brought about actively and economically; for example, information is stored in memory and provided when needed with the least amount of effort. Schemata are creative due to the fact that they can be used to represent all kinds of experiences and knowledge, as they are specific to what is perceived.

In an attempt to apply the schema theory to the practice of language teaching, Carrell and Floyd (1987) state that the FL teacher must provide the student with appropriate schemata and must also teach the student how to build bridges between existing and new knowledge. The link between the reader's existing knowledge and new knowledge is necessary for text comprehension; however, it is common that FL learners lack the cultural preparation necessary to manage authentic texts (Friedman, 1992). Students seem to have trouble understanding certain issues or concepts in the text, even though there is sufficient word recognition.

One of the first studies highlighting the importance of schemata during the reading process is the study carried out by Steffensen, Joag-Dev, and Anderson (1979). This study showed the pervasive influence of schemata on comprehension and memory. It consisted on having students from the United States and students from India read a passage about an American and an Indian wedding in English, and later they recall both texts. Results indicated that the subjects read the native passage more rapidly, recalled a larger amount of information from the native passage and recalled more culturally appropriate elaborations from the native passage. It also showed that readers produced more culturally based distortions when recalling the foreign passage. In another study, Ulijn and Strother (1987) presented ESL learners

with an original and simplified version of a passage. They simplified passive structures, nominalizations, and uncommon phrases. No difference in comprehension was found between the simplified and the original version of the passage. The lack of background knowledge equally affected students' comprehension reading of the simplified and original source. These findings support what Lee and Van Patten (2003, p. 233) have argued, "language does have a role in reading comprehension, but instructors should not view the language of the text as the only criterion for judging a text's appropriateness." Whereas many researchers have found that simplified versions do not affect comprehension, others, like Lee (1986b) have found evidence that the language of the text does make a difference in the readers' comprehension, being modified versions of authentic texts easier to understand by the foreign language students than the original ones written for native speakers.

One way to overcome these language challenges is the implementation of adequate pre-reading activities that draw on the reader's background knowledge to enhance comprehension, foster predictions, and ascertain the level of knowledge needed by students to close the gap between their prior knowledge and the demands of the text.

As a summary of this section, I will conclude that research in reading has indicated the following conclusions: a) lack of schemata or the failure to activate an appropriate schema can significantly impair comprehension; b) appropriate content schema application can increase comprehension, and c) comprehension is facilitated

by explicitly introducing schemata through pre-reading activities (Oxford & Scarcella, 1994).

The review of background knowledge and the review of schema theory are indispensable to justify the purpose of this study. As background knowledge theories state, background knowledge is an invaluable tool to improve reading comprehension. The present study will focus on the background knowledge activation, as well as the construction of schemata. These schemata, created and/or supported by pre-reading activities will sustain and organize the participants' background knowledge, which will lead the participants to expect or predict segments of the content of the text.

With this contemplated, the main objective of the pre-reading activities used in this study is to activate participants' background knowledge. The students' interaction, and discussion will trigger the background knowledge. Hopefully, as proved in the study by in Pang et al. (2003), the activation of background knowledge and the formation of appropriate schemata will be a relevant factor in reading comprehension.

Next, with the objective of better understanding L2 readers' complexities and challenges, the following section will describe the particularities and subtleties entitled in the L2 reading process as well as the importance of it in the actual classrooms.

2.2 READING IN L2

According to Peregoy and Boyle (1997) the reading process is essentially the same whether we are reading in our first language or a second one. In other words, both first and second language readers look at the page and the print, and use the same knowledge of sound/symbol relationships, word order, grammar, and meaning to predict and confirm meaning. In the process, readers use their background knowledge and reading strategies to arrive at an interpretation. If they are not satisfied with their interpretation they go back and reread the passage.

In the actual classroom, the process of reading is not as simple as going back and rereading. On the one hand, Barnett (1989) has pointed out the position of reading in the educational context of United States; for him reading has always held an important place in FL and ESL classrooms. On the other, Mitchell and Swarbrick (1994) have stated that with the emergence of the communicative approach many considered that the most prevalent skills in the classrooms were oral and listening, leaving writing and reading in second place. Nonetheless, educational trends have a way of coming into and going out of fashion and the importance of reading is no exception. Contrary to Mitchell and Swarbrick's (1994) assertion, Omaggio (1993) states that reading as a source of "comprehensible input" just started to be valued in the communicative classroom, especially when authentic materials can serve the dual purpose of developing reading skills and fostering cultural insights. The discussion about the place of reading in the communicative era is still alive. Should we use more reading and more speaking in our classes? Should we use less? Should we practice

both skills equally? It would be almost impossible to come to a fair conclusion, since each educational setting applies what works best for their students. What can be concluded however is that, as Omaggio (1993) claimed, reading authentic materials is an excellent source of comprehensible input and cultural knowledge. Educators should therefore consider the benefits of including authentic material in their classrooms, as well as relevant reading strategies and tools.

Even though reading does not have pride of place in our classrooms, most experts, such as Tse have argued "reading is the most effective and efficient way to learn a second language" (Tse, 1996, p. 27). In the same line, Schultz (1983), more than twenty-five years ago, also pointed out the invaluable contribution of texts in our curricula, due to the positive language learning effects that they bring to the college cycle. She claimed that reading is probably the most useful skill to be taught in the classrooms, since most upper-level courses were based on the study of literary texts. Nowadays, the curriculum for upper–level courses is still based on literary and cultural texts, which are highly demanding in terms of reading skills.

In L1, as well as in L2 contexts (not limited to educational contexts), reading not only expands a student's vocabulary, spelling, and grammar knowledge (Krashen, 1982), but also serves as a model for writing and speaking, increases students' cultural knowledge, and promotes critical thinking and different interpretations of the text (Davis, 1993). Barnett (1984, as cited in Swaffar et al. 1991, p. 18) includes a longer list of reasons for including reading skills development as a vital part of the L2 curriculum: (1) reading is still essential for the reading of literature, which remains an

important goal in many programs, (2) it is a skill that can be maintained after students complete formal language study, (3) it fosters the development and refinement of literacy skills.

Nevertheless, the importance of reading in the curricula does not lessen the difficulty of this skill. Reading can be a difficult task for some FL students, even in one's native language, therefore it is recommended that some instruction in reading strategies be provided before assigning any reading task. Reading strategies can help students comprehend the texts assigned for the FL class in a more efficient and effective manner.

Among the most common reading strategies, also called types or ways of reading, are those selected and encouraged by Hosenfeld et al. (1993), such as reading for meaning, skipping unknown words, using context to guess meaning, breaking down words, making inferences, using world knowledge, using illustrations, silent reading, and teacher's reading aloud. The following subsections will examine the characteristics of different types of readers according to their L2 proficiency level and will connect the readers to the reading strategies that suit them the most.

2.2.1 Reading for novice L2 learners

On the one hand Omaggio (1993) emphasizes that reading for beginners becomes a difficult bottom- up task since they lack knowledge of the code, as well as, knowledge of the cultural context of the reading material. She reminds us that

Bernhardt (1986, p. 97) confirms "that L2 readers become more efficient at gathering information from the text as their proficiency develops". This is consistent with Lund's (1991) research on reading in German in which it was observed that students with intermediate and advanced proficiency, following the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines, understood more details from the written and spoken language than beginners. Lund (1991) also noticed that understanding of detail also improved with a second listening of the text.

However, Bernhardt (1991) suggests that comprehension of discourse seems to be influenced more by conceptual factors than linguistic ones. In her study (Bernhardt, 1991) with beginning German students reading literary passages, she found that the reader's ability to visualize the passage content and relate to it personally was more important in predicting comprehension than his/her linguistic competence and level of conversational abilities. The level of proficiency, as well as the ability to relate the passage to the readers' background knowledge, and being able to activate it while visualizing the text, has demonstrated to be crucial for beginner L2 learners' reading comprehension. It could be concluded that novice L2 learners are in need of both linguistic and conceptual background knowledge to successfully understand the text.

2.2.1.2 Reading for advanced L2 learners

According to Pang et al. (2003), advanced L2 readers are usually fluent. They are able to recognize the words and construct meaning from them. Readers become

fluent when they do both things at the same time. Fluent readers need to have a good knowledge of vocabulary; it is crucial that they know the meaning of individual words and the processes needed to assemble these words and make sense of them in the context provided. Vocabulary is very important in learning to read and in future reading development. Words that are recognized in print have to match the readers' oral vocabulary in order to be understood. This is of special importance for children who are developing oral proficiency, as well as for L2 learners.

Additionally, in order to understand the authentic text, the reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities including punctuation and cognitive ability (e.g. attention, memory, inference, critical analytical skills, and visualization ability). Snow (2002) also adds, the reader must also have motivation (a purpose for reading) and different types of knowledge (e.g. vocabulary, topic, linguistic, as mentioned above, discursive and strategic).

For Snow (2002), fluency can be conceptualized as both antecedent to and a consequence of comprehension. Some aspects of fluent, expressive reading may depend on a thorough understanding of a text. However, some components of fluency and efficient recognition of words and aspects of syntactic parsing, appear to be prerequisites for comprehension.

In addition to the motivation and different types of knowledge, the reader will also need thinking and reasoning abilities during the reading process. The fluent reader actively engages with the text to construct meaning. This active engagement includes making use of prior knowledge and involves drawing inferences from the

words and expressions that the writer uses to communicate his/her ideas. Good advanced readers are aware of how well they understand a text while reading and they also go a step further to overcome difficulties in comprehension. Readers can be instructed in strategies to improve text comprehension (Pang et al., 2003). Since the reader is seen as an active participant in the reading process, Nolan (1991) states that comprehension difficulties are often related to readers' failure to participate actively in the reading process.

This reality calls for the integration of reading strategies into reading instruction to help students become strategic readers. One of the basic strategies that helps overcome difficulties of comprehension is focalized on the pre-reading stage. This stage is in charge of activating students' prior knowledge and creating new background knowledge in order to construct meaning from the text.

With the purpose of helping readers become more fluent, Omaggio points out that "the importance of considering our students as individuals who approach a text with various types of background knowledge, interests, motivation, skills, and strategies, becomes clear when one considers the interactive nature of reading" (Omaggio, 1993, p. 197). She recommends that teachers keep such individual factors in mind in order to help students to be more successful and efficient readers.

To conclude this section, it could be stated that, not only are the individual factors important for the success of the reading task, but also reading purpose, reading skills, strategies, and of course, students' schemata or background knowledge. It is also vital to highlight the support of authentic reading material for the purpose of

developing L2 reading skills. As Omaggio (1993) pointed out, reading authentic materials is an excellent source of comprehensible input and an excellent source of cultural information. In this same vein, Krashen's (1982) theories assert that comprehensible written input will lead the students to achieve language acquisition, and it will also assist the readers in the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Moreover, culture is becoming one of the central factors of the FL curricula, reaching the same importance as grammar, vocabulary, or any other component of the language curricula. Understanding the significance and implications of reading in the FL classroom to increase language and culture learning, as well as understanding the various steps involved in the reading process, along with the impact of background knowledge, is vital to understand the goals of the present study. The next segment of this chapter will examine the different reading assessment tools commonly used and the impact of the obtained scores.

2.3 READING COMPREHENSION MEASUREMENT TOOLS

The following sections will illustrate in detail the measurement tools used to evaluate participants' reading comprehension: written recall protocol and multiple-choice test. Each tool's advantages and disadvantages will be presented, as well as the final conclusions of significant comparative studies that evaluate the effectiveness, practicability and the results' validity of such measurement tools.

2.3.1 Multiple-choice tests

Multiple-choice (MC) tests have been extensively used as a comprehension measurement tool in different disciplines due to their practicality and objectivity. "Nowadays, MCs are being increasingly used in higher education as a means of supplementing or even replacing current assessment practices" (Nicol, 2007, p. 53). MC tests play a vital role in measuring many important aspects of most constructs, such as reading, writing, and critical thinking. The MC format is generally acknowledged as the most useful and efficient way to measure knowledge (Haladyna, 2004, p.6). If MC item writers are well trained and items are quality assured, MCs become a more effective testing format. MCs lend themselves to the development of objective assessment items. However, without author training, questions can be subjective. To increase the effectiveness of the MC questions, tests-takers should be instructed on the MC format, as they were in the present study. It is clear that format familiarity reflects students' better performance; if test-takers are aware of how to use response sheets tick boxes their responses can be relied upon with clarity.

In many assessments, reliability has been shown to improve with larger numbers of items on a test, and with good sampling and care over case specificity overall test reliability can be further enhanced.

Regarding the time concern, MC tests definitely require less time to administer for a given amount of material than would require written response tests.

The debate about what language is more suitable to measure reading comprehension focuses more on tests that require production, such as cloze-tests,

short written answer tests, and recall protocols than on those that only require recognition. MC tests only require recognition of the question and the items, so generally L2 is considered. Though, there are some recommendations that need to be considered before creating, MCs, cloze tests, and/or short answer questionnaires.

Omaggio (1993, p. 451) offers some recommendations to take into consideration before writing the MC tests. First, test writers need considerable practice in writing integrative MC comprehension items, and any item they write should be tested first on colleagues and native speakers so that potential areas of difficulty are eliminated. Another good idea is to have somebody reading the questions without looking at the passage offering feedback to the test writer. As inexperienced test writers, we might produce items with unintentional cues that allow the test taker to select the correct answer without understanding the passage itself.

Chapter three will explain the MC tests' implementation process during the study and its conclusions. The next section will present the MC tests most common challenges, as well as suggestions to reduce them during the MC questions creation process.

2.3.2 Multiple-choice tests' challenges

The MC questions format has been frequently criticized due to the fact that the correct answer might be reached in more than one way, it can often be identified without actually understanding the text, or any judgmental activity in selecting the correct response (Klein-Braley, 1985, as cited in Aweiss, 1993, p.10). A second MC

test challenge is that the language used to formulate the questions might unconsciously lead the subject to choose the expected response. A third challenge is based on the notion that it is common to create MC tests whose items are a mere repetition of a section of the passage. If this is the case, the test can become a word recognition and matching exercise instead of a reading comprehension activity. However, as Bernhardt (1983) states, this is due to the fact that students' limited vocabulary forces the teachers to use limited words and structures to express the content of the passage in the multiple-choice items. There is also the fact that MC cannot fully test the students' comprehension of the text. As Fiene and McMahon (2007, p. 406) argue that "multiple choice questions do not enable the teacher to get at the heart of the comprehension. To truly understand students' constructed meanings, teachers should look to a variety of sources, such as ongoing classroom based assignments, to distinguish variations in comprehension [...] comprehension is not an absolute to be measured once with one single text".

In addition, some researchers argue that MC tests promote memorization and factual recall and do not test high-level cognitive processes, while others maintain that this promotion of memorization depends on how the tests are constructed, implying that they can be developed in a way that forces students to use their higher cognitive levels (Nicole, 2007). It is also a common belief that the feedback provided through MC tests is usually quite limited as it is predetermined during test construction; hence there is little scope for personalization of feedback based on different students' needs (Nicole, 2007, p. 54) As a result, there are a series

of drawbacks to be considered when using a MC test. All of the above drawbacks have been carefully contemplated during the MC test creation in the present study.

2.3.3 Recall protocol

The second tool used to collect the data is recall protocol. Recall protocol has been defined as a retrospective assessment tool in which subjects are asked to read a short passage and write a paper on everything they remember from the text in their native language in less than twenty-four hours (Aweiss, 1993, p. 12). The recall protocol method has widely been claimed to be more appropriate than conventional comprehension questions, multiple-choice, and/or true/false type. Bernhardt (1983, p. 31) stated that the recall protocol procedure is an excellent method for testing reading comprehension. Berkemeyer (1989, p. 131) supported Bernhardt's statement and she has favored the immediate recall protocol "as a valid means of assessing reading comprehension for foreign language students".

This method has received criticism but it has also been distinguished for its beneficial contributions to the foreign language teaching area of study. As Nunan (1992, p. 124) asserts "retrospective data has been criticized by a number of researchers on the grounds that the gap between the event and the reporting aspect will lead to unreliable data". However, as Ericson and Simon (1984, as cited in Nunan, p. 124) argue, and Bernhardt has also recommended in many of her studies, ensuring that data is collected as soon as possible can enhance data reliability. In order to avoid memorization it is important to remind the subjects that that they are

39

only required to read the specific passage and to understand as many ideas as they can.

Aweiss (1993, p. 12) argues that more than twenty years ago there was a consensus in L1 and L2 reading research that text recall was the best research method to obtain a performance from which we can infer what the process of comprehension of the subject are. Nowadays, the preference toward recall protocol is still visible, although there is also some resistance from instructors who believe that the process of grading recall protocols is very time consuming task. Johnston (1983) also favors recall protocol by stating that free recall protocol not only provides more valid information than any other type of reading comprehension measure, but it is also the most straightforward assessment of text-reader interaction, since our concept of reading is defined as a process of interaction between the text and the reader. Bernhardt (1983) pinpointed the recall protocol's unique capacity to reveal something about the organization of the stored information, about some of the retrieval strategies used by readers, and the method of reconstruction that the reader employs to encode information in a text. The recall protocol is also in line with the latest reading theories that focus on the interactive process supported by Bernhardt (1991) between the text and the reader. This interactive model, known as Bernhardt's constructivist reading model, focuses on the connected interactions between various textual and extra-textual features. Bernhardt (1991) also maintains that immediate recall protocol avoids many of the pitfalls commonly found in other assessment measures. Influencing the reader's understanding of the text is a feature of the MC test, as well

as guessing the right response using the information in the question and the MC items.

As stated above, the point of this method is to require the reader to integrate the components of the reading passage well enough to be able to recall it in a logical and coherent manner. More in line with the dynamic assessment, the recall protocol provides considerable descriptive data about the way the subject has processed and stored the text in memory, information that is rarely exposed through other types of reading measurement methods (Aweiss, 1993, p. 13). Recall protocol's goal is not to test for grammar, but it shows when a lack of grammar is interfering with communication; it does not influence the student's understanding of the text and it stresses the importance of understanding the material. It also excludes the guessing option, so if students did not really understand they will not be able to answer.

In short, as Berkemeyer asserts "…the immediate recall protocol demands that the reader comprehend the text well enough to be able to recall it in a coherent and logical manner […] and it also allows misunderstandings or gaps in comprehension to surface; a feature that other methods do not offer" (Berkemeyer, 1989, p. 131). This last feature allows researchers to examine the recall protocols not only in a quantitative manner, (using a objective scale to measure the recalled idea units), but also in a more qualitative manner, focusing on the information that the reader was not able to recall and paying attention to the misunderstandings at different levels, syntactic, vocabulary and metaphorical. This type of analysis, despite its limitations, is a useful summative tool for assessing the reading comprehension processes and

examining more deeply the students' reading processes. An aspect that raises discussion among the test developers relates to the language used by the students in their recall protocols. The following section will analyze this issue and relate to the study.

2.3.4 Recall protocol in L1 or L2

An issue related to reading comprehension testing is the language used to express the ideas understood by the reader. Should students use L1 or L2 when being tested on reading comprehension? As Omaggio (1993, p. 142) affirms, classroom teachers and test developers have used conventional formats such as true/false, multiple choice, and completion questions for years to assess listening and reading comprehension. If these formats are to be used, answers should be elicited in students' native language in order to avoid mixing skills. The recommendation for the language used in this type of tests is students' native language, with the exception of ESL classrooms, where English is the most appropriate due to the wide range of different native languages. So then, what is the best language that students can use to write their recall protocols?

Swaffar, et al. (1991, p. 164) point out that writing the protocol in the student's native language helps reveal "how the reader's logical manipulations interact with their recognition of textual vocabulary and syntax". Since the point of this instrument is to allow the subjects to express meaning in their own words, the L1 will be more appropriate than L2, due to the fact that low proficiency in L2 might act

as an interference in communicating meaning. It is also significant to say that researchers, such as Charles (1983), suggest that when students use their L1 to talk or write about what they have read in the FL, more understanding of the text is displayed than when those activities are conducted in the L2. Moreover, using the native language to write the recall avoids the confounding effect of L2 writing proficiency. If the subjects are ESL students, L2 is the most appropriate language, since we cannot expect the researcher to understand all the different languages of his/her subjects.

With reference to time, the recall should be produced immediately after the reading of the passage; "the greater the temporal distance between the event and report, the greater the chance for embellishment or decay of the information" (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, p. 3).

To conclude, when circumstances allow it, recall protocol in the L1 is the most effective method to examine the information processed by the reader especially, in terms of quantity, quality and organization. The present study concentrated on the quantity and quality of the ideas recalled, not considering the organization of the recalled idea units.

2.3.5 Recall protocol challenges: The scoring process

Analyzing a written recall protocol of a text is indeed a technique, which can give the researcher a fair approximation of the way the text material has been processed by the reader (Aweiss, 1993). Researchers such as Hayes (1989, as cited in

Aweiss, 1993, p. 12) have described the protocol analysis, as "the cognitive's psychology most powerful tool for tracking psychological processes". This tracking capability of the method allows the researcher to detect whether any lack of grammar is interfering with the communication between the reader and the text, while not focusing on linguistic elements in the text (Bernhardt, 1991). This method reflects the idea that description, explanation, understanding, and elaboration are more appropriate indicators of reading comprehension than memorization (Bernhardt, 1991). Several researchers have commented on the inappropriateness of the recall protocol due to the deficiently objective method of analysis, for being a very time-consuming grading process, for the little attention that researchers pay to the effect that memory might produce in the recalling process, and also for its focus on holistic comprehension, excluding the importance of minor details. In the same line, Swaffar et al. (1991, p. 165) pointed out the problematic nature of standardized grading due to its subjectivity and the absence of a ranking system that responds to reader schemata. This has been the biggest impediment to the use of recall protocol procedure in FL classes. Bernhardt (1983) proposed a scoring instrument that lacked construct validity because it assigned equal weight to each of the separate idea units isolated from the passage. Contrary to what Bernhardt (1983, p. 32) states, recall protocol does not offer a relatively easy evaluation procedure, which makes the issue of developing an appropriate grading criterion, a difficult task.

Meyer and Rice (1984) discussed the fact that all idea units are not created equally and prose passages can be hierarchically organized in terms of their relative

44

importance in relation to the meaning of a text as a whole. "Although the recall protocol is essentially an essay, it can be scored as though it were comprised of discrete units" (Deville & Chalhoub-Deville, 1993, p. 2).

To resolve the issue concerning the analysis of the recall protocol, Meyer proposed the idea of ranking the proposition units in the text and awarding points according to the value of the proposition in the text. Level 3 refers to main generalizations; level 2 to supporting ideas and level 1 to minor details. Since, the hierarchical proposition units scale seems to be one of the most commonly used methods to measure the recall protocols, the present study will create an instrument based on Meyer's (1975) measurement instrument that will evaluate the information recalled by the readers. The objective of using this instrument is to weigh all possible propositions in a text according to their importance on a fixed scale created by different raters.

Meyer (1975) points out the drawback found in the measurement of recall protocols: the inter-rater reliability[3] of the performance. Inter-rater reliability refers to the level of consensus between two or more independent raters in their judgments of a candidate performance. According to Meyer (1975) the inter-rater reliability on the scoring process using idea units' templates, is infrequently high. In the same line, Bernhardt (1983) also states that there is general disagreement with the inter-rater

---

[3] The definitions of the different types of reliability used in this study have been provided by the Ohio State University glossary used by the department of Foreign Language Education "www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~aged885/Glossary/GLOSSARY.htm"

reliability for the scoring instrument, more specifically with the determination of the "most important parts of the text". Differing from Meyer (1975) and Bernhardt (1983), the inter-rater reliability on the idea units' templates used to score the recall protocols of the present study are appropriately high, which also occurred in the Deville and Chalhoub- Deville study (1993), when the Cronbach's alpha[4], statistical procedure to calculate the internal consistency of a test, revealed satisfactory results.

Another aspect of the reliability that is considered essential when creating the hierarchical proposition units scale, also known as idea units' templates and/or text templates, is the intra-rater reliability[5], which refers to the extent to which a particular rater is consistent in using a proficiency scale at different time points. These two reliability measures as well as the scoring criteria will be explained with more detail in chapter three.

In an attempt to diminish the benefits of the recall protocol, Page (1990, as cited in Aweiss, 1993, p. 15) argues that the recall of a text should not be considered as a safe indicator of what has been really understood by the reader. Not every proposition unit recalled has to be necessarily comprehended by the reader (p. 15). The fact that this instrument counts all the recalled ideas as comprehended ideas

[4] Cronbach's alpha is a test for a model or survey's internal consistency. It is also called a 'scale reliability coefficient.

[5] Intra-rater reliability is a type of reliability assessment in which the same assessment is completed by the same rater on two or more occasions. These different ratings are then compared, generally by means of correlation. Since the same individual is completing both assessments, the rater's subsequent ratings are contaminated by knowledge of earlier ratings. (http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/strokengine-assess/definitions)

posits some doubt about the validity of the scores. However, despite Page's criticism, the recall protocol has been widely used and continues to be used in reading research, assuming that all the propositions recalled have been fully understood by the reader. It highlights the fact that if the reader does not understand the propositions the reader cannot memorize the propositions to fully recall them later. Readers who remember a certain quantity of propositions must comprehend them before they are able to store them in their memory. It is vital to understand the information in order to store it in your memory, especially in texts longer than 400 words.

From the teacher's point of view, the most noticeable shortcoming of the recall protocols as a reading comprehension tool is the grading process, which becomes considerably time consuming. In order to make valid inferences from the recall protocol, it is important to invest time grading the written recall protocols, and this process could easily take more time than what it was expected.

Another important issue to consider when using recall protocols is that the instructor is required to assume a lack of understanding from the student when certain propositions are not recalled. Every proposition not recalled in the paper is supposed to indicate that the reader does not understand a specific segment of the text, instead of assuming that the reader might have forgotten that particular piece of information. This aspect of the recall protocol scoring implies that long-term memory plays an important role in the testing procedure.

For all the reasons stated above, I believe, as well as other researchers mentioned in this chapter, that the benefits of recall protocol make it one of the most suitable tool to measure foreign language reading comprehension.

2.3.6 Different levels of significance within the recall protocols

Besides the cumulative system to analyze the recall protocol, there is an alternative system that concentrates on a specific level of significance for the idea units. As Deville and Chalhoub-Deville point out, "…the reading passage is arranged in a hierarchical tree structure. Information positioned at the top levels of the structure represents the main ideas of the reading passage, and information located at the lowest level represents detail" (Deville & Chalhoub-Deville, 1993, p. 2). All the levels reflect the whole text, as the points awarded for all the recalled idea units reflect the cumulative score. Most of the cumulative scoring systems used to evaluate recall protocols are based on the Meyer and Rice (1984) weighted system. This template offers three levels of importance for the text propositions, basing the final scores on the sum of the discrete units correctly recalled; this sum of recalled units does not discriminate between the amount of main generalizations, which are worth 3 points, supporting generalizations, 2 points, and/or supporting detail, 1 point.

For example, if reader X recalls 5 generalizations (3 points each), 2 supporting generalizations (2 points each), and 2 supporting details (1 point each) during the first text, the final score is 21 points out of 131 points. These points become a score of 16%.

According to Deville and Chalhoub-Deville (1993) some studies have been looking beyond summated item scores to the relationship between subjects' response patterns and their total test score, pointing out that because a total score is the sum of correct responses, it is possible for different subjects to achieve different items correctly and still obtain the same total score. The total test score by itself may not offer an accurate indication of differences in subject's performances. Further analyses that examine subjects' response patterns need to be performed.

The cumulative system has been extensively used, as Deville and Chalhoub-Deville (1993) affirm, to facilitate the grading task for the researchers and educators, as well as, to offer the teachers the possibility to award one global score to the student.

With the purpose of verifying the relevance of the weighting system of recall protocols, Deville and Chalhoub-Deville (1993) investigated the utility of item analyses in order to examine which items functioned well or poorly in an L2 reading recall protocol. The units of the recall protocols were analyzed using classical item analysis; a system that awards one point to all included ideas, and dichotomous scoring analysis, a scale that awards up to three points, depending on the importance of the idea. The results indicated that both analysis systems obtained the same final scores, implying that there was no need to prepare the templates with the weighted propositions, since the results were the same.

Lund (1991) and Bernhardt (1991) however found that the number of propositions recalled differed according to the linguistic level of the proposition.

Lund (1991), who used a modified version of the Meyer weighting system, reported that more subjects comprehended the propositions that were higher up in the hierarchy. Bernhardt (1983) strongly believed that a recall protocol, much like lecture notes, reflects process rather than product. In an attempt to demonstrate an aspect of the process of recalling the information, Bernhardt investigated what types of propositions were recalled the most. Her findings illustrate that her subjects had the most difficulty with level 2 propositions and the least difficulty with level 3.

Even though the results in Deville and Chalhoub-Deville's study were analogous when using different scoring systems, it was also proved that subjects tended to recall more information from level 3, and less from level 2. These results similarly match those that Lund and Bernhardt provided. To be more precise and with the purpose of finding a conclusion that embraces the three studies' on recall protocol analysis, it can be stated that subjects recall more of the material pertinent to the main ideas of the text and less of the secondary and minor details. As the three studies suggest, further research needs to elaborate the textual or any other type of factors that influence a subject's recall.

Therefore, in comparison with other reading comprehension tests mentioned above, recall protocol has proved to offer the most authentic samples of readers' comprehension.

Along with recall protocol, MC tests will be also be used to balance the possible recall protocol deficiencies. Both tests will be analyzed separately and their results will be compared and interpreted with the objective of observing the impact of

the reading comprehension tools. Different results from different measurement tools are expected, as several studies have shown. Nonetheless, non-contradictory results are expected.

To conclude this section, MC tests, recall protocol examined by a cumulative analysis, and the alternative recall protocol analysis in which special emphasis is placed on each level of significance of the text idea units, have all demonstrated to be efficient and adequate tools to gather and evaluate students' reading comprehension data.

2.3.7 Other reading comprehension methods, advantages and disadvantages

Recall protocol and MC are not the only reading comprehension methods used by the researchers. There are other types of measurement tools that must be evaluated in this section with the objective of justifying the use of recall protocol and multiple-choice questions. The following list gives a brief explanation of additional pre-reading activities

Short answers: It allows students certain freedom of expression and involves activities such as inference making, recognition of a sequence, comparison and establishing the main idea of a text. The disadvantage of this method is that it requires the reader to write and this is some of the concern that might threaten the internal validity of the scores, that is, are we really measuring what we want to measure?

Cloze procedure: Cloze procedure is widely used as a traditional method to measure reading comprehension. However, it has been heavily criticized by many researchers for its indirect measurement of vocabulary and grammar and also for the requirement of higher skills such as "intersentential relationships" and pragmatic techniques, in order for the subject to answer correctly. Although a product-oriented test, cloze procedure is considered more text-based than either true/false or multiple-choice answers (Aweiss, 1993, p. 11).

2.3.8 Different measurement tools obtain different scores

It has been proven by many studies that the data measurement tool affects the experiment's results. Reading comprehension is not an exception and measurement tools for reading comprehension have been the object of debate for many years. One of the most salient comparative studies on this topic is Wolf's (1993), study in which the reading comprehension performance on various reading assessment tasks was compared, concluding that learners performed better on multiple-choice items than on the open-ended and cloze test items. Wolf's findings are not the only ones to affirm that the measurement tool applied will categorically affect the results. Wolf's findings coincide with Shohamy's (1984), whose subjects also scored higher on the multiple-choice questions than on the open-ended questions (Shohamy, 1984). Shohamy hypothesized that multiple-choice questions require comprehension and selection, while open-ended questions require comprehension and production, which is a harder task compared to recognizing and selecting. The learners may forget the appropriate

terminology to produce an accurate response to an open-ended or a cloze item. Thus, the language production skills that are required to complete open-ended and cloze tasks may delay test taker's ability to fully demonstrate their reading comprehension (Wolf, 1993). Another explanation for a subject's higher performance on the multiple-choice items is guessing. In Wolf's study, fewer items in the multiple-choice test were left blank than in the open ended and cloze task. Back in 1975, Pyrczak also found no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of those students who had read the text and those who had not. Pyrczak (1975) cited three justifications for the results 1) prior knowledge; 2) the 'interrelatedness" of the questions; and 3) the general construction of multiple-choice tests. It is important to solve the problems of "interrelatedness" and increase the passage dependence of all the items. However, it is difficult to control the knowledge that the reader brings to the test.

The hypothesis for the present study on the difference in the scores depending on the reading comprehension measurement tool, is in-line with what the reading comprehension measurement literature supports; MC tests results should be somewhat higher than written recall protocols results.

2.4 PRE-READING

Pre-reading is considered a type of reading strategy carried out before the readers have a first encounter with the text. Empirical evidence has shown that in most reading classrooms students have received inadequate instruction on reading skills

53

and strategies (Miller & Perkins, 1989, as cited in Zhicheng, 1993, p. 2). The next section presents the definition of pre-reading activities, different types of pre-reading, and will explain the relevance of using pre-reading activities in L2 classes.

2.4.1 Pre-reading stage

Language students usually lack the ability of native readers to easily understand the meaning of an L2 text. This deficiency pressures the instructor to think of strategies to facilitate students' comprehension. In order to understand the significance of pre-reading activities, it is important to highlight that empirical evidence has recently shown poor pre-reading performance in our reading classrooms" (User, 1993; Zhicheng, 1993). This lack of preparation leaves students facing the texts without adequate tools to approach the text, producing anxiety, frustration and even lowering readers' motivation. Several authors (Arcuri, 1990; Eskey, 1997; Lee & Riley, 1990; and Peregoy & Boyle, 2001) assert that pre-reading activities are the most suitable activities to encourage the students to use their background knowledge. In connection with this statement Alfferbach (1990) argues that readers with prior knowledge are more likely to construct the main idea of a text with less difficulty than readers with no prior knowledge.

According to User "if a reader is totally unfamiliar with a text, they will fail to understand it" (User, 1993, p. 17). This should encourage teachers to enrich student's background knowledge prior to reading in order to achieve a better understanding of the text. Teachers usually want their students to be able to be

independent readers. If students are able to read and comprehend for themselves without the post-reading intervention of teachers or more skilled classmates -if the "clicks" of learning occur as they are reading- these students might come to see themselves as proficient learners who can discover meaning and relate it to what they already know (Henry, 1990). Lee and Van Patten (2003) also point out the importance of fragmenting the reading process in three different stages. They present a framework with three essential phases: preparation (pre-reading), guided interaction (during reading) and assimilation (post-reading) and emphasize that the first stage, pre-reading, is necessary to achieve the desired comprehension.

 The pre-reading phase involves skimming, scanning, predicting, anticipating, and hypothesizing all top-down processing techniques that focus on meaning. This phase is especially important for FL learners (Phillips, 1984) in order to activate background knowledge, strengthen necessary vocabulary, and identify text genre (Schulz, 1983).

Lee and Van Patten (2003, p. 229) present a set of techniques that serve to activate knowledge relevant to a particular text:

• **Brainstorming:** synonymous of idea generation or putting ideas "out on the table" without criticizing or commenting on them in any way. It takes place before readers are given a text. Students are asked what they know about the topic of the text.

- **Previewing title, headings and illustrations:** Not all the texts carry a title and subtitle relevant to the content, but when they do, it can be very helpful for students. Informative pictures and photographs describe some of the text content.

- **World Knowledge**: Topic knowledge is one type of schema; other schemata that come into play can be classified as world knowledge. The source of the text directly affects how readers should interpret the content; it determines which schema is appropriate. Readers do not have the same expectations when approaching an article from *Cosmopolitan* magazine than when they approach an article from The Modern Language Journal. Although FL language learners have little knowledge of magazines and newspapers in the L2, they can be instructed to make associations with their own country's press.

- **Pretest:** A good technique to find out how much the learners know about the topic is to administer a pre-test that would activate the appropriate schemata. This test can be used as a pre-reading activity. Critically the instructor would not correct the students' answers, it is not a real test; it is just a tool to activate the appropriate schemata.

The focus of the above pre-reading activities is on text content. The activation of this particular knowledge would provide the reader with a degree of familiarity with the content of the text. The pre-reading activities listed by Lee and Van Patten (1995) do not require interaction between students and much less knowledge sharing; they can be carried out on an individual basis. Although, as studies assert, these are excellent techniques to activate background knowledge, they fail to stimulate

knowledge interaction between the students. Even though modifications to the above activities can be done to make them more interactive, they are presented with the goal of activating individual knowledge on an individual basis. Linking the interactive nature of cooperative practices with the guidance and preparatory nature of pre-reading activities will be discussed in the following cooperative section.

Swaffar et al. (1991, p. 121) offer an additional pre-reading classification. Contrary to Lee and Van Patten's (1993) classification, these pre-reading activities are based on two elements of the text, the structure and its content. The focus is not only the activation of background content knowledge, but also the activation of text structure knowledge. This list of pre-reading activities serves two important purposes in the same activity; it can serve as pre-reading, as well as a post reading, depending on the focus of the activity.

• **Semantic mapping:** It is primarily a vocabulary-building tool. Students brainstorm about words that relate to a concept suggested by the teacher. It divides words and phrases into related categories. An application of this technique to the texts used in this study would be:

> Communist countries: China, Cuba, and North Korea
>
> Communist leaders: Fidel Castro, Che Guevara

• **Graphic Organizers**: These activities arrange vocabulary in a hierarchy of major to minor concepts. They are particularly appropriate for technical or scientific texts because they reinforce the sets and subsets of terms students must learn. They

are less appropriate for works of fiction. With this technique teachers and students find themselves better prepared after answering to the questions in the organizer

Post dictatorships consequences

music?   people?   economy?   politics?

- **Story grammars and story maps:** These techniques recreate the metastructure of stories. They are great techniques for stories, tales, and personal events, that are composed of six parts: (1) setting; (2) initiating event; (3) internal response of characters; (4) attempt, the effort to achieve a goal; (5) consequence, success or failure; (6) reaction, character's response to the outcomes.

	Setting		Event Structure	
Initiating event		Reaction		Resolution
		Attempt		

A story map uses many of these features but arranges them in a vertical flow chart rather than a diagram. An example of the Che Guevara article would be:

Setting: Latin America

Problem: Latin America people are oppressed

Goal: Che Guevara and his army want to target oppression

Resolution: Che is assassinated; therefore Latin American countries continue to be ruled by their own government

- **Idea mapping:** Commonly used in L1 work with high school and college students. The pattern is supposed to provide a spatial representation across the whole text. This technique is completely text-based and focused on the relationships within

the texts, not on connections between text messages and the real world. The teacher is usually in charge of generating idea mapping.

The problem with these techniques may be that students must organize information in terms of a structure that is imposed on them versus a structure that they generate themselves. It defeats reader creativity and individual contributions to the text in terms of text organization.

Additionally, the above text-based patterns fail to integrate the reader's personal perspective. "Idea maps, like any other text-based techniques focus on relationships within the text, but not on connections between text messages the real world" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 124). Clements-Davis and Ley (1991) summarize the discussion about the different types of pre-organizers that focus on text structure. They state that the main purpose of the pre-organizer is to provide the "ideational scaffolding" or superordinate ideas under which new subordinate ideas may be subsumed. Preparing the students for the structure of a text has been declared by different researchers to be as important as preparing them for the content. However, in the case of the present study, since the structure of the texts is the same, it is not a considerable concern. The texts used to collect the data are four expository articles about the history and socio-political situation in four different Spanish-speaking areas. More details about the structure of the text will be provided in chapter three.

2.4.2 Pre-reading research in L1 & L2 settings

The reading of written texts in L2 must be provided within an appropriate methodology or approach that systematically prepares and guides students' development of the skills necessary to interact with texts (Adair-Hauck, 2000; Harper, 1988). Several experts have developed techniques and/or models to approach written texts (especially authentic texts) from the early stages of language learning, highlighting the importance of progression (Swaffar et al., 1991). One of these suggested procedures is the pre-reading / reading / post-reading sequence (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997), which divides the reading process into three stages, allowing for different activities in each stage.

Mitchell and Swarbrick (1994) assert that though it is important for learners to be offered a wide range of texts and to be given opportunities to read them, simply providing texts and opportunities for reading access does not answer all the needs of students. If pupils are to read successfully in the foreign language, they need to be taught how to do so. An important recommendation by these authors is that "instructors teaching L2 students to read, need to be conscious that they are not teaching students how to read, but they are teaching them how to read in a different language" (Mitchell & Swarbrick, 1994, p. 6). Students do not come cold to a text, rather, they come as experienced readers of their own language, and therefore with some knowledge. This knowledge is usually implicit and the challenge of the language teacher is to make what is implicit explicit. It is a mistake to assume that pupils transfer all of these skills automatically. Our task is greater than providing

texts to pupils. We need to teach them reading strategies in order for them to gain independence as readers. The important thing to consider in this section is that students bring some knowledge of how to approach unfamiliar texts every time they encounter a text. (Mitchell & Swarbrick, 1994). The next section will focus on the type of pre-reading activities that best suit the different readers' proficiency levels.

2.4.2.1 Pre-reading activities and readers' proficiency level

Carrell (1984a) pointed out the importance of pre-reading activities in relation to readers' language proficiency levels. One of the most popular studies carried out by Hudson (1982) compares one type of explicit pre-reading activity, students are asked to briefly view a set of cue pictures and to generate a set of predictions about what they expect to find in the passage, to another type of pre-reading activity, a vocabulary activity. In general, Hudson found that the former type of pre-reading activity had a significantly greater facilitating effect on reading comprehension compared to the latter. However, close examination of the data showed that the effect was significant only for beginning and intermediate level ESL readers; at the advanced levels neither one of these two pre-reading activities was better than the other. In fact, at the advanced level there were no significant differences among these two types of pre-reading activities and a third "read and reread" activity.

Lee and Riley (1990) also studied the effect of pre-reading activities on beginner L2 students. Their study explores the effects of providing students with information about the rhetorical structure of an expository text as a text adjunct. Two

passages were tested under each of the three conditions: no rhetorical pre-reading framework, minimal framework or expanded framework. Results indicate that an expanded framework is an effective pre-reading technique for the comprehension of expository prose. This confirms that pre-reading activities that focus on content as well as on structure, work in the advantage of beginner students.

The present study will attempt to confirm Hudson's (1982) conclusions about the reading comprehension improvement noted in intermediate students. Since the subjects in this study are intermediate-high students, (between intermediate and advanced proficiency level), the inquiry of this study is: Will the subjects not be affected by the pre-reading activities as the subjects in Hudson's (1982) study? Will the subjects in this study show reading comprehension improvement if the treatment is not only visual, as in Hudson's project, but also interactive and cooperative instead of only visual? These questions will be answered in chapter four along with a discussion on the results presented in chapter five.

A second study focused on advanced students' reading comprehension is the study carried out by Schallert (1976), in which she studied the influence of a title on reading comprehension. She found that the effect of the context was greater when students were required to process it more deeply by either rating it for ambiguity or by studying it in order to learn it. Her study showed that meaningful processing is influenced by the provision of a context in the form of a title, pre-reading anticipation activity.

In the same line, Hung (1990) addressed the need for investigating effects of pre-reading activities in beginners and advanced students. The findings of previous investigators (Hudson, 1982; Johnson, 1982) that prior knowledge or schemata is an important variable in L2 reading comprehension have found additional support in Hung's study. This study compared two different sets of pre-reading activities carried out in two different groups of students. Each group had been evenly formed with good readers with a high proficiency level and poor readers with a low proficiency level. Before the administration of the experimental passage, subjects in the two groups were given an hour's pre-reading instruction on concepts dealt with in the experimental passage -a constrained form for subjects in Group I, and an open form for subjects in Group II-. In the former, key concepts were linked together in the form of two charts. The links among the concepts were thoroughly discussed and explained. In the latter, key concepts were similarly discussed and explained, however each was taught in isolation. No effort was made to demonstrate how they were linked in any way, especially with regard to the elements and process of communication, and the subject matter of the experimental passage. With respect to the comparative effectiveness of the two types of pre-reading instruction, the key concepts showing links proved to have been more beneficial to good readers than to poor readers when answering text implicit questions. This type of pre-reading instruction was also more beneficial than the key concepts taught in isolation for poor readers when implicit questions were used. To answer implicit questions the reader had to combine some information from the text and his/her prior knowledge. When a

comparison was made between constrained and open forms, the findings in Hung's study contradict the idea that good readers do not benefit from a constrained form of pre-reading instruction. Both, good and poor readers in this study, benefited from the conceptual framework provided by a constrained form of pre-reading instruction when answering implicit questions. Hung's study therefore, finds that both groups of readers benefited from the pre-reading intervention, not only low proficiency level students, as most of the previous research has suggested, but also advanced proficiency level students. Hung's findings, as well as Schallert (1976) suggestions, support the rationale of the present study, which aims to investigate intermediate high readers' reading comprehension of expository texts after the intervention of a cooperative anticipatory pre-reading handout. The handout created for the study uses most of Hung and Schallert's pre-reading components.

2.4.3 Reading and pre-reading conclusion

To summarize the pre-reading section, it is central to reiterate that pre-reading activities build knowledge, motivate, and help students to establish a purpose for their reading. Based on the instructor's view of the students' needs, the instructor decided what particular type of pre-reading, (i.e. anticipated guides, preview guides, structured overviews, or less elaborated methods), would work better for the specific group of readers and specific text. The present study proposes cooperative previewing and anticipatory guides in which the links between world knowledge, personal knowledge, and text content play a crucial role.

Reading is considered one of the means we have of offering comprehensible input and authentic culture to the students. However, reading authentic texts presents considerable challenges that should be attended. Pre-reading activities, as observed in the review of the literature, are an excellent way of reducing the challenges presented by FL texts; by activating the readers' background knowledge that corresponds to the particular text the reader is about to read. Background knowledge activation plays an important role in obtaining successful reading comprehension. What is the most suitable way to activate background knowledge? Different pre-reading activities, such as brainstorming, previewing the title, headings and illustrations, story grammars, story maps, and/or interactive cooperative discussions as this study attempts to do, can be used to activate readers' background knowledge. The next section will focus on cooperative theories that can be applied to the educational practices, particularly to pre-reading practices.

2.5 LEARNING IN-GROUPS: COOPERATIVE GROUPS VERSUS TRADITIONAL GROUPS

The studies discussed in the third section of the literature review are devoted to cooperative learning and traditional learning group approaches. It presents a detailed description of both learning approaches, supported by several studies conducted in L1 and L2 within different disciplines and different settings.

Additionally, it offers a brief explanation of the more conservative textbook-based individual learning approach.

2.5.1 Cooperative/Collaborative learning approach

Johnson and Johnson (1999) have described cooperation as the act of working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all other group members.

Applied to the educational setting, cooperative learning has been defined as "a group learning activity organized in a way that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups, and in which each learner is held accountable for his/her own learning and motivated to increase the learning of others" (Oxford, 1997, p. 442).

Brody (2004) has also described "cooperation" as more than simply something we do in our classrooms; CL is a deep and broad strategy for helping people to learn together. Commonly speaking, cooperative learning has been defined by many educators as the instructional use of small groups, so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Working in small groups with the objective of maximizing the students' learning is also the foundation of approaches such as collaboration, peer working, interaction, and reciprocal teaching. Provided that cooperation and the above cited approaches share these main characteristics, it is important to accept and understand that CL shares many features

with other pedagogical approaches. Thus, in many contexts CL can be identified with reciprocal, peer and collaborative work.

There is more to CL than helping learners and maximizing their learning however. CL, with its dual emphasis on academic and interpersonal skills, appeals to instructors because it addresses and integrates seemingly diverse goals within a single approach, such as social and cognitive development; individual and group responsibility development, social and verbal interaction skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

With this emphasis on the CL approach, classroom strategies that encourage dialogue among students, and social interaction have gained new respect, serving to generate new ideas and to reinvigorate older ideas about peer-mediated instruction, including communities of learners (Palincsar & Brown, 1985); collaborative learning, and peer tutoring. The significance of cooperative principles has developed into different approaches that can be considered the same approach with different peculiarities. Typically, the traditional learning groups approach, also called traditional groups, is discussed within the cooperative parameter, mainly due to its physical structure: a group of three or four students working together. Other teaching approaches encouraging dialogue among students, using peer mediated instruction, or just being based on group work, might also be called cooperative. The objective of the following section is to describe and analyze the features embedded in the CL approach, and compare and contrast them with the features of other approaches generally labeled with the term cooperation.

67

2.5.2 Different but similar: cooperative/collaborative/reciprocal teaching

In this section the similarities and differences between four teaching approaches based on student social interaction and knowledge sharing will be outlined and compared.

The term cooperation has been widely associated in educational contexts with collaboration, reciprocity and in some cases peer work. The concepts cooperative, collaborative, and interaction are often used interchangeably because of the similarity of their theoretical principles. Cooperation, collaboration and interaction have developed special connotations and different classroom applications in many disciplines, such as mathematics, science, social studies and language studies (Oxford, 1997, p. 443). In the language-teaching context, the differences and similarities among these three concepts are particularly important to understand. As Oxford (1997) stated, even though the three approaches share a communicative aspect they hold some differences that should be pointed out: "Cooperative learning as compared to collaborative learning is considered more structured, more prescriptive to teachers about classroom techniques, more directive to students about how to work together in groups, and more targeted to the public school population" (Oxford, 1997, p. 443). Below you will find a descriptive chart of the conceptual comparisons among cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction.

Approaches	Cooperative Learning	Collaborative Learning
Purpose	Enhance cognitive and social skills via a set of known techniques	Acculturates learners into knowledge communities
Degree of structure	High	Variable
Relationships	Individual is accountable to the group and vice versa; teacher facilitates, but group is primary	Learner engages with "more capable others" who provide assistance and guidance
Prescriptiveness of activities	High	Low
Key Terms	Positive Interdependence	Zone of Proximal Development, cognitive apprenticeship, acculturation, scaffolding, situated cognition, reflective inquiry, epistemology

Table 1. Conceptual comparisons among cooperative learning, collaborative

learning (Oxford, 1997, p. 444)

On the one hand, as observed in table 1, the cooperative approach places more emphasis on individual responsibility on the group and the role of the teacher as facilitator. On the other hand, the collaborative approach places more emphasis on the capability of other learners who assist in the learning process.

Along the same lines as Oxford, Bruffee (1995) presents a more complete list of differences among cooperative and collaborative approaches. According to Bruffee (1995, p. 6) the aim of cooperative learning to ensure accountability between participants is undercut in many ways by collaborative learning and vice versa.

- First, in the cooperative learning approach the teachers need to make sure that students participate fully and equally, while in collaborative learning, the teacher does not have this responsibility. In the collaborative approach the teacher defines a social role -a recorder- to write a report of the group discussion chosen by the group.

- Second, cooperative learning suggests that teachers act as active guides and supervisors of the students' work, while the collaborative approach leaves teachers aside and their power is transferred to the students.

- Third, the cooperative recommends that teachers evaluate "group process", and the quality of the relationships created by group members, while teachers practicing the collaborative approach rarely evaluate the students since they have not qualitatively observed their discussions.

- Fourth, collaborative learning does not attempt to eliminate competition among individuals as cooperative principles do. The collaborative approach tends to shift the focus of competition from among individuals to groups.

Not only does the collaborative approach undercut the cooperative approach, it can also be the other way around. The cooperative also undercuts in many ways some of the collaborative principles.

• Cooperative pedagogy tends to conflict with the collaborative kind when dealing with teacher authority, since collaborative pedagogy situates an important part of classroom authority in the students' groups.

• Collaborative learning replaces the traditional classroom social structure with a structure composed of negotiated relationships between student communities and the teacher, while in the cooperative approach the structure places a supervising responsibility on the teacher side.

Despite the differences described by Bruffee (1995, p. 14), the collaborative and the cooperative approach share most values and principles, especially the fact that knowledge is not absolute neither inside or outside but is instead a social construct.

As stated above, most of the studies about cooperation and collaboration in L1 and L2 use these terms interchangeably (Oxford, 1997; Bruffee, 1995). "In a practical sense, collaborative and cooperative learning represent the two sides of the same coin because both instruct learners to complete tasks by pooling their resources, ultimately achieving knowledge that surpasses the boundaries of any planned activity" (Horwitz et al., 1997, p. 597)". It is also important to point out that the similarities in both approaches distinguish cooperative and collaborative learning from simple group-work. This is what makes the list of differences and similarities so important. Working in groups does not automatically mean cooperation, collaboration, or even

reciprocal learning. Cooperation needs controlled guidance and structure in order to share knowledge correctly and use it as effectively as possible, whereas traditional groups do not require any of these requisites.

Another teaching approach usually associated with CL, due to its structure, is reciprocal teaching. Palincsar, et al. (1989) notice that the emphasis of reciprocal teaching is on the interactive dialogue between teacher and students and among students. Reciprocal teaching has been widely used in studies about reading comprehension, obtaining considerable positive results. The emphasis of the reciprocal teaching approach is focused on the dialogue structured around four skills: question, generation, summarization, clarification and predictions (Pressley, 2002). Each person in the group acts in response to the other, and the group is engaged in the same task and is required to finish the task as a group. This requisite of reciprocal learning matches the accountability principle in the cooperative approach. Routman (2002) adds to reciprocal teaching the concept of "scaffolding"; he defines reciprocal teaching as the interactive scaffold instruction in which the teacher leads a group of students as they dialogue their way through the text to understand it. The basic idea behind reciprocal teaching is that instructors guide students to develop the four skills and then students get into groups and take responsibility for the activity without relying on the teacher's help. As we observe, the accountability of the students, after having observed the model (instructor) is as crucial in reciprocal teaching as it is in CL, this being an important similarity.

After reviewing the differences and similarities between the above approaches, this study will refer to the concept of CL as a group learning activity organized in a way that cognitive and social learning depends on the exchange of information between learners in groups, and in which each student is held accountable for his/her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. Agreement between the members of the group is a central goal in structured cooperative discussions, and it will also be in this project, which implies that group discussions, must reach a final conclusion that has been previously decided on and accepted by all the group members. The final agreement between the group members will be an essential part of guided and cooperative practices, as well as the precise and clear instructions offered by the teacher and his/her constant feedback and guidance during the activity.

2.5.3 Basic principles of cooperative learning

In this section, we discuss Oxford's (1997, p. 445) list of basic principles sustaining the CL approach in educational settings:

1) Positive interdependence: Gains for one person associated with gains for others; can be attained through structuring the goals, rewards, roles, materials or rules.

2) Accountability: Every learner is accountable through individual grading and testing; the group is accountable through a group grade; improvement scores are possible.

3) Team formation: Teams are formed in various ways- randomly; by students' interest; by the teacher using specific criteria, representing different characteristics such as aptitude or gender, or homogenously.

4) Team size: Groups smaller than seven members usually work best.

6) Social development: development of social skills such as taking turns, active listening, and so forth are as important as social development.

5) Cognitive development: This is viewed as the main goal of cooperative learning.

Along with CL principles, it is important to note Mills' (1992, p. 206) recommendations on implementing the CL approach. Mills points out seven recommendations, in line with Johnson and Johnson's classification, to be followed for the implementation of CL in an educational setting, and not specific to any particular subject. Mills' recommendations are the following:

An instructor committed to guided and structured CL practices should:

1. Encourage student-teacher contact

2. Encourage cooperation

3. Encourage active learning

4. Give prompt feedback

5. Emphasize time on task

6. Communicate high expectations

7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning

The component that basically defines CL is the fact that interdependence, accountability, group formation, social skills, and structure are all built into the sequence and communicated to the students in multiple ways. For these reasons, CL can be defined as an array of highly structured objectives and techniques for learning.

2.5.4 Cooperative theoretical framework

In this section the theories, perspectives and educational implications of the most influential philosophers and educators supporting the CL approach will be described. Most of the theories presented below are based on children's cognitive and social development studies in L1. Still, the implications of these studies might be applied to other educational contexts, such as adult learners in the L2 context.

2.5.4.1 Social development theories applied to teaching approaches

Recently Siegel (2005, p. 340) highlighted the idea that constructivist psychology provides the theoretical framework for the CL approach. Traditional constructivist psychology is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed (built on prior knowledge) through interactions with the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky presented an influential pre-cognitive theory of how individuals acquire higher mental functions through scaffolding provided by cultural traditions (especially language) and social interaction. Vygotskyism was an overtly Marxist theory that was supposed to be a scientific account of how thought arises from practice. The constructivist theory expressed by Vygotsky, also known as

"construction of meaning" or "social constructivism" has been defined as the process of negotiating and acquiring knowledge through social interaction (Smith, 2001), based on Vygotsky's definition of constructivism. The idea of building and creating knowledge through negotiation and social interaction is a central concept in most of the group-based teaching practices, and is of special importance in CL. Smith (2001) states that constructivism finds expression through activities such as CL, and defines CL as a teaching perspective that reinforces language learning as socialization, not merely cognition, and recognizes the learner as an active participant with prior knowledge and experience.

Piaget (l932) cited in Oden (1987) pointed to peer interaction between children as one major source of cognitive as well as social development, particularly for the development of role taking and empathy. Supporting Piaget's theories, studies about social interaction showed that children evidenced more advancement and significant long term benefits when solving a task while interacting with a classmate than when doing it individually (Oden, 1987).

De Vries (1997, p. 4) asserts that the current debate in education on the role of individual and social factors in development presents Piaget as giving primacy to individual cognitive processes, in contrast to Vygotsky's view of the primacy of social and cultural processes. It is generally believed that Piaget's child is a solitary scientist constructing knowledge apart from the social context (Santrock, 1997). Experts in education, such as De Vries (1997), consider this view a mistake, and argue that it should be corrected in order to understand theoretical differences between Vygotsky

76

and Piaget, and the consideration of educational implications of Piaget's work. Piaget's social theories focus on the role of cooperative social interaction and ways in which they function to promote cognitive, affective and even moral development. Therefore it can be observed that Vygotsky and Piaget's views are more reconcilable than conflictive.

In line with Vygotsky theories of constructivism and social development, the process-based teaching model, developed by Ashman and Conway (1989, 1993, cited in Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 159), emerged. This teaching model, based on the work of the Russian cognitive psychologist Luria, shows many similarities to the cooperative teaching approach when referring to social interaction. The process-based teaching model takes an information-processing approach to learning, and considers cognition as an interaction between input, storage, and retrieval activities. According to the developers of the approach, the information-processing approach can only be of practical relevance if employed within an interactionist framework. Placing a heavy emphasis on cooperative learning and teaching, Ashman and Conway built a classroom-integrated model, which stressed the importance of teaching learning strategies according to a systematically prepared plan.

The work of Luria on perception, problem solving, and memory, as well as the work of Vygotsky, is extremely extensive. For the purpose of the present study, we will only focus on the psychological theories that have been already applied to educational models, particularly to language teaching and learning approaches.

2.5.4.2 Vygotsky's theories of Social Constructivism and Zone of Proximal Development

According to Piaget's theories of cognitive and social constructivism, Vygotsky also pointed out the critical role played by social interactions in the learning process. He placed special emphasis on the specific type of social interactions that he believed was inductive to learning, defining for this purpose the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defined the notion of ZPD as the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and his/her potential development level as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. In other words, it is the difference between what a learner can achieve independently and what a learner can achieve when provided with assistance.

Vygotsky argued that teaching would be more effective if teachers were able to work with their learner in their ZPD. He thought social interactions were powerful, but were only effective if learners were interacting with a more competent peer. These group interactions have been called asymmetric dyads (Cesar, 1998, p. 4). The idea of having a more competent peer in the dyad with the objective of achieving learning, has been challenged by recent studies that demonstrated that peer interactions are much more powerful in themselves than Vygotsky originally conceived (Cesar, 1998, p. 5). Studies such as those by Elmore and Zenus (1992); Johnson and Johnson, (1982); Stevens and Slavin (1995), have shown that learners

are able to cognitively and socially progress in both, asymmetric and symmetric dyads, and what is more significant is that in asymmetric dyads, both partners learn and progress. These results demonstrate that a more competent peer in the group of learners is not always a necessary factor to achieve learning. The interaction itself is a sufficient factor to increase cognitive and social learning.

The above argument supports the idea of forming cooperative groups with members of the same cognitive level disregarding the presence of a more expert peer. The interaction between two or more learners, considered to be cognitively symmetric, also contributes to the development of the learner's cognitive and social learning.

Piaget and Vygotsky are the most well-known social constructivism theoreticians supporting CL, however, their theories are not the only ones linked to the CL approach. More than half a century ago, philosophers and educators, such as John Dewey, offered significant insight about social constructivism and the important gains of socially cooperative performances. The next section will provide relevant information about Deweys' theories and their connection to CL.

2.5.4.3 Dewey's pragmatic theories of Social Constructivism

The book *Democracy and Education* (1932) written by John Dewey's, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educator, raised considerable interest in what would come to be known as cooperative learning. In this book, Dewey explains

his concern about the importance of creating socially responsible citizens who could cooperate to solve challenges presented in life. If the aim were to prepare socially responsible adults, children and students would have to participate in planning and evaluating social learning experiences at school.

Dewey, as well as Piaget and Vygotsky, refers to learning as a social process and not as an individual one. According to Dewey, learning does not happen in isolation, the individual learns by being part of the surrounding community and the world as a whole. Dewey even proposed a triangular relationship for the social construction of ideas among the individual, the community and the world (Oxford, 1997, p. 447). In some of his work he stressed the importance of cooperative play and learning for the young child's cognitive and social development, and the importance of involving students in the active exchange of ideas rather than passive learning (Tudge & Caruso, 1989, p. 1). The idea of learning as a socially embedded process has been emphasized in Vygotsky theories of constructivism. As stated before, the idea of learning as a social process truly underlines the theories behind cooperative practices.

The influence of Dewey's ideas in educational practices is reflected in different teaching approaches, such as cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, the reflective thinking approach, reflective teaching, communities of learners and so on. Nowadays, many publications about L2 teaching refer to the above-cited approaches, which reflect the importance of social constructivism in the L2 learning arena (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

80

2.5.5 Cooperative learning research: What does the research reveal?

Over the past 25 years, substantial research on various grades and on numerous academic subjects has documented the benefits of CL. Numerous studies about CL learning carried out in many educational contexts, involving different disciplines using all types of students (different gender, achievement level, and different socio economic status) have proved CL a success. Research literature on CL shows, "not only increased achievement, but also more positive heterogeneous relationships, better attitudes toward schools and teachers, and higher self esteem" (Sapon-Shevin, 1994, p. 184). CL has been studied in diverse educational settings and has obtained positive results. Many of these studies suggest that CL can effectively promote academic achievement and social skills development (Elmore & Zenus, 1992; Johnson and Johnson, 1982; Stevens and Slavin, 1995). As an example, Slavin (1991, p. 76) reported "out of 67 studies of achievement effects of CL, 41 (61%) found significantly greater achievement in cooperative than in control classes". Unfortunately, most of these studies have been carried out within disciplines other than FL, such as math, science and English (Frances & Eckart, 1992), although a few of them were carried out in language classes (L1), especially in reading classes (Stevens & Slavin, 1995).

Johnson and Johnson (1999) add that there have been over 500 experimental studies and 100 correlational studies on the cooperative approach with positive results; not only positive achievement results, but also with regard to attitude and social skills. Nonetheless, not all the studies have focused on the positive outcomes of

81

CL. There are some researchers that have paid attention to the disadvantages of CL. The next section will explain some of the common drawbacks of CL in the classroom setting.

2.5.6 Challenges in cooperative learning practices

One of the most significant obstacles of CL focuses on learners and instructors' lack of experience with the approach. When students have little or no experience with CL, simply placing them in groups and instructing them to "cooperate" is not likely to be sufficient. The learning of social skills will not happen automatically; "social skills may need to be taught explicitly to diminish the effects of class, race, and gender" (Sapon-Shevin, 1994, p. 184).

The second challenge is the time consumed in these activities. When learners work in groups and discuss their ideas with the rest of the group, the activity tends to take longer. All the members in the group should have something to contribute and negotiate with the others. Nowadays, due to time limitations, educators tend to shorten the activities by individualizing them in class or by labeling them as homework.

2.5.7 Cooperative learning in language instruction settings

In this section the most prominent studies about CL carried out in English (L1) classes will be described. Krol, Jansen, Veenman, and Van der Linden's (2004) carried out one of the most recent studies in which they examined the effects of CL with respect to the elaborations of forty 6th graders working in mixed ability and

mixed sex dyads on two cooperative tasks (one mathematics and one reading). Students were asked to solve a mathematics task and reading comprehension task developed around a story. Two short stories were written with some differences. Each student received a text with different information about the story, so that students had to share the necessary information to obtain a clear picture of the story. To encourage verbal exchange of information and discussion, looking at each other's text was not allowed. Students were given clear and detailed instructions about how to cooperate to solve the task in less than 30 minutes. The authors of the study assert that the development of this reading activity was based on the principles of reciprocal teaching, a common method, as Palincsar and Brown (1985) emphasized, to teach reading comprehension skills; in which students are taught to formulate questions, clarify unclear passages of the text, summarize the essential elements of a passage and predict the ending of the story.

The treatment dyads were found to exchange significantly higher-level elaborations during the language task than the control dyads. "The treatment dyads also tended to produce higher performance scores on both tasks, one mathematical problem and one reading" Krol et al. (2004, p. 431). This study borrows from the Piagetian and Vygotskian perspectives on development the importance of social interaction for learning, which is based on the active reconciliation of different perspectives within the cooperative group and the importance of studying learning as a social process. To summarize the study, Krol et al. (2004) concluded that the treatment dyads attained better performance than the control dyads on both tasks

(reading and math)". These results suggested that peer cooperation had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension activity.

As research has been shown, reciprocal teaching is a feasible method of teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension to poor readers even before they are fully able to decode the language. In other words, the reciprocal approach offers excellent results in readers at the beginning level, as well as the intermediate or advanced. The use and control of cognitive and metacognitive strategies led Krol, et al. (2004) subjects to considerably improve their language and reading task.

Regarding the subject of reading in L1, one of the best-known studies about CL in reading practices has been carried out with 2nd through 6th grade students. Stevens and Slavin (1995) showed that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) program had significant positive effects on standardized methods of L1 reading comprehension with elementary students. The CIRC program consisted of students working in heterogeneous teams on reading and writing activities related to stories. Teachers in this study were considered guides and facilitators. As part of the guiding process, they explicitly taught students reading comprehension strategies. The two-year study was conducted to determine the long-term effects of CIRC on elementary reading and language arts instruction students' achievement, attitudes and metacognitive awareness. One of the peculiarities of this study is that it mainstreamed academically disabled students in standard classes. In the study 635 students from three different elementary schools actively implemented

the CL approach, compared to 644 students at four elementary schools that used traditional instruction. The CIRC program consisted of three main elements: story related activities, direct instruction in comprehension strategies, and integrated writing and language. The first year results showed that CIRC students attained significantly higher achievement in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. Second year results indicated that CIRC students had higher achievement in vocabulary comprehension, and language expression. The above results supported the effectiveness of the CIRC program as a multifaceted CL approach to reading and language arts instruction.

2.5.8 Cooperative learning in foreign language settings

Although research on cooperative and collaborative learning is more abundant outside the field of L2, some studies find that CL enhances linguistic interactions encountered by students in the L2 classroom (Swain & Micolli, 1994, as cited in Oxford, 1997, p. 444). The following section will show the results presented by studies particularly carried out in L2 reading classes. Fung, Wilkinson, and Moore (2003) studied the effects of L1-assisted reciprocal teaching on EFL Taiwanese college students' reading comprehension of English expository texts. The intervention comprised the alternate use of L1 (Mandarin) and L2 (English) reciprocal teaching procedure. From 12 to 20 days of instruction students learned to foster and monitor their comprehension by using cognitive and metacognitive strategies of questioning,

summarizing, clarifying, and predicting. The standardized comprehension test and the test developed by the researcher showed that students under the treated condition made considerable comprehension gains when reading L1 as well as L2 texts. In the area of foreign language teaching, Shachar and Sharan (1994)'s qualitative study on proficiency improvement highlights the noticeable language proficiency progress in a group of EFL students that used reciprocal teaching in their classroom activities.

After the recapitulation of CL studies, a summary of the benefits of CL divided in four points will be presented. First, through social interaction we enhance the development of cognitive and social skills development that is not only useful in the classroom setting, but also in real life. The classroom is a micro society in which students and instructors play citizens' role. Thus, it is the instructor and students' responsibility to set up the micro society patterns and rules to achieve the maximum degree of learning and experience. Secondly, the accountability of the student is an excellent support for the learner's responsibility of his/her own learning. It allows them, from the beginning of the school year, to feel responsible and accountable for their own learning improvement, which hopefully will develop into accountability for their future learning. Third, cooperation in class has the power to acculturate learners into communities, which helps to create a community environment instead of an individualistic and competitive one. Class communities work together and support each other to achieve not only an academic goal, but also a social one. Last but not least, the fourth point is that the cooperative approach gives the teacher the role of guide, counselor, and facilitator. This role implies that the teacher is required to

structure the implementation of the activities in steps that clearly guide the students and supervise students' work from a facilitator point of view instead of an authority figure. This role, not common in today's classrooms, offers the students the opportunity to be a vital element in the classroom. This fourth characteristic has received criticism from parents' and students', who argue that the teacher has to be the maximum authority in the classroom and the one in charge of transmitting knowledge.

Although these principles might be seen as a utopia, there are many studies that have shown that cooperative theories can be put into practice with patience, control and perseverance. In FL classes, in which the students bring a varied array of knowledge, preconceived ideas, and different types of anxiety, cooperative practices could be a promising option to create a more unified atmosphere with common objectives and responsibilities. Due to the potential of cooperative practices to increase student achievement and social skills development, CL is believed to be the best option for school reform (Johnson & Johnson, 1999)

The studies cited in section 2.5.1 have investigated the implementation of cooperative/collaborative theories into several teaching and learning practices. Nevertheless, not many studies have applied the theories of cooperation to FL pre-reading practices, leaving the impact of CL on FL pre- reading activities an arena for further investigation. The purpose of the present study is to combine the benefits of guided and structured CL practices with the benefits of pre-reading activities, explained in the second section of the literature review, hoping that guided social

87

interaction during the pre-reading stage, will activate the readers' prior knowledge and facilitate the posterior reading comprehension process. The reading comprehension results will be compared to those obtained from the individual treatment and traditional non-guided and non-structured group practices.

2.5.9 Traditional learning groups

The second type of pre-reading activities evaluated in the present study are practiced in a traditional learning group format, also known as traditional groups. This learning approach is one whose members have accepted the task of working together but they do not really perceive the benefit of it (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The assignments created within a traditional group approach are structured in a way that cooperative work is not required. Participants do not take responsibility for any member's learning other than their own. Even though participants belong to and work in groups while completing the activity, the actual work is somewhat individualized. Individuals complete their work on their own and their achievements are individually recognized and rewarded. The members of the group usually share difficulties related to the assignment content and the instructions, which proceeds to the initiation of some social interaction between the group members. This interaction however, is not a requirement. Students are accountable as separate individuals, not as members of a team, they do not receive training in social skills, and they do not count on the group leader, in charge of directing the member's participation to complete the task. The

quality and outcomes of the group efforts is not supervised and/or guided by the instructor.

A better way to explain the specific components of the traditional learning group approach would be comparing it to the CL approach. Below you will find a table in which both approaches are compared. In contrast to the approaches mentioned in the previous sections, traditional learning groups do not share much with CL, besides the fact that the participants sit in groups of three or four students and complete a particular task assigned by the instructor. Below you will also find an outline describing the main features of CL and traditional learning groups' (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 73).

	Cooperative Learning Groups		Traditional Learning Groups
	Positive interdependence		No interdependence
	Individual accountability		No individual accountability
	Heterogeneous memberships		Homogeneous membership
	Shared Leadership		One appointed leader
	Task and relationships emphasized		Only task emphasized
	Social skills directly taught		Social skills assumed or ignored
	Teacher monitor groups		No group monitoring
	Group processing		No group processing

Table 2. Cooperative and traditional approach differences (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 73)

It is important to point out that the description on the right column belongs to a traditional teaching approach that it is still in use in classrooms, even though the pedagogical trend nowadays tends to favor cooperative learning, due to its major benefits.

As we can observe in the table 2, the main difference between cooperative and traditional is the presence of guidance and structure. Although traditional groups are usually included in the big umbrella term "cooperation", it is vital to highlight that the actual cooperation in the traditional groups is minimum, and the emphasis on a cooperative task is not prominent. In other words, traditional groups would be described as groups of students sitting together with a predetermined assignment, a specific amount of time to complete it, along with a leader who has not been informed of how to implement his/her leadership. The instructor's role is merely to control that every student finishes the assigned work and to clarify any doubts that might interfere with the workflow. In a traditional group approach the teacher's task is to provide the material to the students and collect at the end of the class. Instructors' guidance and structure are not required features; the group members are open to organize their task structure the way that suits them the most. The same way CL identifies with other teaching approach, the traditional group approach identifies with informal learning groups. Davis (1993) has described informal learning groups as the improvised temporary clustering of students within a single class session. According to Davis' (1993) description, informal learning groups can be initiated by asking students to turn to a neighbor and spend two minutes discussing a question the instructor have

90

posed. The instructor can also form groups of 3 or 4 students to solve a problem or pose more challenging questions. The instructor can organize informal groups at any time in a class of any size to check on students' understanding of the material and to give students the opportunity to share what they are learning, or to provide a change of pace. Davis (1993), as well as Johnson and Johnson (1999), does not mention guidance or structure from the instructor or students' part when referring to informal learning groups. Traditional groups can also be compared to Oxford's (1997) description of interaction groups, which basically follow the same format as traditional groups and encourage interaction-producing tasks with the role of a teacher as a mere facilitator. The interaction approach is not as restrictive as the cooperative approach in its implementation guidelines; the engagement between teacher and learners or learners among learners does not necessarily mean the learning of new knowledge. The fact that it seems a more open approach with fewer restrictions than CL and less of a guarantee of a successful learning process, made teachers view it with skepticism.

Research about traditional learning groups, such as Lampe, Rooze, and Tallent-Runnels' (2001) study, determined that content achievement and self-esteem of Hispanic fourth graders increased when receiving instruction using CL or traditional learning groups in comparison to the individualistic approach. Results, though, indicated higher achievement when cooperative groups were implemented.

The next section describes the insights of the individualistic learning approach and offers details about the procedure to implement it in the classroom.

91

2.5.10 Textbook-based individual learning approach

The textbook-based individual learning approach is founded on the idea of the learner as an individual, who does not participate in any cooperation or interaction with other learners. The textbook-based individual approach can be best described through the individualistic approach's description, carefully explained and exemplified by Johnson and Johnson (1999). One of the most outstanding distinctiveness of the individualistic approach is that "…in an individualistic situation, individuals work by themselves to accomplish goals unrelated to and independent from the goals of others. The individuals' work is rewarded on the basis of how their efforts and/or results compare to the present criterion of excellence" (Johnson and Johnson, 1999, p. 13). This trait is the basis for the textbook-based individual approach; the fact that students work by themselves and for themselves becomes the most important quality of this learning technique. Whether the learner achieves the goal of a task has no influence on whether other classmates finish their goals. In the individualistic learning approach, when teachers structure lessons individualistically, students work by themselves to accomplish the task objective. In an individualistic lesson, the most prevalent feature is that students are advised to work by themselves without interrupting their classmates, and they are also required to work in separate desks with as much space between students as can be provided; the instructor's assistance is the only support the students can receive. As Johnson

92

and Johnson (1999, p. 14) revealed, during the past 55 years competitive and individualistic lesson plans have dominated USA education system, given that students come to school with competitive expectations and pressures from their parents. When a class is dominated by individualistic patterns students concentrate on isolating themselves from each other ignoring others and focusing only on their own work.

Most of the students feel the motivation to compete within individualistic situations although the structure of the learning approach does not require it. In the textbook-based individual approach, the student does not belong to any group and he/she is the only person responsible for completing the task.

The only considerable difference between the individualistic and the individual approach is the degree to which the instructor is involved in the students' work. On the one hand, as Johnson and Johnson confirm (1999, p. 84), "…within the individualistic learning situations the teacher is the major source of assistance, feedback, reinforcement, and support. Students should expect periodic visits from the teacher, and a great deal of teacher time may be needed to monitor and assist the students".

On the other hand, in the textbook-based individual approach, the teacher merely controls the dynamics of the class and assists the students if these raise their hand and ask for specific clarification. The involvement of the teacher is basically inexistent. This discrepancy with the individualistic approach differentiates the

individualistic learning approach described y Johnson and Johnson (1999), with the textbook individual approach used in the present study.

Most of the studies that compare the individual learning practice with CL (Frances & Eckart, 1992; Lampe et al., 2001; and Slavin, 1991) reveal the positive learning effects of CL in comparison to the individual. In Frances and Eckart (1992) the results indicated that reciprocal teaching improved readers' comprehension of the 7th grade English students.

Nonetheless Westmyer's (1994) study with sociology college students proved that students in CL environments did not show greater learning of selected sociology concepts than students working in individual environments. Westmyer admits in her study that one reason for the negative results could be that the amount of time spent in a CL setting amounted to only about 10% of the total class time.

Generally speaking, the textbook-based individual approach is identified with a more conventional teaching approach, in which the instructor lectures the content and students complete the follow-up activities in an individually, that is why competitive students relate to this approach in a positive manner. Nonetheless, for the purpose of foreign languages, the textbook-based individual approach seems less adequate than CL or traditional groups, provided that oral interaction is a fundamental part of the curriculum. One positive feature of the individual practice, especially for the students considered competitive, is the opportunity to silently focus and concentrate on the assigned task and engage with the assignment in a more personal manner.

As stated in the section pertaining to CL, there is extensive amount of research, at all levels of education and with all subject areas, that consistently indicates that CL results in higher achievement, increased positive interpersonal relationships, and higher self-esteem than competitive or individualistic efforts.

2.6 TEACHER- RESEARCHER

In order to observe classroom phenomena, the role of the researcher is primary, but in order to observe a teacher's decision-making process, the role of teacher-researcher might provide a better standpoint, since one's own thoughts are more available and easier to interpret than somebody else's. Teacher-research is defined as an investigation "done *by*, not just *on*, teachers in classrooms" (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 319). This role, even though more difficult than the role of researcher because of the double load of work, typically provides a privileged position from which one can observe the phenomena both as a participant and as a researcher. Additionally, the teacher-researcher, just like any researcher, becomes "the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data" (Merriam, 2001, p. 20). The importance of this role should not be overlooked, since many inconsistencies between theory and practice in the field of second language acquisition seem to originate from the distance between researchers' findings and teachers' practical applications. The role of teacher-researcher allows being "close to the matter at hand, but also to develop the perspective that comes from a degree of distance" (Hobson, 2001, p. 8).

According to van Lier (1989, p. 4), this is the best way to obtain "significant and lasting improvements in classroom second language learning"; since teachers and students are the ones involved in classroom experiences, and know more about this than anybody else. In favor of the teacher-researcher Burgess (1980, p. 165) added that many educational researchers in the past were outsiders to schools and to the teaching profession and did not engage in teaching duties during their research, indeed, he supported the idea that the investigator who did not teach in the institution under study, was the ideal educational researcher. Moreover, Burgess highlights the common concern about the instructor bias, as well as a tendency to think that pupils may view teacher-researcher more as a teacher-spy than as a researcher, leading to inquiries about the reliability of the students' responses. Yet, Burgess (1980, p. 168) asserted that"…this might depend on the teacher's roles and his/her relationship with the pupils".

Teachers are encouraged to overcome the teacher researcher related problems and be aware that when the potential problems are resolved, research can lead to a type of data unlikely from an outside researcher who feels removed from the classroom environment. It was critical, based on the reasons stated above that the researcher also took the role of the teacher in order to implement the pre-reading activities consistently in the present study.

2.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

This chapter has provided a review of the evolution of the definition of reading, making emphasis on the present concept of reading as an interactive act between the reader, the text and the contextual aspects. The development of the concept of reading demonstrates that not only reading, but also pre-reading and post-reading activities have taken in the last years a more interactive direction in which the reader, as well, as the text and the contextual cues play a balanced role. The foundation of the concept of reading used in the present day in the FL classrooms is closer to a conversation with the text than to a mere act of decoding a set of words to reach a final message.

Following, it discusses the rationale for the implementation of pre-reading activities in the FL classrooms, and the different approaches employed in the study. The first approach mentioned in the chapter is cooperative learning, due to the students' interactions that cooperative learning demands, it has been considered a rich and valuable teaching approach, not only in the field of FL teaching, but also in other subjects such as science, history, math, etc. Most of the research listed in the previous sections confirmed that most of the practices associated with a structured and guided CL approach demonstrate improvement in academic achievement, as well as social skills development. In addition to the positive effects on achievement, positive inter-group relations, greater acceptance of mainstreamed students, and self-esteem, other educational effects arise from CL practices. To end the section about CL approach the chapter includes a detailed explanation of CL theoretical framework, making special

97

emphasis on the theoreticians Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky. Following the CL approach, the traditional group approach is discussed and its characteristics are thoroughly compared to those of the CL approach, emphasizing the lack of structure and guidance usually found in regular group work. The last approach listed is the textbook-based individual, in which the instructor takes a step back and leaves the accountability of learning to the students. In the textbook-based individual practice, the role of the teacher is perceived as an organizer and facilitator of the materials, while each student completes the rest of the activity individually with no interaction with their partners. Out of the three learning approaches provided in this study, the textbook-individual practice is considered the most conventional and the easiest to implement in a classroom.

To conclude the chapter, the effects and responsibilities of the teacher-researcher role on the study outcomes are presented. Accordingly, the next chapter outlines the methodological design of the present study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

According to what has been explained in the previous chapters and following the conventions commonly used in research studies, chapter 3 outlines the methodological design of the present study. First the research questions are presented. Next, the methodological framework of the study is introduced including a description of the study participants, instructors, instruments, and the data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the possible differential effects of three distinct pre-reading schema development activities on the reading comprehension of fourth semester students at the university level. The three pre-reading activity types examined in the study are the following:

- Guided and structured cooperative

- Traditional group

- Textbook-based individual

Given the goals of this investigation and the specific data collection methods, the following research questions were formulated:

1) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the scores obtained from guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities and those from textbook-based individual pre-reading activities?

2) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the scores obtained from traditional group pre-reading activities and those from textbook-based individual pre-reading activities?

3) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the scores obtained from students involved in guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities and those participating in traditional group pre-reading activities?

By comparing the scores obtained from the different types of pre-reading activities, I intend to examine what type of activities increase students' comprehension of the required history and socio-political texts.

Prior to conducting the project analysis, and based on the existing literature presented in chapter two along with my professional experience teaching Spanish, my hypothesis about the outcome of the study favored the cooperative guided and structured pre-reading activities over the textbook-based individual approach as a device to increase reading comprehension. With regards to the second research question, my hypothesis supported the individual approach in comparison with the traditional learning group pre-reading treatment. The second hypothesis is based on

the notion that lack of guidance and structure in a group of students may have potentially detrimental effects on the students learning and concentration on the material, affecting negatively the motivation towards the text. On the other hand, the textbook-based individual approach, commonly used by instructors and students, generally permits individual attentiveness to the task and fewer interruptions during the task completion.

Throughout the rest of the study, for the purposes of simplification, every time we refer to guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities, we will simply use the term "cooperative activities". In addition, every time we refer to traditional group pre-reading activities we will simply refer to them as "traditional group activities". Lastly, when we refer to textbook-based individual pre-reading activities, the term "individual activities" will be used. The following section will present a detailed description of the design of the study, followed by the data-collection methods, measurement tools, and analysis procedures used in this study is provided.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study was carried out in the department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). The official name of the level chosen for this study is SPN 312L Second-Year Spanish II: Oral Expression, Reading and Composition. Nonetheless, this level is commonly referred to as Spanish fourth semester, intermediate-high Spanish, and/or simply SPN 312L. The former, SPN

312L and fourth semester Spanish, will be used throughout the description of the present study.

In fourth semester Spanish at the University of Texas, reading comprehension is an integral part of the curriculum. Studies such as Pichette (2005); Walter (2004); Swain and Micolli (1994); carried out in low intermediate and/or intermediate level classes, seem to indicate that intermediate high and/or advanced level students need less assistance than students at the intermediate levels. The fact that intermediate students usually find more reading challenges, due to their unstable reading proficiency level, makes them more appealing for research. However this does not imply that more advanced students do not encounter the same or different types of challenges. The challenges they face might not be as noticeable and interruptive as in intermediate classes, but they still exist. Rather, the tendency to conduct research on beginning and/or intermediate FL students may have simply ignored some of the common concerns found in more advanced FL classes. Thus, I contend that advanced students' reading challenges need to be addressed before they become more conflictive and affect students' motivation to read. The assumption that because of an advanced high proficiency level, students will not encounter significant challenges in the texts is unfair to students and to instructors. The challenges that advanced FL students face definitely need to be considered as much as those encountered by beginners and intermediate students.

One of the objectives of fourth semester Spanish at the University of Texas is to encourage students to engage in a process of perfecting the material learned in the

102

three prior semesters while improving their ability to speak, read, write, and understand Spanish. The objective in the 312L course could be matched with the goals stated in the Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCERL), a project based on the linguistic policy of the European Council, whose ambition is to establish and develop the guidelines for a unified teaching and learning practice within the European context. Besides the four traditional language skills, listening, reading, speaking, and writing, MCERL emphasizes the interactional skills and intercultural communication as basic factors for language acquisition, skills of reception and production. Given the fact that the participants in the present study, in terms of their reading ability, are able to read articles and news related to actual social issues in which the author adopts a concrete point of view, and they also understand literary prose, they would match the B1+ level, according to the language scale used by MCERL. As the guidelines explain, the levels B, B1+ and B2 fall in the advance proficiency category or stage. In MCERL guidelines B1+ is categorized within the threshold level (umbral in Spanish).

Revisiting the description about the course in which the subjects in the study were enrolled, we would point out the specific teaching goals for the SPN 312L level: describing and comparing situations and experiences in detail; narrating in the present, past and future; giving advice, expressing opinions and reacting to dramatic events and situations; talking about likes and dislikes and explaining why; and hypothesizing on both personal and impersonal topics. In both oral and written work, students learn to support their opinions clearly and convincingly. It also includes

being able to understand news articles, conversations about sophisticated topics, poems, journals, and authentic communication in both listening and reading.

The prerequisite is a passing grade (C or better) in SPN 312K Second-Year Spanish I: Oral Expression, Reading and Composition (Spanish third semester), or equivalent credit transferred from another recognized university or credit by University of Texas placement exam (University of Wisconsin College-Level Placement Test). Results of the Wisconsin Placement Test in Spanish are used to place students in the appropriate Spanish courses according to their particular levels of proficiency. The Wisconsin placement test is presented in the format of multiple-choice to test grammar knowledge, reading, and listening skills. An example of a test can be found in the appendix.

The SPN 312L curriculum presumes that students have learned the basic reading strategies in former courses. In spite of this, SPN 312L curriculum includes a set of four reading strategy exercises, such as scanning and skimming; using context to understand the meaning; finding cognates; and using the dictionary. The instructors usually present one of those strategies before each unit. For example, before text 1 in unit 1, students practice scanning and skimming; before text 2 in unit 2, they practice using the context, at the same time students can also apply the strategy they learned in unit 1. By teaching the strategies in such a way, the students have practiced the four strategies in class and at home by the end of the semester. This means that when students read text 4 in unit 4, they have already learned 3 reading strategies plus the one they are learning before reading text 4. It is possible to assume that the way the

curriculum is organized should favor the comprehension results of text 4, given that students have already practiced 3 reading strategies. This is one of the reasons why the pre-reading treatments were applied to every other text; to balance the potential improvement that classroom instruction and reading strategy practice could have produced in students' reading comprehension. Since the impact of the reading strategies on students' reading comprehension is well balanced throughout the semester, the validity[6] of the scores will not be affected.

3.2.1 Classes

The five selected sections for this study gathered during the following times every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10 a.m.	Class 3		Class 3		Class 3
10-11 a.m.	Class 4		Class 4		Class4
11-12 a.m.					
12-1 p.m.	Class 2		Class 2		Class 2
1-2 p.m.	Class 5		Class 5		Class 5
	Class 1		Class 1		Class 1

Table 3. Outline of the classes and meeting times involved in the study

Each section was comprised of 21-24 students. Every class was labeled as a smart classroom (equipped with a computer console, a large white screen and

---

[6] Validity is "the degree to which accumulated evidence and theory support specific interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses" (American Education Research Association [AERA]. American

professional speakers). The five sections used the same uniform standard syllabus, as well as the same weekly calendar, created by the SPN 312L supervisor with the help of the instructors. The syllabus and calendar were customary to all SPN 312L sections. The chosen sections were also coordinated by the same supervisor/coordinator.

3.2.2 Participants

The sample consisted of 117 subjects, all of whom were students in SPN 312L during the semester of Spring 2007 at the University of Texas at Austin. Spring semester runs from January the 15th to May the 12th. The students were enrolled in five different SPN 312L sections. The exact number of students per section was the following:

Class 1: 1-2 p.m: 22 students

Class 2: 12-1 p.m: 24 students

Class 3: 9-10 a.m: 23 students

Class 4: 10-11 a.m: 24 students

Class 5: 1-2 p.m: 24 students

In a few cases, due to different personal reasons, not all the students in the selected sections were able to fully participate in the study. When a student was not present the day of the pre-reading activity, his/her reading comprehension score was

---

not counted, therefore the total number of valid subjects was 107. More details regarding these scores fro absent students will be given in the data analysis procedure section.

It was assumed that the students did not present any considerable background knowledge about any of the four texts treated in this study. As Bernhardt (1983, p. 27) has stated "It is difficult to know what kind of knowledge the reader has already at hand", however, it would be safe to confirm that students had not studied any of these topics in any previous Spanish course at UT, and any preexisting information was superficial in comparison with the thorough and detailed manner that the four informative texts treated each topic.

The 107 subjects were native speakers of English. The first day the study was implemented, the subjects signed a release form (see appendix) committing themselves to participate in the project, which entailed participation in the pre-reading activities, reading the texts, and completing the reading comprehension tests (multiple-choice and recall protocol) with trustworthiness and accountability. In order to motivate the students to take the tasks more seriously, the students earned points for their participation. The number of points awarded were 30 points out of 1000, or in other words, 3 % of their total grade. Points were taken off when students missed a particular task out of the eight tasks needed for the study.

The decision to award points for participating in the study was based on what the literature states about this issue. If grades are deemphasized, students' interest in the subject may noticeably deteriorate, therefore, the instructors, as well as the

researcher, predicted that awarding points to the students would encourage students to be more conscientious with the tasks. McKeachie (1986, p. 225, cited in Bell, 1994: p.4) argues that "students need extrinsic motivation and grades are the most effective of all students motivational tools". Bell (1994, p. 8) goes further by affirming, "competition and reward is America", while he diminishes the importance of the academic utopia, also called, the non-grades system. Bell's expectations, in–line with the impact of grades discussed in the recent literature, were observed in the participants' attitudes towards this study.

3.2.3 Teachers

The teachers for this study were four graduate students from the Spanish and Portuguese department and myself. The five female instructors completed a questionnaire (see appendix) about their education, teaching experience and attitudes towards teaching reading and cooperative practices. As it can be observed in the questionnaires, all of them present substantial experience teaching advanced Spanish culture and language classes. Not only had they been teaching Spanish for more than 5 consecutive years, but they have also been responsible for their own classes for more than four consecutive years with excellent success in the language program. All the instructors had taught in at least one additional academic institution prior of their involvement with the language program at UT. The five of them were familiar with classes containing a wide range of students, from different countries, socio-economic backgrounds, ages, and different language needs. Only two of them (including

108

myself) were familiar with the implementation of the cooperative approach, as well as other alternative teaching approaches, such as inductive approach, and Total Physical Response (TPR). The classes led by these two instructors were the ones chosen to implement cooperative activities, whereas the other three classes implemented traditional groups. Both groups compared their treatment to the steady control treatment, the textbook-based individual practice.

Previous to this study, instructor 1 (myself) and 2 had implemented various cooperative practices in their teaching practices. On the other hand, instructors 3, 4, and 5, did not have the experience of consciously implementing activities within the frame of the cooperative approach. Even though, group and pair work was a common practice in their classrooms, their understanding of group work did not exactly match the definition of cooperative work; as explained in chapter 2, but instead it matched the traditional group techniques. For the reason stated above I decided that instructors 1 and 2 were going to lead the cooperative activities and instructors 3, 4, and 5 would direct the traditional groups, with no guidance and structure.

A week before the study was conducted the four instructors met with me and I carefully explained the manner in which the research process should be implemented. Each of the instructors received instructions to implement a particular approach. Instructors 1 and 2 shared the guided and structured cooperative guidelines and instructors 3, 4, and 5 understood their less guided traditional group implementation. For them, the traditional learning groups were basically what they called "in group

activities" in which students worked together but the instructor's role remains secondary.

The guidelines that instructors 1 and 2 received summarizes Bruffee's list of cooperative components. In this list, Bruffee highlights the importance of structural guidance in cooperative practices. First, teachers need to confirm that students participate fully and equally while working cooperatively, if that is not the case, teachers need to encourage students to be active in the group and to participate; secondly, teachers must act as guides and supervisors of the students' work, while simultaneously evaluating the quality of the work during the activity and offering feedback to the student; and thirdly, Bruffee points out the importance of evaluating the "group process" and the quality of the relationships created by group members.

Following Bruffee's components (1995) are Oxford (1997) and Johnson and Johnson's (1999) catalogue of essential constituents for the cooperative approach. Namely, the structure and guidance components were reinforced in instructors' 1 and 2 training sessions before initiating the project. During the implementation both instructors checked group work more often than the rest of the instructors; offered more feedback about students' completed exercises; answered questions with other questions in order to prompt students to think through the answer themselves; controlled the time of each exercise in an organized manner; and encouraged students to create thoughtful and sophisticated responses about the political issues discussed in the texts.

The instructors who implemented traditional groups received a handout stating the conditions of their treatment as well. This handout basically summarizes the Johnson and Johnson's (1999) list of required components in traditional learning groups. This list includes the formation of groups of students, the presence of a student recorder[7] in each group and the absence of teacher feedback, control or supervision. The instructor allows the students work at their own pace, in their own manner, with no time limitations nor any other type of constraints.

During the post-treatment interview with the instructors, instructors 3, 4 and 5 confirmed that the implementation of traditional groups was uncomplicated and relaxed, which confirmed that the traditional group approach was completed successfully. Instructors 1 and 2 described the process of applying the cooperative pre-reading activities with explicit and precise group supervision; control over the order and procedure used by the students to complete the activities; continuous facilitated assistance to the group members, and the use of personal teaching efficacy brought to the classroom by the instructor. Teaching efficacy, as Yeh (2006, p. 514) points out, refers to the teachers' initiative to try a new approach entrusted by the instructors that includes the teacher's belief that s/he has the competence and skills to bring about student learning. Yeh (2006, p. 514) states that evidence has been found that personal teaching efficacy is a strong predictor of students' learning. Instructors

---

[7] "student recorder" or simply "recorder" refers to the member of the cooperative group in charge of noting down in the cooperative handout the answers after the group members' discussion. His/her main task is to write down the response for all the questions with the information shared and agreed by the whole group.

1 and 2 offered a stronger feeling of teaching efficacy than instructors 3, 4, and 5, a factor that supports the potential positive effect of type 1 instructors on the students pre-reading activities performance.

On the other hand, during the implementation of traditional group pre-reading activities, the level of teacher efficacy was below the level found with instructors 1 and 2, given that the instructors in the traditional group classes held and believed that implementing such an approach without guidance and structure, although uncomplicated to implement, would not necessarily increase students' learning in comparison with the individual pre-reading.

Another important aspect of the pre-reading implementations is my own role as one of the instructors in the study. This position places me in the controversial teacher-researcher position, as argued in chapter two (section 2.4). The benefits encountered in the teacher–research position, as well as my eagerness to commit myself to the development of the study made me to be part of the study.

3.2.4 Instrumentation

This section describes the tools used to obtain and analyze the data. It starts with a description of the required texts used by the students, followed by a description of the cooperative handouts employed in both types of in-group treatments, and the individual activities.

3.2.4.1 Text selection

The four selected texts were part of the curriculum in the course. They were part of the class textbook, *En contexto: Manual de lecturas y películas* by García, Osa-Melero, Sacchi, and Theodoridou, (2007). The textbook was chosen by the department as a requirement for the SPN 312L level.

The first text in unit 1 in the textbook is *Después de la represión: España en los años ochenta.* The text discusses the effects of Franco's dictatorship in Spain and the relevance of its effects on future generations, especially the 80s generation. It contains 957 words along with 3 pictures, one representing the war in Spain and two others representing the 80s generation in Spain, emphasizing the punk style. The second text, *Los años de la dictadura en Argentina y las marcas del terror* contains 1024 words. It focuses on the effects of the recent Argentinean dictatorship on the Argentinean society, making special emphasis on the disappeared civilians and the mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo. It also contains 3 pictures, one portraying the faces of some of the disappeared, another one showing the mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo protesting in a big avenue in Buenos Aires, and the last one shows a sign that says "No al autoritarismo, la violencia y la impunidad; Sí a la democracia, la justicia y la verdad" [No to authoritarianism, violence and impunity; Yes to democracy, justice and truth]. The third text, *Colombia, un país fragmentado* focuses on Colombia's issues with the guerrillas, the government and the paramilitaries. It consists of 859 words and several pictures that try to reflect the fragmentation of the country itself, one about a peaceful square in a little town in

Colombia, the second one shows the boots of soldiers and a third one portrays a beautiful landscape in the mountains. The fourth and last text, *El Che Guevara,* contains 852 words and 3 pictures. Two of them are a representation of the famous portrait of Ernesto Guevara and the last one is an indigenous woman selling clothing items in Puno, Peru.

The four texts offer a substantial amount of glossed words with their corresponding translation in English at the bottom of each page. Every page shows from 18 to 27 glossed words. The text also presents a synopsis of a Spanish-speaking movie related to the content of the text, since it is a course requirement that the students watch, understand and critically respond to questions about a movie related to the historical period explained in the main text. The participants were not required to read this part for the present study.

The authors of the texts and the language program director, who subsequently approved the use of the four texts at the SPN 312L level, controlled with their experience and expertise the difficulty level of the grammatical structures and the vocabulary presented in the texts. Nevertheless, it was necessary to research the difficulty level of the texts from the students' perspective, and confirm the assumption that the four texts were equally demanding and challenging. One SPN 312L class, with a total of 23 students was used for this piloting purpose. This sample of students was not related to the subjects and/or instructors participating in the study. With this purpose in mind, the pre-reading activities were conducted individually, given that our main interest was to rate the text difficulty and appeal. The day of the

pre-reading activities the students individually started their textbook based pre-reading activities in class and completed them at home. The following day these students read the text at home and subsequently completed the MC test in class with three questions that targeted their beliefs about the level of vocabulary and grammar difficulty, topic complexity, and the degree to which the students were engaged with the subject matter (see appendix). The aim was to assess not only the students' reading comprehension, but also their personal attitudes and perceptions towards the text content. The students read the text individually at home and the following day they completed the MC texts. The results are presented in the following table.

	MC reading comprehension mean score	Degree of content complexity (1-5*)	Degree of vocabulary and grammar complexity (1-5)	Degree of interest (1-4)**
Text 1 España	92.75	2.78	3.04	3.61
Text 2 Argentina	87.09	3.26	3.65	3.21
Text 3 Colombia	82.52	3.45	3.13	3.1
Text 4 El Che Guevara	85.57	3.09	3.19	4

Table 4. Results of the evaluation for the text adequacy

* 1 being the least difficult and 5 the most difficult
** 1 being not interesting; 2 somewhat interesting; 3 interesting; and 4 very interesting.

As the results in table 4 demonstrate, the four mean scores fall into a 10% grade range of difference, which is considered a satisfactory and acceptable grade

115

difference for assignments at the same language level. The first text, the article about Spain, obtained the highest score in the reading comprehension MC test, while the third one, which one focused on Colombia, received the lowest score. The first text was supposed to present less grammar and vocabulary difficulties, since it is the first text in the semester. The text difficulties are supposed to increase throughout the semester. With regard to the extent to which the students were engaged and interested by the readings, the fourth and the first texts are the ones that presented a more attention-grabbing topic to the students, and the third one being the least interesting for them. The fourth text about Che Guevara turned out to be more acknowledged among the students due to the recent release of the successful movie *The motorcycle diaries*. As part of the Che Guevara unit, the students were required to watch, understand, and reflect on the plot of *The motorcycle diaries*.

The final discussion regarding the results also considers the degree of vocabulary and grammar difficulty of the texts according to the students' perceptions, and the degree of interest that the sample students expressed about the four readings.

3.2.4.2 Pre-reading handouts for cooperative and traditional group activities

The researcher created a set of pre-reading activities for each text. The cooperative handout for each text can be found in the appendix. The activities used in these handouts limited the students from sharing their knowledge with the group. Students were supposed to discuss their thoughts and knowledge about the specific

topic being asked. Once the group had made a decision about the response, the recorder wrote the answer down.

All the responses had to be decided through group consent. The significance of being in agreement is clearly stated in the handout. The four handouts shared the following instructions:

Cooperative Pre-reading Activities (35-45 min)

Instructions

Form groups of 3/4 people and follow the instructions below before reading the text.

This is a guided collaborative activity and the 3 or 4 group participants must accomplish it.

As a group you need to make sure you are following the directions and understanding each other.

Exchanging opinions and talking about your own thoughts and ideas is a very important concern.

Please make sure you listen to your partners, you understand them, and that they listen to you.

This is a cooperative activity, which means that all the members of the group must participate and agree on the responses.

One member will be in charge of writing the responses, but all of them will agree on them.

Besides encouraging the participants to share their knowledge, the cooperative activities try to personalize the content as much possible. The purpose behind these activities is to encourage students to build relationships with the content. As previous research has confirmed, when the reader makes personal connections with the content of the text, the motivation to read and understand the meaning of the text increases (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). As Fountas and Pinnell (1996, p. 9) corroborate, readers' comprehension might increase if "they use what they know to get to what they yet

117

don't know […] talk about and respond to what they read […] and make connections between texts they have read and their own world, knowledge and reading. Raising readers' curiosity and activating the readers' personal experiences will expectantly enhance readers' interest to read". An example of an activity with the purpose of activating the readers' personal experience to link it with the text content is the following:

5) ¿Qué sucede normalmente después de periodos de represión? ¿Cómo reaccionan los ciudadanos?
6) Compartan un caso en el que ustedes sufrieron represión de algún tipo. ¿Qué sucedió y cómo reaccionaron?

The cooperative handout questions were also designed with the purpose of stimulating discussion and disagreements among students', and aided them in maintaining a group debate while completing the task. The functions of these exercises are based on Kumpulainen and Kaartinen's (2003) collaborative approach research, who confirm that "existing research on collaborative peer learning that is grounded in sociocognitive theories has shown that engaging and resolving conflicts with peers encourages learning". Kumpulainen and Kaartinen (2003) explain that in resolving disagreements, learners explain, justify or question positions and approaches along with seeking new information or adopting alternative points of view and conceptualizations.

The cooperative handouts were implemented in two different ways: guided and structured by the instructor and non-guided and non-structured. The difference

between these two types of implementation were maintained by the degree of involvement by the instructor in the activity and the degree of organization in the completion of the exercise on the part of the students'. In the case of guided and structured activities:

- Students followed the order of the activities as stated in the handout
- Students were required to complete the entire handout with the consensus of all the group members
- Instructors were rigorous about the instructions included in the handouts and frequently checked that the group members were following them
- Instructors helped students with vocabulary, grammatical, and content questions about the handout activities
- Instructors controlled that all the members were equally participating
- Instructors controlled the time to make sure every group completed the activity in 30-35 minutes
- Instructors supervised the group work and offered immediate verbal feedback.

None of the above guiding principles were present in the classrooms where traditional group activities were being implemented. The instructors simply divided the classes in groups, handed out the set of activities, reminded the students about the requirement of appointing a recorder to note down the answers and instructed them to start. The instructors did not walk around the groups to offer feedback or to supervise the students' work. These instructors sat down to grade papers while the students

completed the assignment. The only assistance offered by the instructors was the translation of specific terms and/or expressions that were not in their dictionary.

3.2.4.3 Textbook-based individual pre-reading activities

The textbook *En Contexto: Manual de lecturas y películas* offers a set of individual pre-reading activities before presenting the text. These activities have been commonly used as the default pre-reading activities for SPN 312L. The following is an outline of the textbook individual activities. You can see the full sets in the appendix. These activities do not require any cooperation between the students; they are designed to be completed individually.

A. Map of the country presented in the text. Students locate the main cities of the country

B. Students fill out a chart with the information they already know about the country that they are about to study. The chart has 9 boxes: history, politics, music, cuisine, sport, art, famous people, society and life style, other facts.

C. Students read a brief introduction to the text and answer 10 true/false comprehension questions.

D. Students write similarities and differences between one aspect of the reading and their own country. There are 3 -4 lines to write the response. In the case of unit 1, students compared the political parties in Spain during the late 30s and the political parties in the US at the present moment

E. Creative activity. Students are asked to use their imagination and write a paragraph about a specific aspect of the text. In the case of unit 1, students have to imagine and speculate the reaction of the Spaniards at the end of the dictatorship in 1975. The instructions require the students to use a particular grammatical point, in this case preterit and imperfect.

3.3 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The following sections outline the different steps taken before and after the data collection. They offer details about the treatment, the implementation of the treatment and the actual data collection. It follows an outline that summarizes the steps involved in the treatment implementation and the subsequent data collection.

```
  ↓         ↓         ↓            ↓              ↓         ↓
  1         2         3            4              5         6
class      pre-reading  reading   post-reading/data collection   data analysis  results
observations
```
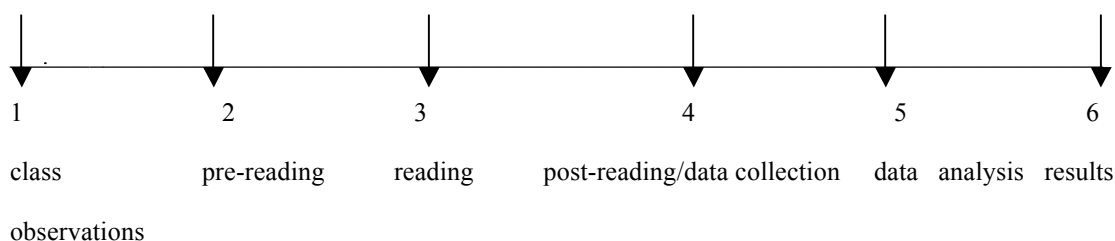
1-Before the treatment implementation: class observations in the five participating classes

2- Pre-reading stage:

		Text 1: Spain after the dictatorship (2nd class week)	Text 2: Argentina after the dictatorship (5th class week)	Text 3: Colombia's post-war situation (10th class week)	Text 4: The impact of Che Guevara in Latin America (13th class week)
Cooperative classes	Class 1	*Guided & structured cooperative*	*Individual*	*Guided & structured cooperative*	*Individual*
	Class 2	*Guided & structured cooperative*	*Individual*	*Guided & structured cooperative*	*Individual*

Table 5. Cooperative classes diagram

		Text 1: Spain after the dictatorship (2nd class week)	Text 2: Argentina after the dictatorship (5th class week)	Text 3: Colombia's post-war situation (10th class week)	Text 4: The impact of Che Guevara in Latin America (13th class week)
Traditional group classes	Class 1	*Individual*	*Traditional group*	*Individual*	*Traditional group*
	Class 2	*Individual*	*Traditional group*	*Individual*	*Traditional group*
	Class 3	*Individual*	*Traditional group*	*Individual*	*Traditional group*

Table 6. Traditional group classes diagram

3- Reading stage: Students read the text at home

4- Post-reading stage/ reading comprehension data collection: First, students complete multiple-choice tests; second, students complete written recall protocol.

5- Data analysis

MC tests grading

Written recall protocol grading

      - Building the text templates/ idea units template (written recall protocol measurement tool)

      - Text templates inter-rater reliability

      - Grading criteria inter-rater reliability

      - Grading criteria intra-rater reliability

6- Results (Chapter 4: Quantitative results):

MC results: mean comparison tests for paired data

Recall protocol results: mean comparison tests for paired data

The study set-up accommodated me, as a researcher, for class observations, especially when cooperative and traditional learning groups were implemented. Due to schedule reasons, classes 1 and 2 implemented the cooperative treatment, during text 1 and 3, and the rest of the classes implemented the traditional group approach during text 2 and 4. In this way I was able to observe all the classes.

3.3.1 Pre-reading stage

3.3.1.1 Class observations prior to the treatment implementation

Prior to the treatment implementation, I personally observed the four classes once with the objective of becoming familiar with the setting, class dynamics, students, and instructors' teaching style. The five instructors demonstrated to have followed the calendar thoroughly and showed a notable enthusiasm to encourage the students to participate in the lesson. The physical distribution of the students varied. Class 3 and 4 used a more traditional chair distribution, four straight lines of desks, while class 1, 2 and 5 used a discussion type distribution, and the chairs formed a semicircle. Interesting enough, classes 1 and 2 seemed to be more centered on the students, and both classes showed a set of activities in which the instructors were not the main figure, but rather the guide or facilitator. On the other hand, the lesson plan in classes 3 and 4 appeared to be somewhat teacher centered.

During my observations, the interactions in the semicircle classes occurred more often and more eagerly than in the line distribution classes. The students in the

semicircle distribution classes also volunteered to participate and interrupted the teacher more frequently than students in classes 3 and 4 with a more traditional distribution.

During the observations I witnessed, that the students' oral skills proficiency were suitable to participate in a fourth semester post-reading discussion, and in the case the students' Spanish oral level was not sufficient they undoubtedly switched to English to finish the idea.

3.3.1.2 Treatment implementation: Guided & structured cooperative

Instructor 2, with the help of the researcher, led the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading lessons. A week before the pre-reading activities were implemented I called a meeting with the four instructors participating in the study and informed them of the objectives and procedures of the process. In this meeting the differences between cooperative oriented activities, traditional group, and individual activities, were pinpointed. An outline describing and comparing cooperative approach with the individual approach was presented and thoroughly explained to them. I also performed an example of a cooperative pre-reading activity that I had applied in an ESL classroom the year before. The major differences between the two approaches were highlighted, as well as, the importance of the guidance and structure variables.

In order to collect qualitative data about the actual accomplishment of the activities that could support the quantitative results and to control all the possible variables in the study, I decided to be present during the cooperative treatment implementation. My presence as a researcher in the classroom helped balance the instructor's personal teaching style and also helped them in case of doubt about the pre-reading implementation procedure. The instructors valued the fact that I was in the classroom, in the case they had a doubt or a misunderstanding emerged.

Next, I will describe with more detail the procedure that followed the first cooperative set of activities implemented in classes 1 and 2.

Description of the guided & structured cooperative pre-reading implementation in classes 1 and 2

With the objective of implementing the pre-reading cooperative treatment for text 1, I attended class 1 and 2. Class 2 was the first class treated given that they met before class 1. The lesson started with a warm-up exercise: a conversation about the weekend and their plans for the week. Everything possible was done to make the students feel comfortable with me in the classroom aiding the instructor with the lesson plan. Quickly, students moved their desks and voluntarily joined the groups they wanted to be in. The students were grouped, as they preferred. One of the conditions was the gender variation (2 males and 1 female or 2 females and 1 male). The other condition was to feel comfortable with their partners and be willing to share their knowledge with them. All the students agreed and did not show any difficulty

125

arranging themselves in groups. Group and pair activities had been a common pattern in this particular class. The class was finally divided into 5 groups of 3-4 students each.

After the group arrangement, I gave a brief verbal introduction in English, about the cooperative teaching principles used for the study. I also placed special emphasis on the importance of individual accountability and responsibility for the answers. Most of the participants were attentive to my instructions. Their participation in the study, because of the grades they would receive, created some tension in the class environment and some students seemed worried about completing the tasks correctly and their importance. The instructor responded that a relatively small percentage of their oral participation class was devoted to the cooperative pre-reading and post-reading activities. After making sure that everybody in the class understood the principles behind the set of activities and the value of the participation credit, the students received a consent form (see appendix) to be carefully read and signed by them. In this consent form the students agreed to be part of the study and also allowed the researcher to use their post-reading test scores as data for the present study. Following the consent form, the instructor allocated one set of activities to each group and asked them to read the instructions in their own groups (basically a repetition of the instructions I had just verbally given them). Before starting the task, the participants decided who would take the recorder role and after signing their names, they started the activity. The five groups started to talk to each other enthusiastically, mainly in Spanish. The main language used in the discussions was

Spanish although students occasionally used English. Some groups shared more knowledge than others; some participants were livelier than others, however, it was clear that all the groups were interactively engaged in the activity. When the group members agreed on a common answer the recorder wrote down the answer on the handout. Partnership was noticeable in most of the groups, not only when participants were reflecting about specific ideas to contribute to a final answer, but also to look up words in the dictionary.

The instructor and I controlled the class dynamics and we both believed that it met the expectations of the cooperative principles. Class 1 functioned similarly to class 2 with the difference of one group that showed little motivation toward the activities. The dynamics of the cooperative pre-reading lesson were analogous to class 1. The class was divided into 5 mixed-gender groups. From my observation notes, I recorded that some groups in class 1 used more English in their interactions than the groups in class 2. This English interference usually occurred when the students wanted to share relevant ideas and they could not wait to translate it to Spanish. It also occurred when the students were not sure about expressing the idea in Spanish and instead of taking time to think about it, they would switch to English or make use of some "Spanglish[8]". In both classes the participants exchanged their knowledge and negotiated the meaning of their final responses mainly in Spanish

---

[8] Spanglish is a hybrid "language" made up from Spanish by introducing English terms instead of translating them or by using wrong translations. (http://www.ia.uned.es/~fjdiez/spanglish/). It primarily appears in the speech of the Latin American and Anglo population of the United States and the population

with some English or "Spanglish" when they lacked the terminology needed for the ideas they were trying to convey.

Both sections used 40-45 minutes to complete the task, and most of the groups finished on time except one group in each class that needed 5 extra minutes to finish writing the responses.

3.3.1.3 Treatment implementation: Traditional learning groups

Next, I will describe in more detail the procedure that followed the first traditional learning group pre-reading set of activities implemented in classes 3, 4 and 5. As in classes 1 and 2, I was present during the 2 traditional group implementations to take notes and help the instructors about the implementation procedures. The only class I could not attend was class 5 due to schedule overlapping. The instructor in class 5 reported to carefully have followed the instructions that were explained to her during the training session.

Description of the traditional group implementation in classes 3, 4, and 5

The second text needed to be prepared on February the 14th. For this text, instructors 3, 4 and 5 implemented the traditional learning group treatment in comparison to the individual treatment performed by classes 1 and 2. I attended classes 3 and 4 with the objective of taking notes about the procedure and confirm that the treatment was implemented in the correct manner. In both classes the students were divided into groups of 3-4 students with a good mixture of males and females.

Once the groups were formed they received the pre-reading handouts. The instructor read the instructions out loud to make sure that all the students understood the procedure. After the instructions students appointed the recorder and started the task. Most of the groups seemed eagerly engaged in the activity, and even though most of them took a little bit longer than the students in class 1 and 2 during text 1, only two groups did not complete the handouts successfully. As mentioned in the previous sections, neither the instructor nor the researcher walked around the class helping the students with vocabulary, grammar or content questions. There was no guidance on the instructors' part during the pre-reading activities, and neither was there any requirement to follow the handouts in an orderly manner. Students could complete the activities freely in the order they wanted. The group agreement requirement was also not emphasized as it had been in classes 1 and 2. In the three sections the completion of the handouts took almost 45 minutes, provided that the pace of the student was slower than the pace of the students from class 1 and 2 when given guidance and structure.

3.3.1.4 Control treatment implementation: Textbook-based individual

The textbook-based individual pre-reading activities share many traits with the individualistic learning structure explained by Johnson and Johnson (1999), illustrated in detail in chapter two in section 2.3.7. For example, the lack of student-student interaction, the classroom arrangement, the competitive goal, and the clear specification of the instructional objectives, are patent characteristic in the textbook-

based individual approach. However, unlike the individualistic approach, in which the teacher becomes the major source of assistance, feedback, and support, the textbook-based individual practice relies on the textbook as a primary source of assistance, relegating the instructor to a second position. Consequently, the teacher becomes an organizer of the class dynamics, with no major involvement with the students' assignments unless the students openly request help in a specific matter.

Out of the three types of learning technique, the individual one is the most conventional, and it could be said that it is also the most conservative from a communicative point of view, as well as the easiest to implement in the classroom.

Due to time constraints, I was not able to direct the individual activities, except in my own class. However, the teachers were explicitly instructed about the procedure during the training session. The instructors were familiar with individual instructions given that they had been teaching this course using an individual approach for more than three semesters in a row. The instructors followed my instructions and conducted the pre-reading lesson in which the students worked individually. The students opened their Manual to page 2 and completed the activities A through E (see appendix). When the students finished their activities the instructors corrected them together with the whole class, calling on some students to share their responses out loud. If the answer was correct the instructors offered them positive feedback, such as:

-Muy bien; buenísima idea; ¿algo más? ¿alguien quiere añadir algo a su respuesta? (Inviting the rest of the class to participate) Perfecto.

[Very good, excellent idea; something else? Does somebody want to add something else) Perfect.]

The individual set was completed in 30-35 minutes. Each instructor used the remaining 15-20 minutes to prepare homework for the next day, clarify assignments, or review the material taught in previous classes. The instructors confirmed that they did not provide any extra information about the text itself or the socio-cultural context, unless the students explicitly asked a particular question. This was the case in class 4, where the instructor asserted that a couple of interested and curious students expressed interest in the socio-political situation related to the text content. The teacher openly clarified the students' doubts. The whole class was involved in the response and the participants valued the extra information offered by the instructor.

3.3.2 Reading stage

Following the pre-reading activities, the students were reminded to read the text carefully at home and avoid any outside research or discussion about the topic. Instructors also reminded them about the consent form the students signed on the day the researcher presented the study, in which the participants agreed to follow the instructions respectfully. Following the reminder, students were encouraged to read the text silently at home the day after completing the pre-reading activities. The silent reading was instructed following Bernhardt's (1983, p. 113) recommendation, "when students do silent reading… students can focus their metacognitive capacities on the

message, rather than on how words are pronounced or how prosodic features are produced". Therefore, silent reading was encouraged with the purpose of enhancing comprehension.

3.3.3 Post-reading and data collection stage

Two intra-group comparative studies were performed, one study for the cooperative classes, and another one for traditional group classes. The purpose of an intra-group study is to compare the effect of a particular treatment with a control treatment within the same class framework, that is to say, using the subjects. For the cooperative classes the innovative treatment is cooperative and the control treatment is the individual activities set. For the traditional group classes the innovative treatment is traditional group in comparison with individual activities.

Cooperative classes **(class 1 and 2)** Cooperative vs. individual	**Traditional group classes** **(class 3,4, and 5)** Traditional group vs. individual

Cooperative classes' scores were grouped and combined, given that both of them followed the same treatment at the same time. The same occurred with the traditional group classes. Grouping the scores of the cooperative classes to obtain a more general average score, has protected to some extent, the validity of the scores from factors such as, the impact of the class environment, class dynamics, a particular

teacher's influence on the individual pre-reading implementation, time, class motivation, students' learning particularities, possible differences in students' reading levels and language proficiency.

Both types of classes used the same texts, required in the department. They followed the same order and the students read it at the same time. The sequential order of the text was not altered at any moment.

Due to spatial constraints, it was not possible to conduct three or even two treatments in the same classroom at the same time, under the same instructor. An intra-group study would have permitted a more precise comparison within the same time frame and the same class; however mainly due to the physical size of the classrooms the students could not be divided in two big groups to complete the two different types of activities.

Before the students completed the recall protocols and MC tests, they changed the semi circle class distribution and formed four lines of chairs to avoid seeing their classmates' responses, especially for the MC test. Students in all classes admitted having read the passage at home, but most of them had not reread it before class. The instructors, with the intention of helping students' comprehension, followed Bernhardt's concept of rereading before taking the test. Bernhardt (1983, p.11) asserts that "rereading is an effective method for increasing comprehension", therefore students were allowed to reread the passages during the first 5 minutes of class. Following the rereading, the instructors provided the students with the recall protocol forms and gave them additional instructions:

- Write down in this white paper all the information you remember about the article you read. Do it in English, do not worry about grammatical or spelling mistakes, and do not pay attention to the order. Pay attention to content. Do not look at your neighbors, and concentrate on your own ideas.

Following the instructions, students were informed to close their textbooks and start writing their recall protocols. The use of a dictionary or any source of information was not permitted. The participants were given a blank paper with written instructions that repeated what the instructor had just explained (see appendix). Students completed their assignment individually and silently.

The time average used to complete the recall protocols was approximately 20-25 minutes. As the students were finishing their written recalls, participants received the MC test and completed. The recall protocol ought to be completed prior to the MC so that the learners could not memorize the MC statements and include them in the recall protocol.

The time used to complete the MC tests was approximately 6-8 minutes. The total time used for the data collection for each text was 30 minutes. No anomalies were reported during the data collection process, with the exception of the fact that some students used extra minutes to finish both assignments, especially the written recall protocol.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The present study includes quantitative analysis of the MC tests and the written recall protocols. The MC tests and recall protocols were straightforwardly analyzed by one grader (myself). The MC analysis did not present any important challenge. Each correct answer received one point, each incorrect or absent answer received 0 points. The written recall protocol analysis presented more challenges. Creating an idea units' template, also known as a text template, to analyze the recall protocol was a demanding task. For reliability reasons, the intervention of a second rater (R2) was necessary to create the four text templates and to analyze a sample of the recall protocols. In the following section the details concerning the process of building the measurement tools along with the procedure to objectively score the students' responses are discussed.

3.4.1 Reading comprehension measurement tools

3.4.1.1 Multiple-choice tests

The design of the MC tests followed the standard design of MC tests commonly used in reading comprehension tests: i.e., each of the questions used in the MC test was linked to a major idea in the text or to an important supporting idea; therefore non basic supporting details secondary and/or minor details were not the focus of MC tests. Due to the different length and content of the texts, not all the MC tests present the same quantity of questions. The first MC test consists of 9 questions; the second 7; the third 10; and the fourth one consists of 9 questions. Each item is

composed of one question, three distractors and one correct answer. A sample of an item is included below. The complete MC tests can be found in the appendix.

1. El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional perseguía a

a) los argentinos que simpatizaban con los militares

b) las personas que no estaban de acuerdo con las ideas políticas de la Junta Militar

c) las clases altas y las compañías nacionales e internacionales

d) los prisioneros que no apoyaban las ideas conformistas

The process of creating and polishing the MC questions has been possible with the help of two other colleagues. They completed the MC tests before these were handed to the participants and offered their feedback with the objective of improving the quality of the tests, which resulted in test reliability improvement. Important modifications were made to the first draft of the MC exams, specifically in the rewording of the questions and the correct answers, as well as the length and content of the distractors. Their feedback regarding the MC questions has been invaluable for the data collection. As a last note, these MC tests are still in use in the Spanish and Portuguese department as reading comprehension quizzes for the SPN 312L level.

One of the most valuable topics of the discussion with the two colleagues was about the language used to word the MC questions and items. After a long conversation the instructors' decision leaned in favor of using the foreign language. Despite the amount of literature in favor of the native language for the MC items, I was restricted by the general class requirement "all assignments in SPN 312L, oral

and written, will be conducted in Spanish; English will only be used under special circumstances". For that reason it was important for the study to create comprehension tests parallel with class assignments, in terms of format, thus students would realize that these tests are class-graded assignments and would take them seriously. Moreover, using L2 to phrase MC questions is more in-line with the course assignment purposes and it also offers the students the option to recognize the terminology that they found in the written texts.

The day of the data collection, students in the five sections were explicitly asked by their instructors to ask any questions about the words used in the test. The few words considered difficult for a fourth semester student offered the English translation in parentheses. Below you will find an example taken from the MC test for text 2.

6. Algunas familias argentinas adoptaron bebes provenientes de (from)

a) madres de clase social alta

b) familias relacionadas con la Junta Militar

c) mujeres detenidas por las Fuerzas Armadas

d) abuelas a favor de la tortura y el exterminio

In case the students were not familiar with a particular term and there was no translation on the side, the participants were able to inform the instructor and she would write the translation of the unknown term on the blackboard. With the objective of validating the tests, the sample of students used to obtain feedback about

the texts, also piloted the MC tests, and they did not report any complaint about the complexity of the language or the MC items. Therefore, due to the reasons commented above, Spanish, was the chosen language to formulate the questions, the correct answer, and the three distractors.

The process of grading MC tests was straightforward. MC tests offer a fast and convenient way to obtain and score. If the student checks the correct answer, one point will be awarded; if the student checks the wrong answer, s/he will receive a zero. The almost 400 MC tests were graded by me in a period of 7 days. The scores were translated to percentages and added to excel sheets where the rest of the results were introduced to be used as data for the quantitative analysis.

3.4.1.2 Written recall protocol

The written recall protocol is a written record of the ideas that the reader remembers from the text after having read the text. In this study, the process of analyzing recall protocols presented more challenges than the MC test. The first step was to create a grading rubric, also called idea units' template (see appendix) for each text in the study. To create the idea templates, the texts were divided into meaningful idea units designated to allow quantitative assessment of recall. To account for level of importance differences in each recall, the idea units were also rated by importance within the text. The quantity and quality (importance) of the idea units was determined by my own criteria and the criteria of a university academic colleague. This colleague, named R2, thoroughly assessed the four texts' idea units, as well as

138

the importance level for each idea unit. The inter-rater reliability calculated in this process will be commented on in the following section.

With the objective of increasing the reliability of the recall protocol results, one of the actions taken was to analyze the recall protocol using two different quantitative weighting systems. First, Meyer and Rice's (1984) system, referred by Bernhardt (1991), as one of the most suitable systems to analyze recall protocols. This method requires the cumulative sum of the values of the idea units recalled, and secondly, a modified Meyer and Rice (1984) weighting system, used by Lund (1991) and Bernhardt (1991), which presents a particular focus on the three different idea levels in isolation, concluding with a particular result for each of the three levels of significance.

Procedures to analyze written recall protocol: Idea unit's templates (text templates)

As discussed in chapter two, the most suitable tool to analyze recall protocols is the idea unit's template, or text template described by Meyer and Rice (1984). The template reflects the division of the text into several idea units. Each idea unit has a specific level of importance in the text, also called the value of the idea. The following chart summarizes the three levels of idea units used in the present study:

Points	Category	Description
3	Main generalization	A proposition asserting a basic and fundamental idea of the text. The main generalizations logically aligned will form the summary of the text. The information it adds to the text is essential and indispensable.
2	Supporting generalization	A proposition that supports, gives evidence, and/or justifies the main generalization. Its importance in the text is subordinate to the main generalization. The information it adds to the text usually accompanies the main generalization. The supporting generalization is somewhat necessary to rebuild the summary of a text.
1	Supporting detail	It is the smallest unit of the text subordinated to supporting and main generalizations. The information it adds to the whole text is the least important, a mere detail. The supporting detail is not essential to rebuild the summary of a text.

Table 7. Rubric for the idea unit hierarchical categories

The four texts used in the study have been divided into semantic units categorized into three different levels, following the above rubric. The points scored by the reader are cumulative across levels. It is important to note that the hierarchical content structure of a text does not always correspond to the exact linear model of the propositions in the text; therefore some ideas have slightly changed their order.

As it can be observed in the segment of the first template below "…the text is divided into a hierarchy of ideas with certain ideas of more central importance to the text than others" (Bernhardt & James, 1987, p. 78)

Level of significance	Pausal/Idea Unit	recalled by the student
1	En 1936	
3	guerra civil española	
2	entre nacionales y republicanos	
1	nacionales conocidos como derechistas y/ franquistas	
1	republicanos conocidos como izquierdistas	
1	nacionales ayudados por el Vaticano	
3	nacionales ganaron la Guerra	

Table 8. Text 1 idea units' template (see appendix for the complete template).

140

The following section will offer more details about the work of the second rater and the inter-rater reliability statistical results.

Idea units' template (text template) inter-rater reliability

The importance of the evaluation by the second rater on the idea units' templates and the grading process was highly considered in this study. The division of idea units for each text (see appendix) was created with the assistance, experience, and perspective of the R2, who commented on the division of the texts' propositions and added her valuable feedback.

R2 was given the template I created for each text with the value column in blank (see appendix). I methodically reinforced the different value of the idea units: main generalization ideas were worth 3 points; supporting generalizations were worth 2 points; and details were assigned 1 point. R2 was presented with a handout reminding her about the meaning and implications of main generalization, supporting generalization and detail, as well as other concepts relevant to the task (see appendix). After considerable thinking about the weight of the ideas and the division of these, R2 assigned a specific value, also called the level of significance, to every idea unit in every template. Following Bernhardt and Deville's (1991) suggestions, statistical analyses that support the reliability of the recall protocol are necessary. One of the recommended statistical instruments is the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test for

internal consistency[9]. The application of Cronbach's Alpha served the purpose of measuring the reliability of the idea units' templates of the present study. It compared R2's given values with the values assigned to the idea units during my final round points assignment. The reliability tables are presented below. Table 9 shows the reliability score for the first text template, the result obtained was below the standard (.657), being 0.7 the generally accepted standard, even though in some particular studies 0.6 has been accepted as an acceptable result for the reliability scores.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	Number of items
.657	.657	2

Table 9. Inter-rater reliability for template 1

The high number of idea units that text 1 presented, in comparison with the other texts, could explain this relatively low result. Text 1 consisted of 74 idea units, while text 2 presents 54, text 3 presents 44 idea units, and text 4 offered 63. For the template 2, the inter rater reliability increased positively, obtaining a result of .724; in the case of the template for text 3 the result was in the same line .746. Text 4, however, shows a slight decrease in the inter-rater reliability, which could be

---

[9] Cronbach's alpha refers to the reliability coefficient indicating the degree of internal consistency of items within a test. Mathematically, it is the equivalent of the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients of the test. If certain assumptions are met, it ranges from 0 (zero internal consistency) to 1 (perfect internal consistency); a negative alpha coefficient indicates that items of the scale are negatively correlated and that an inappropriate reliability model is being used. Also called

explained also by the high quantity of details used to describe Che Guevara's origins, journeys and adventures. This was also supported by the sample group of students used to comment on the degree of difficulty of each text. Almost 89% of the sample of students reflected that the text on Che Guevara was more challenging to remember due to the different actions occurring almost simultaneously. The inter-reliability result for text 4 was .602. Overall, the four templates obtained an acceptable inter-rater reliability score.

The intra-rater reliability consisted of having the same main rater (in this case myself), evaluating twice the idea unit values. This procedure was put into practice by evaluating all the idea units one specific day and a second time two weeks later.

Idea units' templates (text templates) intra-rater reliability

Besides the inter-rater reliability for the idea units' templates, an intra-rater reliability assessment was also performed. The intra-rater reliability consists of having the same main rater (in this case myself), evaluating twice the idea unit values. This procedure was put into practice by evaluating all the idea units twice with a time frame of two weeks. The two-week time period allowed me to forget the values that I awarded during the first round, avoiding any type of memorization. Along with the inter-rater reliability practice, the objective of this procedure was to increase the reliability of the measurement tool and create a more objective grading tool.

alpha reliability coefficient and coefficient alpha (Dictionary of Psychology 2001, published by Oxford University Press 2001.)

The Cronbach's Alfa coefficient test for internal consistency was also employed to assess the scoring tools' reliability. In this case, the comparison was between the values assigned during the first and second rounds. The results of the intra-rater reliability for the four templates are stated below. As it can be observed, the intra-rater reliability of text 1 successfully consists of .843, a result generally associated with a high degree of reliability.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	Number of items
.843	.843	2

Table 10. Intra-rater reliability for template 1

Following the trend in text 1, text 2 intra-rater reliability proves to be as high as the first text, concluding with a result of .840. The intra-rater reliability decreases insignificantly in template 3, nonetheless it is still above the standard value of .796. Regarding template 4, as explained in the previous section, the intra-rater reliability decreased to the point that it is situated below the standard .648, however it is still above the .6 which is considered acceptable for many researchers.

With the purpose of corroborating an objective and impartial grading criteria, the next section discusses the inter-rater reliability of the grading criteria.

Grading criteria inter-rater reliability using the idea units' templates

With the objective of increasing the validity of the subjects' scores an inter-rater reliability analysis was performed. The aim of this type of inter-rater reliability

144

assessment is to prove the objectivity of the grading criteria and confirm that the subjectivity of only one rater's criteria does not rule the grading process. The same person (R2) who had previously evaluated the text templates, offered to evaluate the grading criteria since her familiarity with the study was extremely convenient at this point of the research project. She was given only 12 sample recall protocols considering that grading recall protocols are an enormously time consuming task.

The 12 recall protocols belonged to students with an "A" and "B" average score in the class, (a 90% or 80% performance grade). The reasons behind the selection for these particular students were: 1) these three students had completed all the assignments in the study and never missed a pre-reading or post-reading activity; 2) their recall protocols were considered rich in ideas; and 3) their class grade throughout the semester was an "A" (90%) and/or "B" (80%). In the United States educational system, contrary to many European educational systems, a final grade of 80% and above is considered acceptable, whereas a score of 80% or below is considered a poor score that needs immediate attention. The recall protocols belonging to "C" (70%) students usually missed most of the ideas and the process of grading those recalls, since the paper would have been almost blank, would have been a process of marking "0" in all the missed ideas.

I gave R2 three written recall protocols for each text, a total of twelve recall protocols and also three master templates for each text to score the participants' recall protocols. I explained the process of grading the idea units, emphasizing the wording variation, which means that the students did not have to word the idea in exactly the

145

same way it was written in the text, but had to use their own words to explain their understanding of the text. To improve her grading quality we both graded together one recall protocol that was not part of the sample, therefore she could experience the grading process and ask me questions if she had disagreements.

The researcher and R2 scored twelve written recall protocols to check for reliability; the correlation between scorers was considerably high. The Cronbach's alpha[10], correlation, used to measure the degree of reliability provided the following results:

For text 1, the inter-rater reliability for student 1's (S1) written recall protocol was .834, for student 2 (S2) the result was .84, and for student 3 (S3) was .580. Regarding the results for text 2 we obtained .88 for S1, .83 for S2, and .65 for S3. In reference to text 3, the results obtained were .74 for S1, .93 for S2, and finally .62 for S3. In reference to text 4 the results were .98 for S1, .87 for S2, and .88 for S3.

The results of the inter-rater reliability for the grading criteria indicate several valuable facts. The process of grading students 1 and 2 recall protocols was not as difficult as the process of grading student 3. The difference between these three

---

[10] Cronbach's alpha is a test for a model or survey's internal consistency. It is also called a 'scale reliability coefficient. Cronbach's alpha will generally increase when the correlations between the items increase. For this reason the coefficient is also called the internal consistency or the internal consistency reliability of the test. The widely-accepted social science cut-off is that alpha should be .70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a scale, but some use .75 or .80 while others are as lenient as .60. That .70 is as low as one may wish to go is reflected in the fact that when alpha is .70, the standard error of measurement will be over half (0.55) a standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidimensional latent construct. When data have a multidimensional structure, Cronbach's alpha will usually be low. Technically speaking, Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test - it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency) (http://www. http://math.about.com/od/statistics/Statistics).

students was their Spanish proficiency level and their class grade. On the one hand, S1 and S2 were able to maintain an A grade during the whole semester. Not only were their exam grades superior, but the MC tests and the recall protocols grades were also at the top 5% of the class. On the other hand, S3 fluctuated from a low B to a high B during the semester and her scores on the MC tests and the recall protocols reflected a clear B. After scoring almost 400 recall protocols, my experience, together with R2's experience, (even though she only graded 12 recall protocols), informs me that scoring an average recall protocol is a more complicated task than scoring an outstanding recall protocol. Average recall protocols usually present ideas in a more textually disorganized way, less defined, and in an ambiguous manner. The idea units' templates created for this study, following Bernhardt (1983), Meyer and Rice (1984), and Sharp's (2002) remarks and recommendations, functioned competently and efficiently as scoring criteria when used to score "A" recall protocols. However, the scoring criteria presented more challenges when grading average or less than average grade recall protocols.

Another feature of the inter-rater reliability worth mentioning is the fact that student 3 obtained a high degree of inter-rater reliability (.88) in text 4 considering that the text was more demanding than the rest of the texts. This high result is due to the high quantity of zeros marked in the template. The quantity of information the student reported was minimum. The actual recall protocol's grade for S3 shows that she only reported 11% of the ideas of text 4, in other words, seven idea units out of 62. R2 observed the same fact and although she awarded her with a 7.30% of recalled

147

content, the number of ideas that R2 reported from this particular student was only six. Both raters marked 0 for the rest of the idea units, which significantly increased the results of the inter-rater reliability.

3.5 ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Subsequent to the positive results obtained in the inter-rater reliability analysis, the process of grading 400 recall protocols was initiated. A hundred copies of every master idea units' template were used as the scoring tool. I checked all the ideas found in every student's recall protocols and added up the points to transform them to percentages. The recall protocols were analyzed from two different perspectives. The first one, from a holistic perspective, added up the total number of points from the ideas recalled by each subject. The second analysis focused on the ideas with the same value or level of significance. From each recall protocol 4 different scores were recorded as illustrated below:

Student	Total score	Total level 3 ideas score	Total level 2 ideas score	Total level 1 ideas score
John Smith	51%	89%	25%	3%

Table 11. Example of the recall protocol scores obtained by a particular student

As stated in chapter 2, experts in testing reading comprehension agree that recall protocol grading is a highly time-consuming task that might affect the objectivity of the rater, and consequently the validity of the results. To avoid lack of objectivity, the grading process in this study was adapted in a way that every day of

148

the week no more than 10 recall protocols were graded. That is the reason why the grading process was carried out over a period of more than two months. As highlighted in the previous section, MC tests were graded in a period of 7 days, and the grades, converted to percentages, were introduced in the master excel sheet along with the recall protocol scores.

A few recall protocols and MC tests scores could not be used because their result was zero or very close to zero. An average of two students per text left their recall protocol almost blank (these students' MC tests results were also extremely low, which means that the students did not read the text beforehand.

The low scores obtained from these subjects were not counted as data, in order to purposefully avoid a negative alteration of the study results since it was not always the same students who did not accomplish the reading task.

For statistical reasons, an additional measure was taken in the case of one student who attended the pre-reading activity, but missed the post-reading test. The score considered for the day that particular student was absent, was the one the student obtained in another pre-reading treatment test. For example if "John" missed the second cooperative pre-reading activity, the score awarded for the comprehension test would be the same score s/he obtained in the first cooperative pre-reading activity. This was applied to both, the MC test and recall protocol. Below is a chart that provides a better idea of how I proceeded with absent students' scores. Fortunately this only happened in the case of four students due to the importance of these activities for their course participation grade.

149

Stude nt	MC1 Indiv. treatment	RP1 Indiv. treatme nt	MC2 Coop treatment	RP2 Coop treatment	MC3 Indiv treatment	RP3 Indiv treatment	MC4 Coop treatment	RP4 Coop treatment
John	56	22	78	29	54	19	absent (given grade:78)	absent (given grade: 29)
Mary	33	12	39	10	absent (given grade: 33)	absent (given grade:12)	48	21

Table 12. Example of the procedure to compensate for the grade of an absent

student

3.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

This chapter has presented the general description and operationalization of the study, including an extensive description of the participants, the instructors, the texts, the second rater, and an explanation for the data collection procedure. An outline of the steps that the study has to follow has been concisely presented with the purpose of offering a more visual scaffold of the study.

In addition, the two assessment measurement tools used in the study were thoroughly described including the development process of the multiple-choice tests and the text templates created for the recall protocols. The intervention of the second rater was assessed by the adequate inter and intra- rater reliability procedures, which concluded with successful results when testing the reliability of the division of the text ideas, as well, as the reliability for the scoring process of the recall protocols. As explained in the chapter, the recall protocol samples graded by R2 obtained similar

scores to the ones graded by the researcher, consequently the inter-rater turned out to be positive and encouraging, as it occurred to the intra-rater reliability tests.

Additionally, a detailed description of several reading assessment tools has been also presented, with the corresponding comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of each testing tool, demonstrating that multiple-choice tests and recall protocols were the most adequate tools for aim of the present study.

The data obtained were subjected to quantitative analyses to determine if there were differences between the impacts of the different pre-reading treatments. The results obtained from the statistical comparisons applied to cooperative classes and traditional classes are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the quantitative data analysis for the three research questions leading the study. First, it presents the results of the MC and recall protocol for the cooperative classes; in which guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities were implemented. Second, it presents the results for the traditional group classes, in which traditional learning groups pre-reading activities were practiced. Scores in both types of classes were compared to the group scores to the scores obtained from the textbook-based individual activities.

The third section of this chapter addresses the third research question three. It presents the results of the inter-group comparison with those obtained from the cooperative treatment and the results obtained from the traditional group treatment. The last section describes the effects of the reading comprehension measurement tools in the students' scores. All the results are presented with their corresponding charts and figures.

The findings from the quantitative analysis contribute to the corpus on empirical research on the effects of pre-reading activities in the foreign language classroom.

The findings from the quantitative analysis contribute to the existing empirical research on the effects of pre-reading activities in the foreign language classroom.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ANALYSIS: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For ease of reference in the data analysis overview, the research questions are provided below:

1) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the scores obtained from guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities and those from textbook-based individual pre-reading activities?

2) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found can between the scores obtained from traditional group pre-reading activities and those from textbook-based individual pre-reading activities?

3) What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the students involved in guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities and those participating in traditional group pre-reading activities?

The following sections will address these three research questions, and include additional information and descriptive charts relevant to the analysis.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The first research question addresses the extent that cooperative pre-reading activities affect reading comprehension. Two different assessment tools were used to

obtain reading comprehension scores: the MC test scores will be presented first, and second, the recall protocol results.

4.2.1 Cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities: MC tests scores

The first section of the analysis will present the combined mean scores of the cooperative classes (classes 1 and 2). The results obtained in class 1 and class 2 were combined with the objective of determining the statistical difference between the mean scores obtained from each treatment. A comparison test for paired data (t-test[11]) was performed to assess this difference. Table 13 presents the mean scores, standard deviations and the confidence interval percentages obtained in the cooperative classes. Table 14 presents the statistical results obtained by the comparison test.

Text	Pre-reading treatment type	(class 1 & class 2) mean scores	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
mc1	*g & struct coop	88.14	17.33	82.93	93.34
mc2	**indiv	76.2	20.76	69.96	79.13
mc3	g & struct coop	77.37	23.16	65.28	79.20
mc4	indiv	72.24	23.16	65.28	79.20

* guided and structured cooperative **textbook-based individual

Table 13. MC mean scores in cooperative classes

---

[11] The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever comparing the means of two groups, and particularly appropriate as the analysis for the posttest-only two-group randomized experimental design. (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/stat_t.php)
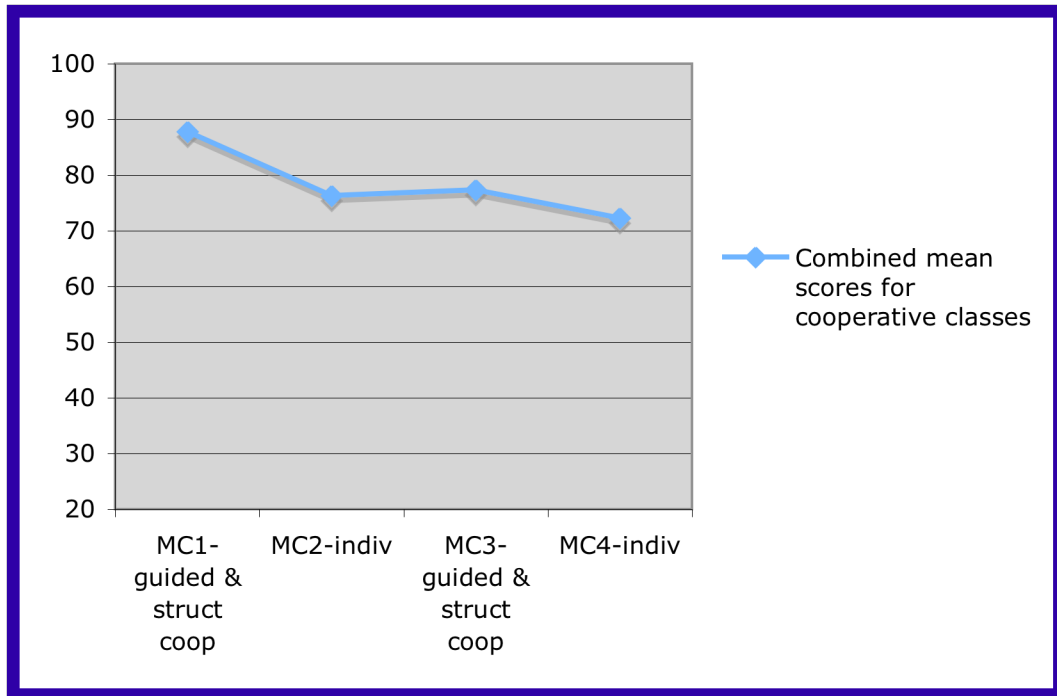
Figure 1. MC mean scores in cooperative classes

As table and figure 1 illustrate, students in cooperative classes initiated the semester with higher MC scores in reading comprehension than the scores obtained at the end of the semester.

The scores obtained on the first text and the tendency of the scores to decline might be explained by the topic (the post-dictatorship in Spain) and grammar level found in the first text. This coincides with the conclusions expressed by the students sample that piloted the MC tests and evaluated the texts' grammar and content difficulty; declaring it to be the less difficult in terms of grammatical structures and the topic. The grade decline makes sense if we take into account the gradual increase

155

in the level of difficulty of the texts as the course progresses. It is also important to consider the increase of the students' workload in the Spanish course as the semester progresses. The lowest MC score was awarded for the fourth text, the last text prepared individually.

With the objective of confirming the significant difference between both types of pre-reading treatments, a mean comparison test was performed. The difference between the average score obtained by students under the cooperative treatment and the average score under the individual activities were examined. The results obtained are presented below in table 14. In order to perform the t-test, the mean score of the same pre-reading treatments was calculated: 82.62% refers to the average score of the two cooperative treatments from both classes, and 74.28% refers to the average score of the individual treatments. The same procedure will be applied to recall protocol scores.

	Guided & structured cooperative (text1+ text 3)	Textbook-based individual (text 2+ text 4)
	86.62 (2.14)	74.28 (2.46)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	8.24 **[.01]	

Note: Significance in brackets   *p (p value) < .05. **p < .01   ***p < .001 . Standard error in parenthesis

Table 14. MC mean scores by type of treatment in cooperative classes

Tests for mean scores of paired data compare the results from two different groups with the purpose of checking that the difference in the mean scores reflects real differences in the population and it is not a random difference. In order to read the t-tests, we pay attention to the p-value (number in brackets), which is an indicator of the statistical significance. The p-value revealed by the t-test has to be compared to the significance level that the researchers in a particular area of study have agreed on. This study, as most studies in the area of education, will use a significance level of .05 as a criterion to reject or not reject the tests results.

In reference to the table 14, the p- value is very low (.01), actually lower than .05. This means that the 8.24 points of advantage that the cooperative treatment shows over the individual treatment are probably not random, but reflect real differences among students.

This demonstrates, therefore that, the cooperative pre-reading activities are more effective in increasing the students' reading comprehension than the individual ones.

4.2.2 Cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities: Recall protocol scores

Next, the results obtained in the recall protocols will be presented. The first important aspect of the recall protocols' scores is that they are considerably lower than the MC scores. Table 15 and figure 2 show the specifics of the scores.

157

Text & measurement tool	Pre-reading treatment type	(class 1 & class 2) mean scores	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
rp1t	g & struct coop	30.35	10.13	27.26	33.43
rp2t	Indiv	30.84	13.07	26.82	34.87
rp3t	g & struct coop	33.82	13.10	29.84	37.81
rp4t	Indiv	31.42	16.25	26.42	36.42

Table 15. Recall protocol mean scores in cooperative classes
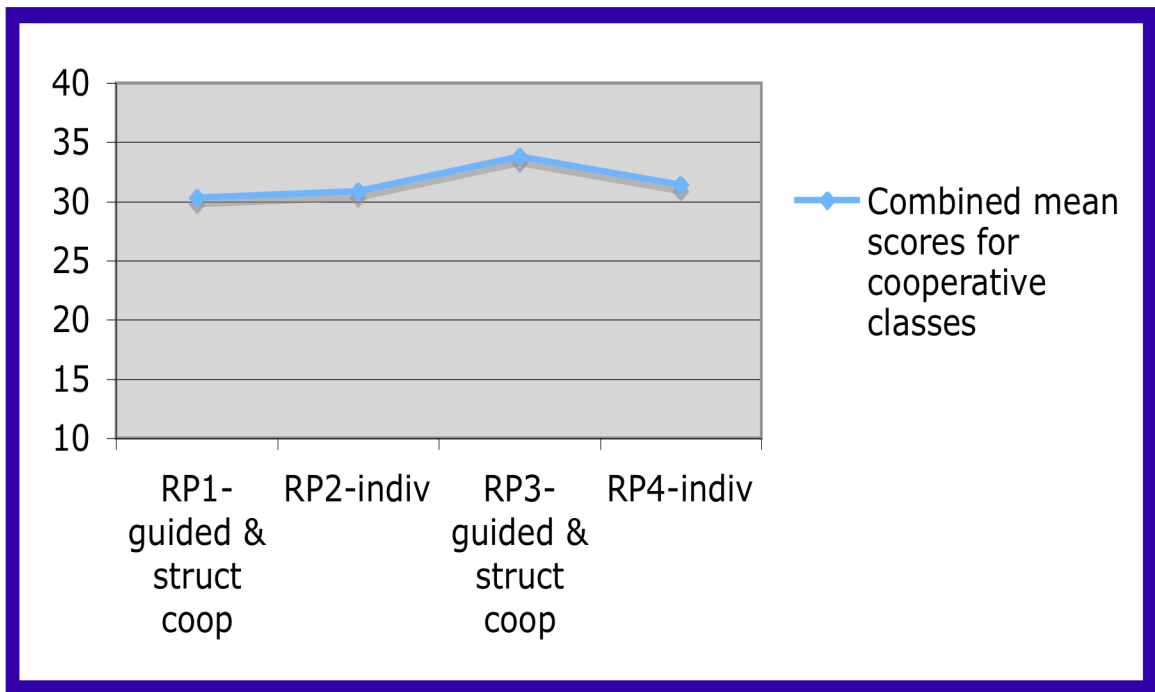
Figure 2. Recall protocol mean scores in cooperative classes

Although the recall protocols scores are definitely lower than the MC scores, the results ought to be considered and examined the same way we did with the MC scores. However, there are two features that need to be contemplated first. It is central to consider that this was the first time that students in all sections completed a written recall protocol. Thus, despite the instructions provided by the teachers and the researcher, it was an innovative reading comprehension assessment for the participants, along with the measurement tool. The practice of recalling ideas in English was also a new exercise for the students. Therefore it could be suggested that the impact of uncommon testing tools may have affected, to a certain extent, the students' performance. Additionally, English, the language used to write the recall protocols, is not commonly used in the SPN 312L, where students are normally asked to read and write in Spanish.

As illustrated in figure 2 the recall protocol scores not only did not match the MC scores; but they did not follow the same pattern either. It is possible at this point to assert that the reading measurement tools impacted the results differently. Students in the cooperative maintained their recall protocol scores within a 5% range in every text, showing a steady score pattern throughout the course, which encourages us to think that the pre-reading activities did not have an effect on the recall protocol results.

As was expected after observing the steady results in table 15 –a score of 30% for text 1 and 2, 33% for reading 3, and 31%- for the last text, when comparing the

mean scores from the cooperative treatment and the individual treatment. Table 16 displays the averages of the combined scores according to the pre-reading treatment.

	Pre-reading treatment	**Recall protocol mean scores in cooperative classes**
text 1+ text 3	cooperative	32.08 (9.63)
text 2+ text 4	individual	31.13 (10.60)

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 16. Recall protocol mean scores for cooperative classes

4.3 DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE REPORT DIFFERENT RESULTS

Given the fact that no statistically significant difference was revealed by the results of the recall protocol, the need to reexamine the recall protocols using an alternative analysis became more evident. The following alternative scoring analysis is supported by the findings in the studies of Lund (1991), Bernhardt (1983) and Deville and Chalhoub-Deville's (1991), in which the scoring focused on the specific value of the idea units. The research question at this point was narrowed to the following: What is the impact of the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities on the recalling of propositions of level of significance 3, 2 and/or 1?

4.3.1 Recall protocol idea units: Different levels of significance account for different results

In order to investigate the potential difference observed in the results certain scoring systems were applied. First, a systematic grouping of the three propositions, also known as idea units' levels was performed, concluding with a definite number of level 3, level 2 and level 1 propositions for each text. Second, recalled level 3 idea units recalled in each text were grouped and assembled according to the type of pre-reading treatment. The same process used to calculate the holistic recall protocol scores was used to calculate level 3 idea units.

The following sections contain the tables and figures representing the scores at each level of significance obtained by the participants in the cooperative and the individual activities. These scores are accompanied by their corresponding t-tests to confirm the statistical significant differences in the mean scores.

4.3.2 Level 3 propositions results in cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities

As explained in chapter three (section 3.4.1.2), level 3 idea units correspond to the main generalizations in the readings. After grouping the ideas from the same level, it was observed that each text was comprised of a different amount of level 3 idea units. As it can be seen in the templates in the appendix, text 1 and text 2 were comprised of 14 level 3 idea units, text 3 consisted of 10, and text 4 included 12. The information compiled by these idea units is essential and indispensable for the

understanding of the plot of the text; these ideas are also called the text skeleton or frame of the text. The number of level 3 ideas recalled by the students for each text was converted into percentages. Table 17 presents the average scores of the recalled level 3 ideas for cooperative students.

Text	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% confidence. Interval	
rp1	g & struct coop	40.68	21.07	32.12	52.60
rp2	Indiv	30.59	23.84	21.13	42.19
rp3	g & struct coop	50.86	21.37	40.12	57.06
rp4	Indiv	43.47	25.87	32.98	55.12

Table 17. Mean scores of level 3 propositions in cooperative classes
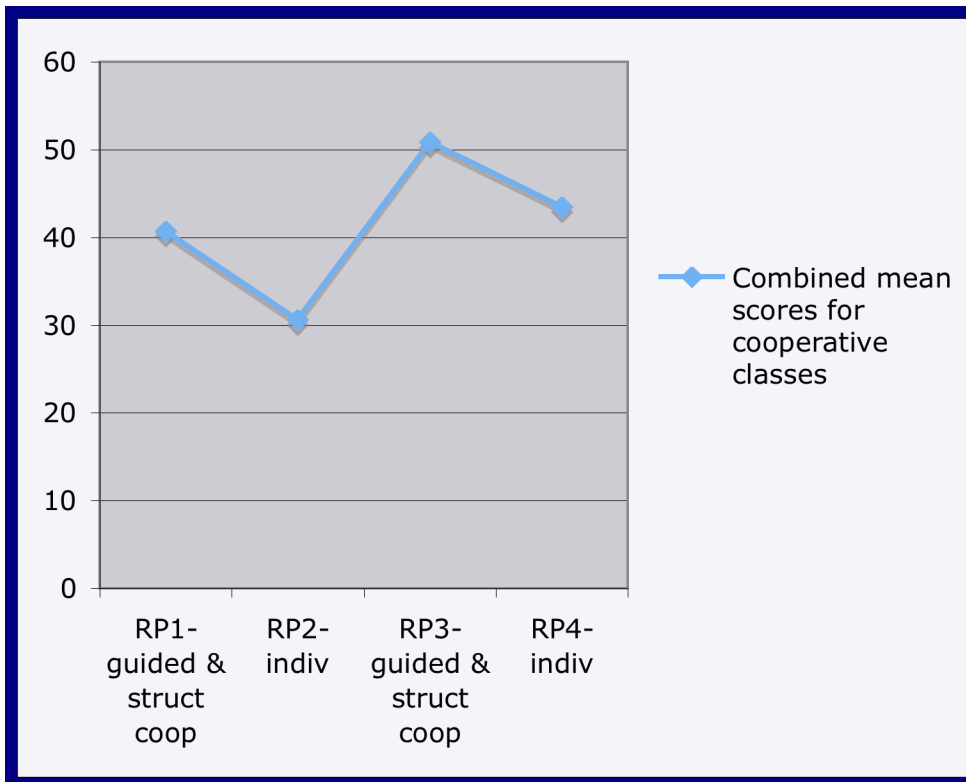
Figure 3. Level 3 proposition scores in cooperative classes

As the results in figure 3 illustrate, there is a clear decline in the scores of the recalled ideas from the first text, 40.68%, to the second text, 30.59%, favoring the cooperative treatment over the textbook-based individual treatment. The highest score, 50.86%, was found in text 3 and treated in a cooperative way, followed by a minor decline in text 4, in which students only recalled 43.47% of the text's content.

Following the same pattern revealed by MC tests and by the holistic recall protocol results, the statistical comparisons according to the type of pre-reading activities were calculated. The objective was to check if the amount of level 3 ideas

recalled when the students participated in the cooperative treatment significantly differs from the amount of ideas recalled when the students followed the individual treatment. For that purpose, a t-test was performed.

	Guided & structured cooperative (text1+ text 3)	Textbook-based individual (text 2+ text 4)
	45.78 (2.62)	37.03 (3.09)
Difference in means	8.75	
Difference in treatment implementation type	**[0.004]	

Table 18. Mean scores of level 3 propositions by type of treatment in cooperative classes

As table 18 reveals, the difference between level 3 propositions, recalled by the students under the cooperative treatment, and the propositions recalled when these students were involved in the individual treatment, is statistically significant. Consequently, it can be assumed that subjects in the cooperative classes recalled more level 3 idea units when the pre-reading activities were completed cooperatively than when the pre-reading activities were completed individually.

4.3.3 Level 2 propositions results in cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities

The same procedure was followed to calculate the amount of level 2 propositions recalled, also known as the supporting details of the text. Table 19 shows the results.

Text	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean	Standard deviation	95% Confidence interval	
rp1	g & struct coop	25.66	16.01	20.91	30.42
rp2	indiv	20.70	16.58	15.78	25.63
rp3	g & struct coop	23.91	16.38	19.046	28.77
rp4	indiv	20.65	18.84	15.05	26.24

Table 19. Mean scores of level 2 propositions in cooperative classes
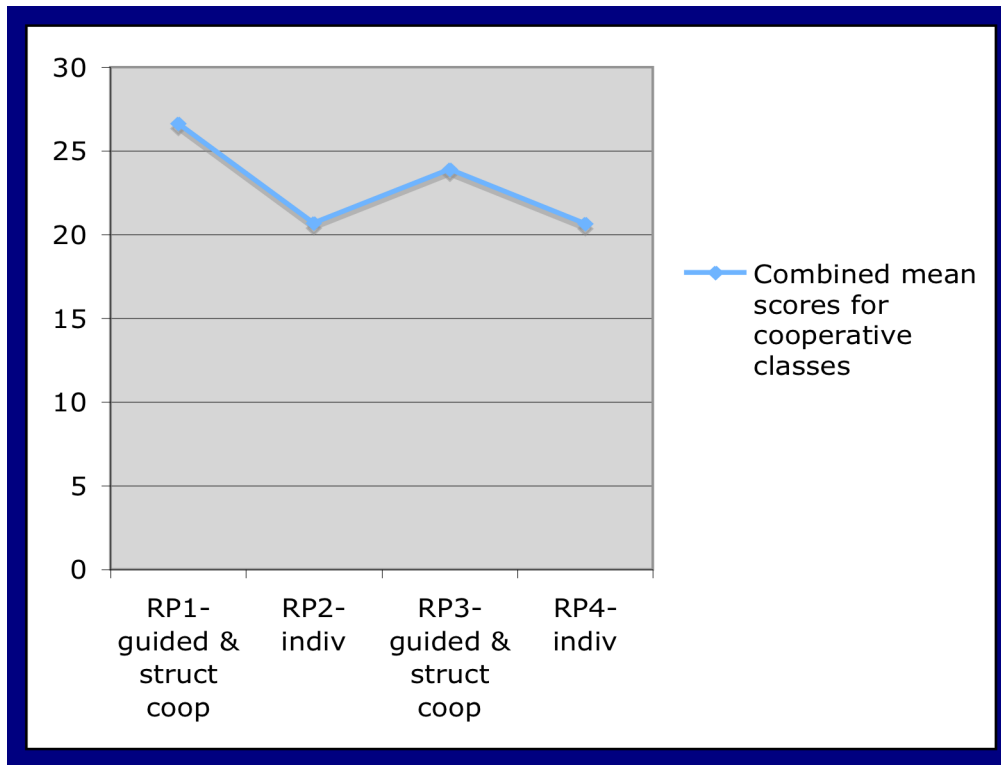
Figure 4. Mean scores of level 2 propositions in cooperative classes

As table 19 and figure 4 reveal, level 2 idea units are also recalled in a higher quantity when the students are involved in the cooperative activities than when they complete the activities individually.

	Mean scores for level 2 propositions in traditional classes
text 1+text 3 guided & struct cooperative	24.79 (2.26)
text 2+text 4 individual	20.68 (2.08)

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 20. Mean scores of level 2 propositions in cooperative classes

166

Due to the slight difference in the average scores, the t-test does not reveal any significant difference in the average scores of level 2 propositions. Therefore, it can be stated that none of the two pre-reading treatments had a noticeable effect on the level 2 propositions recall.

4.3.4 Level 1 propositions results in cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities

The examination of different levels of idea units recalled was also carried out within level 1 propositions, as displayed in table 20 below. Notice how the scores from the level 1 idea units are significantly lower than the scores obtained from level 3 and level 2 idea units. The subjects demonstrated that recalling the details of a text (level 1 propositions) is a harder task than recalling the main or supporting generalizations (level 3 and level 2 propositions). This confirms the conclusions presented by Lund (1991) and Bernhardt (1983) in their respective studies, in which it was found subjects tend to recall more level 3 propositions, given the fact that these are the main generalizations, than level 2 and 1, supporting and minor details respectively.

Text	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean Score	Standard deviation	95% confidence Interval	
rp1	g & struct coop	15.55	12.04	12.04	19.07
rp2	Indiv	13.04	8.83	8.83	17.25
rp3	g & struct coop	19.70	15.47	15.47	23.94
rp4	Indiv	16.04	10.91	10.91	21.16

Table 21. Mean scores of level 1 propositions in cooperative classes
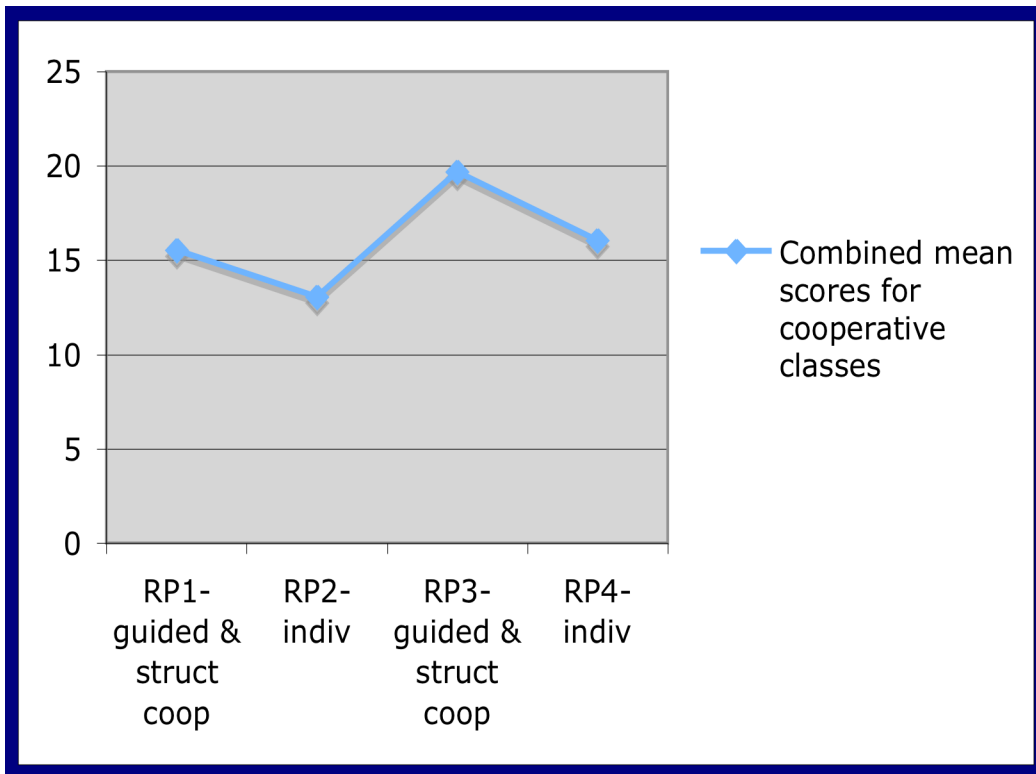
Figure 5. Mean scores of level 1 propositions in cooperative classes

168

As displayed in table 21, there is an increase of level 1 idea units in text 3 (19.70%) in comparison with the other texts. Text 4 (16.04%), the last text in the semester also obtained a higher number of recalled details in comparison to text 1 (15.55%) and 2 (13.04), but was lower than text 3 (19.70) treated cooperatively. This phenomenon might be explained by the fact that for text 3 the students were already familiar with the assignment instructions to prepare the text cooperatively, and may have already developed their own reading strategies to remember as many details from the text as possible. Table 21 below shows the results for level 1 idea units according to the treatment received, given that the t-test performed with level 1 scores revealed no statistically significant results for level 1 propositions.

	Mean scores for level 1 propositions
text 1+text 3 g & structured cooperative	17.58 (1.08)
text 2+ text 4 individual textbook	14.54 (1.30)

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 22. Mean scores of level 1 propositions by type of treatment in cooperative classes

As it can be observed in table 22, the average score, 17.58%, obtained from level 1 propositions when the subjects prepared the texts individually is not significant different from the average scores obtained when the subjects prepared the text in a traditional group, in which they recalled 14.54% of level 1 idea units.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Research question 2 addressed the extent to which pre-reading activities in traditional groups had an impact on the reading comprehension of historical and socio-political texts in fourth semester Spanish classes. MC tests and recall protocols were also used to obtain reading comprehension scores. First, the MC test scores will be presented, followed by the recall protocol results.

4.4.1 Traditional groups versus individual pre-reading activities: MC test scores

The results for the traditional group classes will be presented following the same pattern used in cooperative classes. The first section presents the combined scores from the three classes. The second section discusses the statistical results obtained by the mean comparison test.

Text & measurement tool	Pre-reading Treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% Confidence Interval	
mc1	indiv	84.55	18.03	80.29	88.82
mc2	tradit. group	71.69	18.83	65.81	76.40
mc3	indiv	70.12	18.37	65.81	71.65
mc4	tradit.group	67.41	16.95	63.17	71.65

*traditional learning group with no guidance and/or structure

Table 23. MC mean scores in traditional group classes
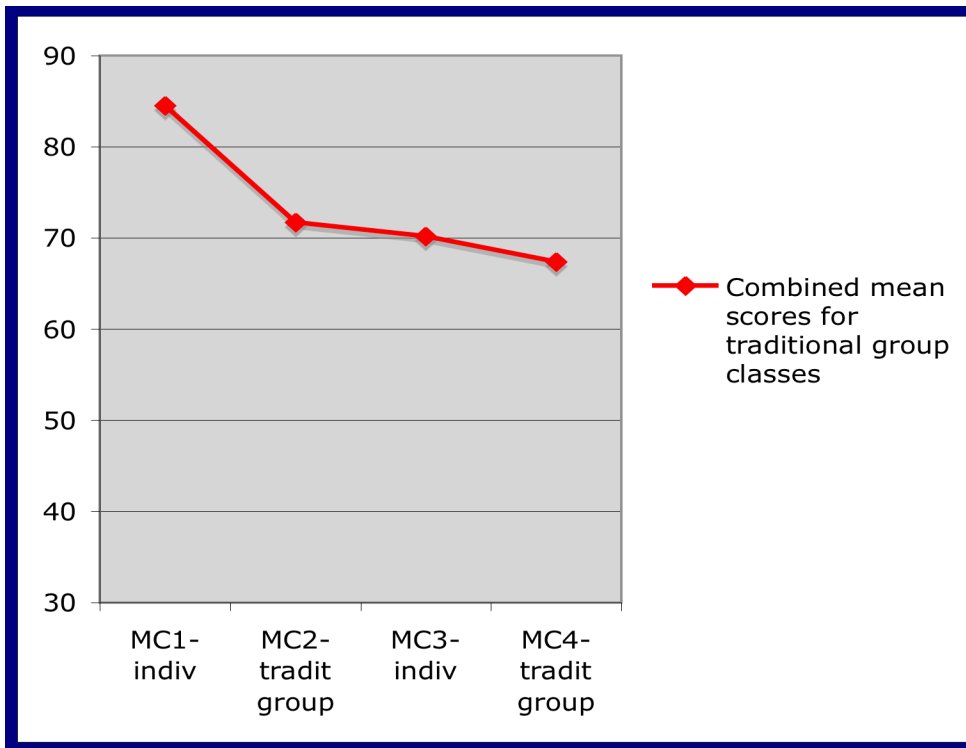
Figure 6. MC mean scores in traditional group classes

In reference to the results from traditional group classes, the MC average scores follow a similar trend throughout the semester. For text 1, students obtained 84.55%; for text 2 the scores reached 71.69%, for text 3 the results stay at the 70.12% level, and for the last text students achieved a score of 67.41%. Similar to the cooperative classes, all traditional group sections obtained higher scores during the first treatment than the rest of the treatments. Additionally, scores from the traditional group coincided with the results obtained by the sample of students who piloted the MC tests and assessed the grammar and content difficulties of the four texts in the

171

study. This finding proves the sample of students' predictions about the grammar and content difficulty of the texts, since all the students in the study obtained better scores after reading text 1 than after reading text 2, 3 or 4. This finding also coincides with the progression of the grammar and content difficulty of the texts as the semester progressed

With the objective of statistically confirming the difference between the two treatments, the mean comparison test was performed. The results obtained are represented in the table below.

	Textbook-based individual (text 1+ text 3)	Traditional learning groups (text 2+ text 4)
	77.37 (2.15)	69.55 (2.47)
Difference in means	7.82	
Difference in treatment implementation type	***[.001]	

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 24. Means of MC scores by type pre-reading treatment

The test is significant at the .01 level, suggesting the almost 8 points of advantage presented by the individual approach over the traditional is probably not random. Thus, the individual method is more suitable to increase students' reading comprehension than the traditional group treatment, implemented without any guidance and/or structure from the instructor. The results obtained from the recall protocols will be presented in the following section.

4.4.2 Traditional groups versus individual pre-reading activities: Recall protocol

The following tables and figures illustrate the recall protocol results in traditional group classes. Following the pattern observed the cooperative classes' recall protocol results, students in traditional group classes also achieve lower recall protocol results than the scores obtained in the MC evaluations.

Text & measurement tool	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
rp1	individual	26.97	9.39	24.66	29.24
rp2	tradit. group	26.49	9.72	24.04	28.94
rp3	indiv	24.74	10.33	22.17	27.21
rp4	tradit group	25.17	12.13	22.17	28.28

Table 25. Recall protocol mean scores in traditional group classes
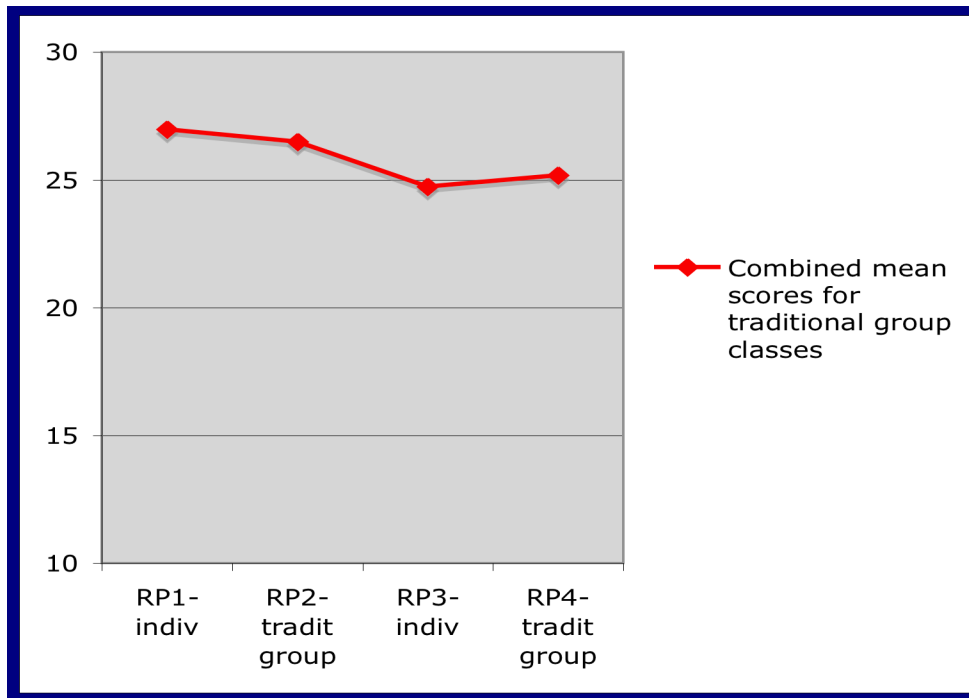
Figure 7. Recall protocol mean scores in traditional group classes

For traditional group classes the combined scores for recall protocols shows a stable pattern, ranging from 24% to 27%. When the t-test was performed as it was expected, no statistically significant differences were registered as was expected.

	Recall protocol mean scores by type of pre-reading treatment
text 1+text 3 textbook-based individual treatment	25.82 (8.638)
text 2+text 4 traditional group treatment	25.86 (9.609)

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 26. Recall protocol mean scores by type of pre-reading treatment in

traditional group classes

174

As table 25 shows, the recall protocol results in traditional group classes are lower than the results obtained in cooperative classes. Text 1 (26.97%), and text 2 (26.49%) reveal a very similar score suggesting that the pre-reading treatment did not affect the number and quality of the recalled ideas. In reference to text 3 (24.74%), in which students used the individual approach, the results show a decline. Text 4 scored (25.27%) showing a slight increase, but did not exceed text 1 and 2 scores.

The next sections will present the scores obtained by the traditional group versus the individual activities in the recall protocols, focusing on the level of significance of the recalled propositions.

4.4.3 Level 3 propositions results in the traditional groups versus individual pre-reading activities

Table 27 below presents the combined scores for the recalled ideas at level 3 in traditional group classes.

Text	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
rp1	indiv	29.17	19.90	24.46	33.88
rp2	tradit. group	31.08	21.32	26.03	36.13
rp3	indiv	35.77	22.71	30.39	41.15
rp4	tradit. group	30.98	27.60	24.45	37.52

Table 27. Mean scores of level 3 propositions in traditional group classes

Even though the four scores seem similar, the individual treatment for text 3 illustrates the top scores. This high result for text 3 coincides with the outcome found for level 3 propositions in cooperative classes. The cooperative treatment was implemented for text 3 in cooperative classes, whereas the individual approach was implemented for that specific text. At this point, it is interesting to observe at this point that both the cooperative and individual represent the more successful MC scores.
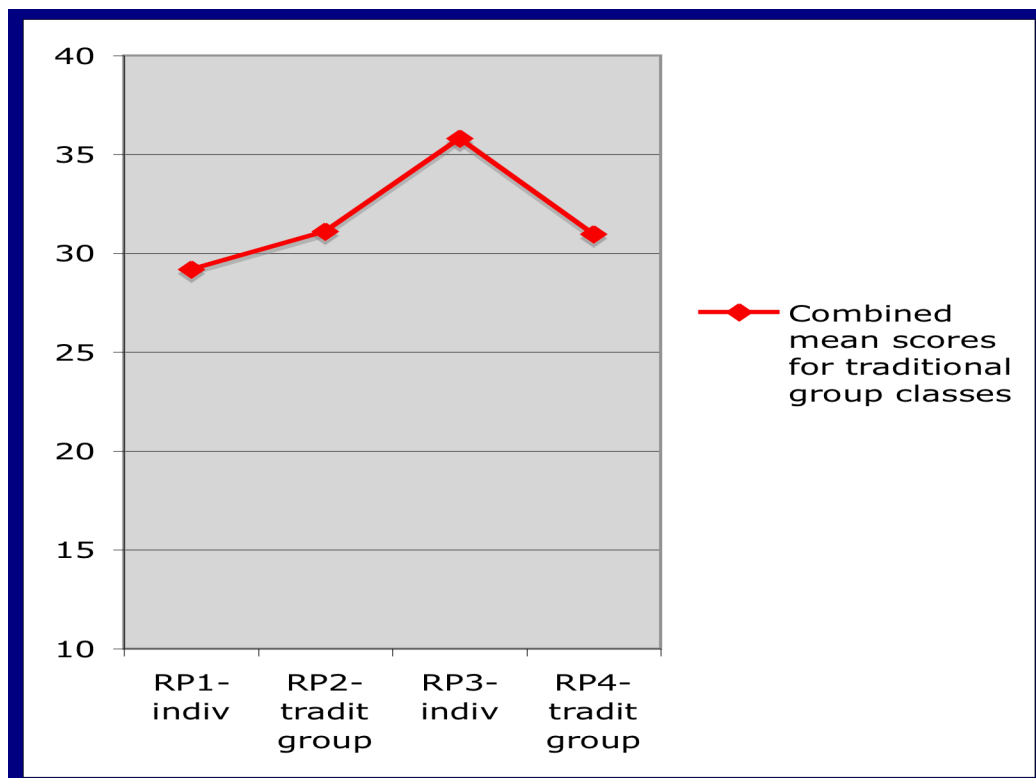
Figure 8. Mean scores of level 3 propositions in traditional group classes

In order to investigate the potential difference, the mean comparison test was performed and the test was not significant at the level .05, therefore it cannot be said that the difference is statistically significant. The average scores are displayed in table 26 below.

Treatment and texts	Mean scores of level 3 propositions by type of pre-reading treatment in traditional group classes
text 1+text 3 textbook-based individual	**32.47** (19.59)
text 2+text 4 traditional learning group	**31.04** (17)

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 28. Mean scores of level 3 propositions by type of treatment in traditional

group classes

Table 28 above shows the average scores paired by treatment, revealing that treatments, the individual and the traditional group reached a very similar average score. The score average obtained after the individual treatment (32.47%) proves to be very similar to the score obtained after the traditional group activities (31.04%)

4.4.4 Level 2 propositions results in traditional groups versus individual pre-reading activities

Table 29 will display the mean scores for level 2 idea units obtained by the students in traditional group classes.

Text	Pre-reading Treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
rp 1	indiv	22.54	14.58	19.08	25.99
rp2	tradit. group	14.52	11.19	11.87	17.18
rp3	indiv	13.95	10.15	11.54	16.35
rp4	tradit. group	12.16	12.45	9.21	15.11

Table 29. Mean scores of level 2 propositions in traditional group classes
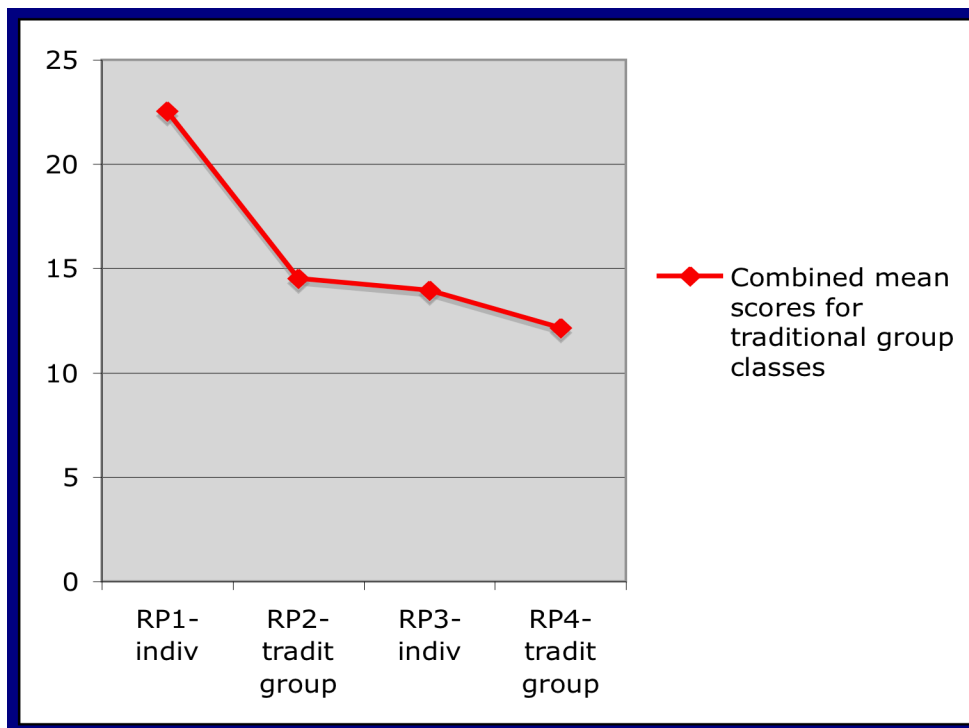
Figure 9. Mean scores of level 2 propositions in traditional group classes

The average of level 2 idea units recalled follows a decreasing tendency. The three traditional group sections conclude the semester with a lower percentage of recalled level 2 idea units (12.16%) in comparison with those recalled in text 1 (22.54%).

Level 2 idea units were also analyzed comparing the means. The mean comparison test revealed a significant difference favoring the textbook-based individual approach.

	Textbook-based Individual (t 1+ t 3)	Traditional learning group (t 2+ t 4)
	18.24 (.97)	13.34 (.92)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	4.9 (1.30) ** [.004]	

Note: standard error in parenthesis **p <. 01.

Table 30. Mean scores of level 2 propositions by type of treatment in traditional

group classes

Surprisingly, table 30 above confirms that the difference in level 2 propositions is statistically significant, thus favoring of the textbook-based individual pre-reading approach. The significant finding regarding level 2 propositions favoring

the individual approach encourages us to further examine the results from the recalled level 1 propositions.

4.4.5 Level 1 propositions results in traditional groups versus individual pre-reading activities

The following table displays the mean scores of level 1idea units obtained in traditional group sections.

Text	Class	Class type	Pre-reading treatment type	Mean score	Standard deviation	95% confidence interval	
rp1			indiv	14.08	9.77	11.77	16.39
rp2			tradit. group	11.73	10.42	9.26	14.20
rp3			indiv	11.19	18.85	8.62	13.76
rp4			tradit. group	8.64	11.10	6.01	11.27

Table 31. Mean scores of level 1 propositions in traditional group classes
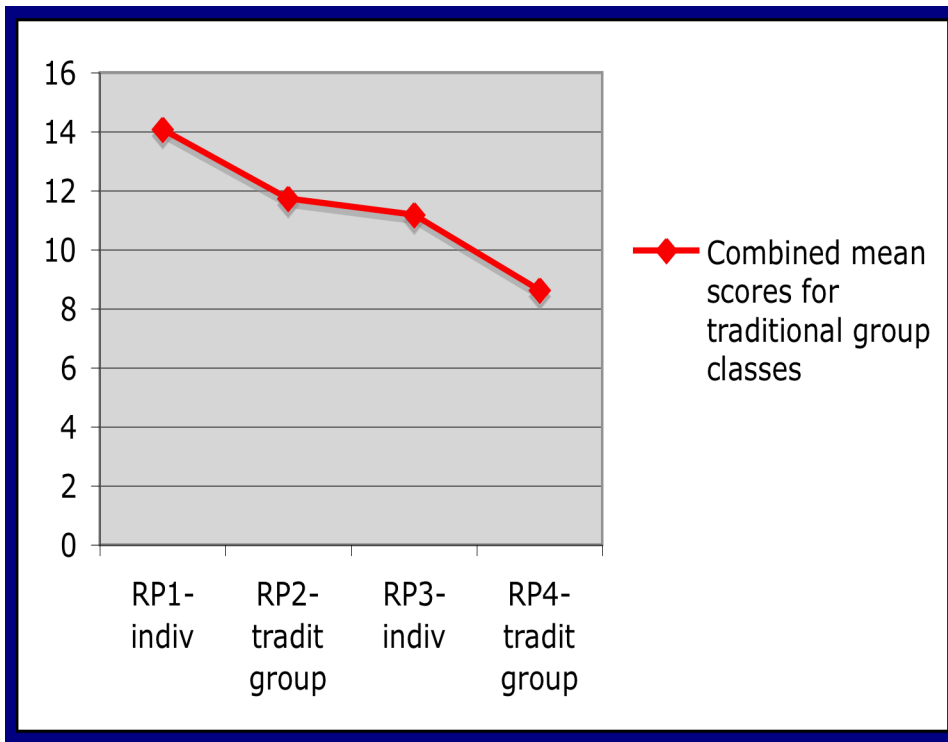
Figure 10. Mean scores of level 1 propositions in traditional group classes

As observed in table 31 and figure 10, there is a clear difference between level 1 propositions recalled in text 1 (14.08%) and the low score obtained in text 4 (8.64%). Contrary to cooperative classes, text 3 combined mean score is not the highest one (11.19%), but rather, it represents the second to the lowest score. In traditional group classes, the highest scores for level 1 propositions are found in text 1 (14.08%), treated individually.

The mean difference between the scores obtained by the two different pre-reading treatments was analyzed by the mean comparison test. The results, as displayed in table 30 show a significant difference between the two combined scores.

	Textbook-based Individual (t 1+ t 3)	Traditional learning group (t 2+ t 4)
	12.63 (7.55)	10.19 (8.30)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	2.44 (9.14) * [.027]	

Note: standard error in parenthesis *p <. 05.

Table 32. Mean scores of level 1 idea units by type of treatment in traditional

group classes

The results in table 32 reveal an interesting outcome with regard to level 1 propositions. The students whose pre-reading activities were completed individually following the textbook instructions, were able to recall more minor details from the texts than when they prepared the readings in a traditional group format.

The statistically significant difference in level 2 and level 1 idea units, which favors the individual approach, seems to indicate that the traditional group technique did not help the students understand and retain the minor details as successfully as the individual approach.

To further examine the disparity in scores obtained by the three different pre-reading activities an inter-group comparative study was generated. The next section displays the differences among the scores obtained by the students who participated

in the cooperative versus individual treatments and those who were involved in traditional groups versus individual activities.

4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: INTER-GROUP COMPARISON[12]: GUIDED AND COOPERATIVE VERSUS TRADITIONAL GROUP PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Subsequent to the relevant differences found in the intra-group comparisons of the scores within the same type of classes, we will now compare the scores obtained by the treatments that required the students to work collectively, which are, guided and structured cooperative treatment, and traditional group treatment.

For this purpose, an inter-group comparison analysis was performed. Prior to the results presentation, it is important to acknowledge that in the inter-group comparison the subjects, teachers, and texts under treatment are different.

Returning to the results obtained in cooperative classes and traditional group classes, we observed that the students in cooperative classes have a tendency to outperform the students in traditional group classes both during the in-group treatments and the individual pre-reading activities.

However, both types of classes show some similarities in the grades pattern; for example, they both experienced a gradual decrease in their grades receiving the lowest score on text 4, particularly when referring to the MC results (72.24% for cooperative classes and 67.41% for traditional group classes). This decrease might be

---

[12] Comparison being or occurring between two or more social groups, in Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2008)

justified by the increased of workload that characterizes the end of the academic course, which may have possibly affected the students' performance in the study.

4.5.1 Inter-group comparisons of MC scores

Table 33 and figure 11 show the results of the MC mean scores obtained by the cooperative treatment and the scores obtained by the traditional group taking into account both times they were implemented.

Measurement tool	Class type	Treatment type	1st treatment mean score	2nd treatment mean score
mc	I	g & struct coop	**88.14**	**77.37**
mc	II	tradit. group	**71.69**	**67.41**

Table 33. MC mean scores by in-group pre-reading treatments
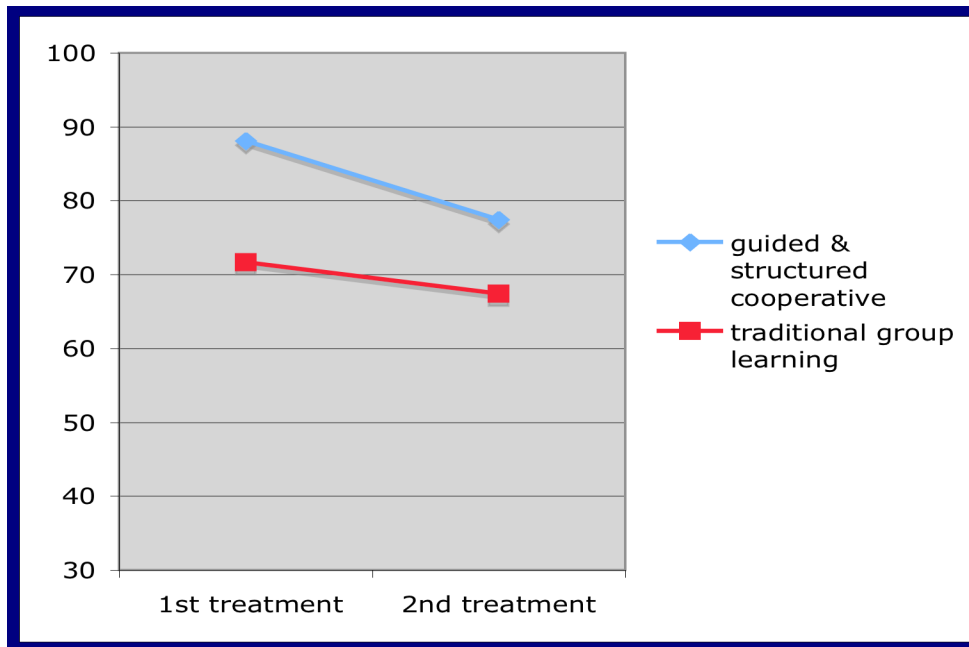
Figure 11. MC mean scores of in-group pre-reading treatments

Table 33 and figure11 above show the scores obtained by the two types of in-group treatments in the study. Subsequently, the mean comparison shows a significant difference in the mean scores at two different points in time.

The first time that students completed the in-group set of pre-reading activities was during the third week of the semester, versus the second time that students received the in-group treatment, which took place during the tenth week of the semester. The first time the students completed the cooperative activities they obtained a score of 88.14% on the MC tests. The second time they completed the cooperative activities they received a score of 77.69%. As we can see in figure 11 the results from both treatments decreased; the cooperative treatment went from 88.14% to 77.37%, while traditional group classes' scores decreased from 71.69% to 67.41%.

185

The scores obtained from the first cooperative treatment are examined in detail in the table 34 below.

	Cooperative classes 1st guided & structured cooperative treatment, text 1	Traditional group classes 1st traditional learning group treatment, text 2
	88.14 (2.58)	71.69 (2.35)
Difference in means	16.45	
Difference in treatment implementation type	[***0.00001]	

Table 34. MC mean scores by 1st in-group pre-reading treatment

As table 34 confirms, when comparing the average score from the first cooperative treatment with the average score from the first traditional treatment average score, the difference in means is statistically significant. The same significant difference occurs when we compare the second treatment, as illustrated in table 35.

	Cooperative classes 2nd guided & structured cooperative treatment, text 1	Traditional group classes 2nd traditional learning group treatment, text 2
	77.37 (2.32)	67.41 (2.11)
Difference in means	9.96	
Difference in treatment implementation type	[***0.00001]	

Table 35. MC mean scores by 2nd in-group pre-reading treatment in cooperative

classes and traditional group classes.

As tables 34 and 35 show, the t-test reveals that the difference between the two in-group treatments is statistically significant. The first time we compared a score of 88.14% achieved by the group of students using the cooperative activities versus 71.69% achieved by the students who were involved in traditional group activities. This allows us to infer that the effect of the pre-reading implementation treatment type varies according to the guidance and structure variables implemented in groups. When the participants worked cooperatively, with guidance and assistance from the instructor, the results are considerably higher (88.14% the first time and 77.37% the second time). When students worked in traditional groups without the instructor guidance and activities' structure, in which they obtained the average scores, were 71.69%, and 67.41% respectively.

In the next section, the results from the first and second cooperative treatments have been grouped and compared with the combined scores obtained from the traditional group. This comparison has been performed in order to further analyze the disparity in the results obtained when both in-group treatments were implemented.

	Cooperative classes guided & structured cooperative treatments (t1+ t3)	Traditional group classes traditional learning group treatments (t2+ t4)
	82.75 (1.19)	69.55 (1.85)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	13.2 [***0.000]	

Table 36. MC mean scores by both in-group pre-reading treatment

187

Table 36 reveals the difference between mean scores from cooperative treatments and those from the traditional group treatments. Overall, what table 34 reveals is that the cooperative treatment enabled the students in MC tests to answer considerably more MC items correctly, than those in the traditional group.

4.5.2 Inter-group comparisons of recall protocol scores

The next section documents the recall protocol scores collected from the in-group treatments, following the same sequence used with the MC in-group scores. First, table 37 illustrates the results from the comparison between the scores obtained from the recall protocols during the 1st and the 2nd in-group implementation

Measurement tool	Class type	Treatment type	1st treatment mean score	2nd treatment mean score
rp	I	guided & struct coop	30.35	33.82
rp	II	tradit. group	26.49	25.17

Table 37. Recall protocol mean scores by in-group pre-reading
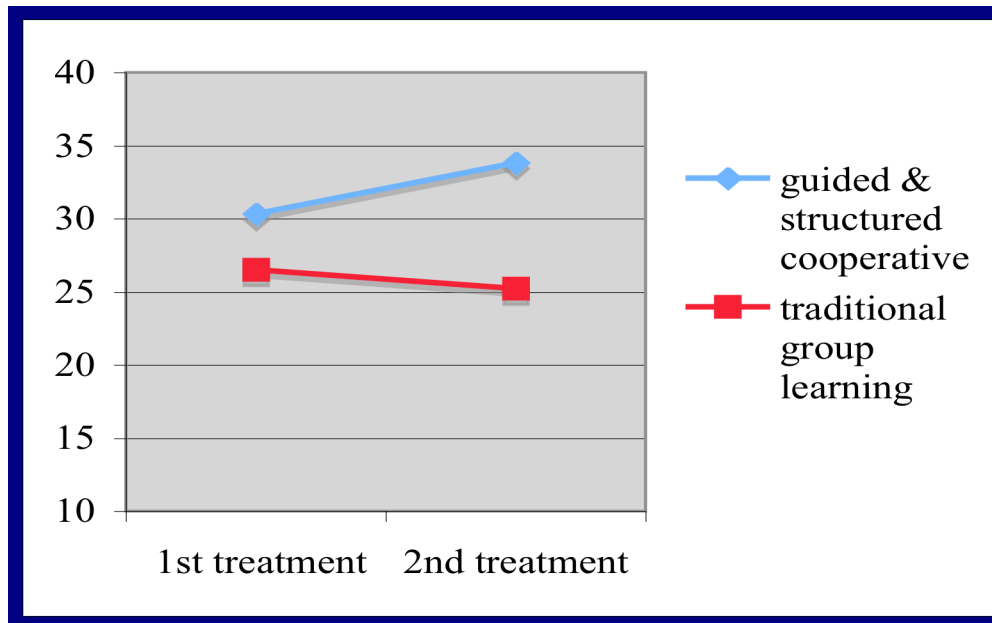
Figure 12. Recall protocol scores of in-group pre-reading treatments

The results reveal a score of 30.35% when the students first prepared the text cooperatively and a score of 26.49% when they first prepared the text in a traditional group manner. The students who used the cooperative pre-reading activities outperformed those students involved in the traditional group pre-reading treatment by almost 5%. Table 38 shows that the difference between the two in-group averages the first time they were implemented. Once again the difference between the averages proves to be statistically significant.

	Cooperative classes guided & structured cooperative 1st treatment , (t1)	Traditional group classes traditional learning group 1st treatments (t2)
	30.35 (1.52)	26.49 (1.22)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	3.38 [*.05]	

Table 38. Recall protocol mean scores by first type of in-group pre-reading

treatment

	Cooperative classes 2nd guided & structured cooperative implementation, text 3	Traditional group classes 2nd treatment traditional learning group implementation, text 4
	33.82 (1.97)	25.23 (1.52)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	8.59 [*.0007]	

Table 39. Recall protocol mean scores by second type of in-group pre-reading

treatment

In reference to the second implementation, a similar statistical difference is revealed. As illustrated in figure 11 above, the difference in the second implementation is even more noticeable than in the first. Table 39 above displays the t-test result for the second in-group treatments. The level of significance revealed in the t-test for the second in-group treatment (0.0007) indicates that the difference is highly significant.

190

The results in table 40 below highlight an important difference that emerges from the all the recall protocols scores obtained by the cooperative treatments, and by the traditional group treatments. When we compared each treatment result to the individual treatment (sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1) the recall protocol scores did not reveal any noteworthy difference at the intra-group level. However, there is a clear statistically significant difference in the inter-group comparison, when we compare the results of the cooperative treatment are compared with the traditional group treatment.

	Cooperative classes guided & structured cooperative treatments (t 1+ t 3)	Traditional group classes 2nd treatment traditional learning group treatments, (t 2+ t 4)
	32.08 (1.48)	25.86 (1.25)
Difference in means Difference in treatment implementation type	6.22 [**0.001]	

Table 40. Recall protocol mean scores by type of in-group pre-reading treatment

As a recapitulation of this section, it is important to highlight the positive effect of cooperative pre-reading activities on students' reading comprehension when these are implemented following the required guidelines, which include structure of the activities, and guidance by the instructor during the completion of the activities.

4.6 EFFECT OF THE READING COMPREHENSION MEASUREMENT TOOLS ON THE RESULTS

Finally, the last section of this chapter will discuss the substantial difference in grades obtained by the two assessment tools and will highlight the implications of such a disparity. Tables 41 and table 42 demonstrate the evident dissimilarity of the average scores.

	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Text 4	
Type of classes	MC1	RP1	MC2	RP2	MC3	RP3	MC4	RP4
	g & struct coop	g & struct coop	indiv	indiv	g & struct coop	g & struct coop	indiv	indiv
I	88.14	30.35	76.2	30.84	77.37	33.82	72.24	31.42

Table 41. MC and recall protocol scores in cooperative classes
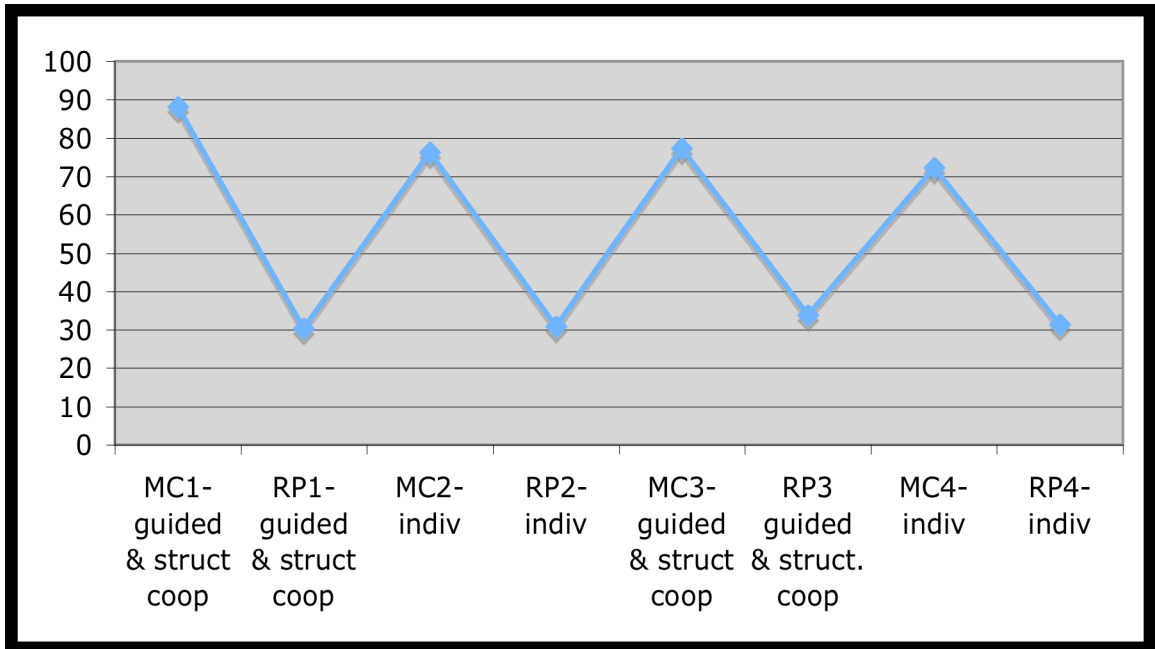
Figure 13. MC and recall protocol scores for cooperative classes

Below we present the same descriptive table pinpointing the scores obtained in traditional group classes.

	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Text 4	
Type of classes	MC1	RP1	MC2	RP2	MC3	RP3	MC4	RP4
	indiv	indiv	tradit group	tradit group	indiv	indiv	tradit group	tradit group
II	84.55	26.97	69.8	26.49	70.12	24.74	67.41	25.17

Table 42. MC and recall protocol scores in traditional group classes

193
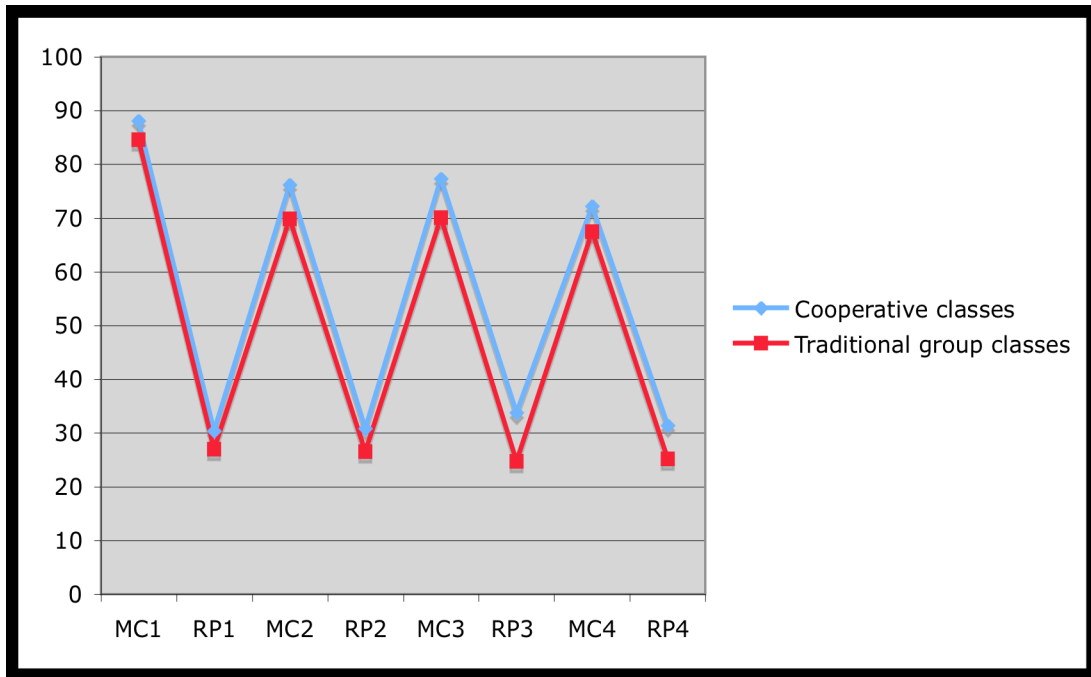
Figure 14. MC and recall protocol scores in traditional group classes

Figures 13 and 14 demonstrate the differences in scores revealed by the two reading comprehension tools used in the study.

To conclude this section, and with the objective of explicitly presenting the differences in the scores resulting from the practice of two different measurement tools, figure 14 reveals the results achieved in each type of class, the cooperative and the traditional groups. Figure 15 displays the results obtained individually in each class, as a reminder, class 1 and 2 are cooperative classes, and class 3,4, and 5 are traditional group classes.
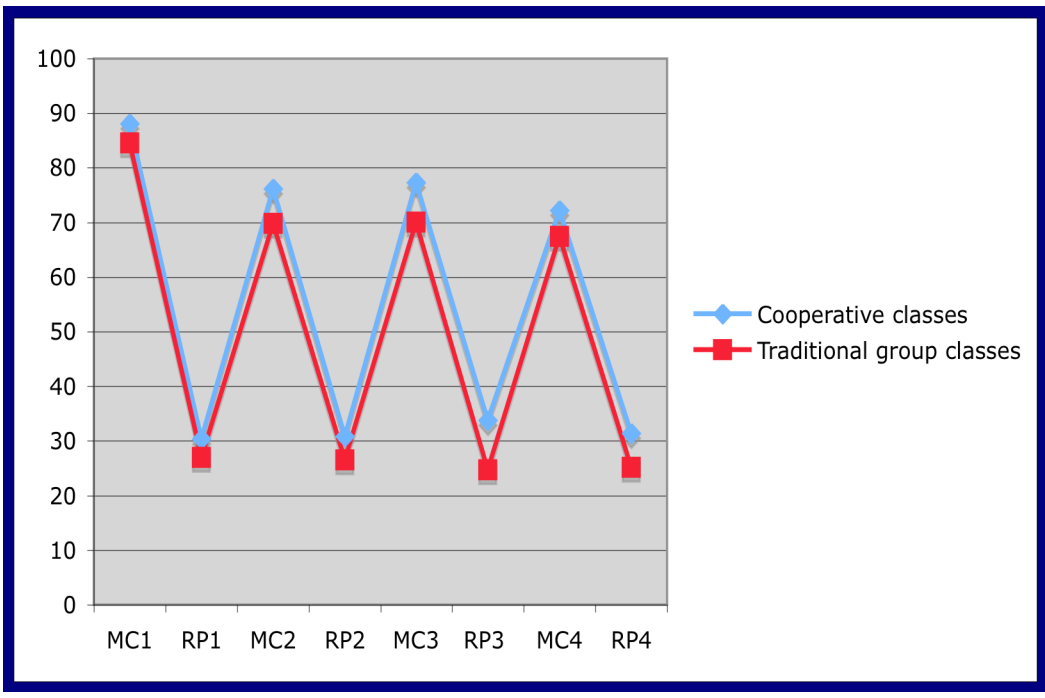
Figure 15. MC tests and recall protocol scores in cooperative and traditional group classes
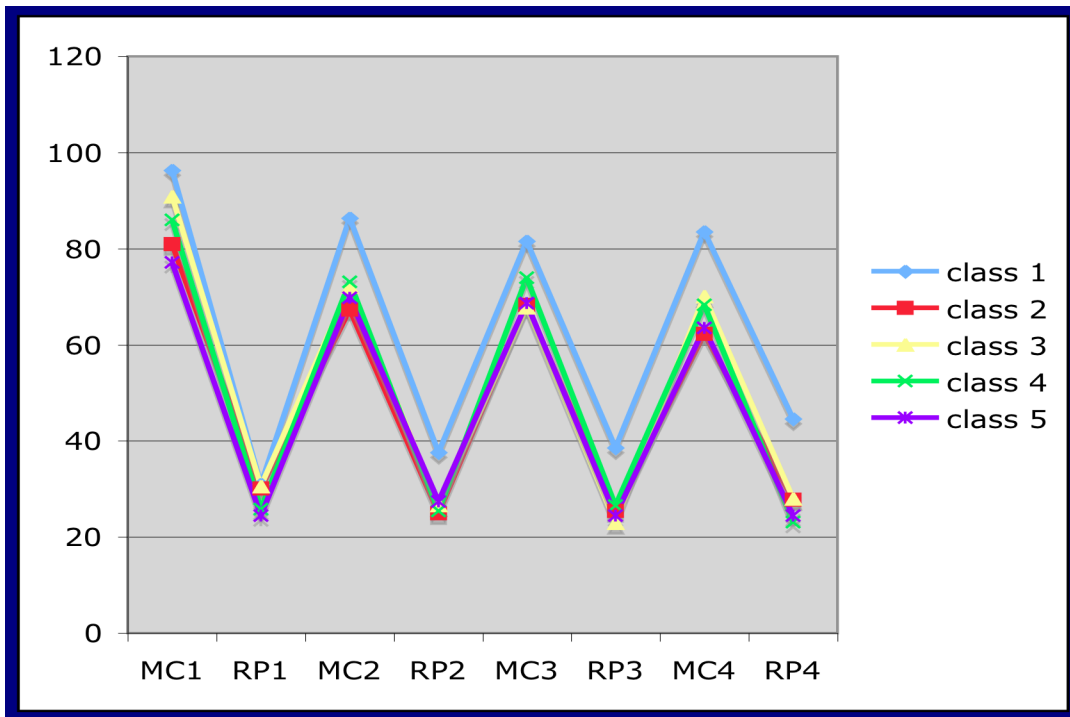
Figure 16. MC tests and recall protocol scores in each independent class

Figure 15 and 16 show that the results obtained by the written recall protocols differ from the results from the MC test. The recall protocol scores for the five independent classes are significantly lower than the MC results, given that the completion of a written recall protocol is more demanding than the recognition required in the MC tests. This finding goes in line with Wolf's (1993) study that demonstrates that reading comprehension scores are higher when MC tests are used as the evaluation tool, and lower when open-ended and cloze-test items are used as assessment devices. Additionally, and also in the same line as Wolf's (1993) study, Shohamy (1984) revealed that in her study, subjects completing MC tests achieved

higher scores than when asked to complete open ended tests. The effort involved in completing an open-ended test, as well as a recall protocol, cannot be compared to the recognition task involved in completing the MC tests. Thus, it can be stated that the reading comprehension assessment tool does impact in many ways the subjects' scores.

4.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

In this chapter, quantitative research results were presented in response to the research questions regarding the effect of cooperative and traditional group pre-reading activities on the readers' ability to recognize and recall the information from the text. The findings revealed by the MC tests and the findings disclosed by the recall protocols vary within and between classes according to the type of pre-reading treatment applied. On the one hand, cooperative classes reading comprehension scores favored the guided and structured cooperative treatment, when measured by MC tests. With regard to the recall protocol results, students recalled a higher amount of main generalizations (level 3 propositions) from the text when they were involved in the cooperative activities than when they completed the pre-reading activities individually using their textbook. Nevertheless, the cooperative treatment did not have an impact on students' recall of supporting details (level 2 propositions) or minor details (level 1 propositions).

On the other hand, traditional group classes' scores reveal that when the students prepared the texts individually with their textbook, they obtained higher

scores than when instance they prepared the texts in traditional group format. Therefore, the results obtained from the students following the textbook-based individual pre-reading treatment outperformed the results obtained from the traditional group preparation. In reference to recall protocol, the results revealed that the instances that students worked on the pre-reading task individually, they recalled more supporting generalizations and supporting details than when they participated in the traditional group format to accomplish the pre-reading task. With regard to main generalizations (level 3 propositions), the traditional group format and the individual pre-reading activities had similar results.

In the last section a discussion about the discrepancy in scores obtained by the two different measurement tools reveals the importance of selecting the correct evaluative tool to assess the learners' reading comprehension.

In chapter five the results will be described in more detail and these will be connected to the implications for practice and further research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of three different types of pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension of students of intermediate-high Spanish. The experimental pre-reading activities were separated into guided and structured cooperative on the one hand, and traditional groups on the other. Both of them were compared to the textbook-based individual pre-reading activities. The intention of the study was to determine which of the three types of the pre-reading models employed in the study; guided and structured cooperative, traditional learning groups, and/or textbook-based individual, generated a significant improvement in the reading comprehension of historical socio-political texts.

Furthermore, the use of two different reading comprehension measurement tools, multiple-choice and recall protocols, provided an interesting disparity in the results worth consideration in the field of reading comprehension testing.

In this chapter the research results are presented sequentially following the order of the research questions with their corresponding summaries. Each summary includes a discussion of the practical implications of the relevant results in relation to the theoretical framework supporting the pre-reading activities format. Following the results, the chapter includes a discussion of the recommendations for future research possibilities regarding the implementation of specific pre-reading activities that may

significantly enhance the reading comprehension of L2 readers. The present study has demonstrated that a simple pre-reading activity does not enhance the learner's reading comprehension as effectively as a set of prepared, structured, and purposeful exercises.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: RESEARCH QUESTION 1

5.1.1 Guided and structured cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities: MC scores

The first facet of the research question investigated here asks whether L2 learners' reading comprehension scores reveal a difference depending on the pre-reading activities implemented. As table 15 in (cf. chapter 4) illustrates, when students prepared text 1 and text 3 using the cooperative techniques, the total MC score resulted in 82%, in contrast to the 74% obtained when readers prepared text 2 and text 4 individually. According to the t-test, the difference of the two mean scores shows a statistically significant difference in favor of the guided and structured cooperative treatment. Consequently, it can be affirmed that when students in cooperative classes prepare the texts in a cooperative manner, following the adequate guidance and structure given by the instructor, the reading comprehension scores significantly increase, in comparison with the scores obtained when the texts are prepared individually.

5.1.2 Guided and structured cooperative versus individual pre-reading activities: Recall protocol scores.

As the literature confirms, the immediate recall protocol requires that the reader comprehends the text well enough to be able to recall it in a coherent and logical manner (Berkemeyer, 1989). In other words, readers cannot recall information that they have not previously understood. Unlike MC tests, in which readers easily mark down a response once they recognize the correct statement, in recall protocols, readers must produce the statements. Thus, the recall protocol process requires more thinking and effort than the completion of MC tests. This may be one of the reasons why the recall protocol scores obtained in this study, as well as in Shohamy's (1984) are notably lower than the scores from the MC tests.

With regard to the second part of the first research question, whether the subjects recalled more ideas when the texts were prepared cooperatively, the t-test demonstrated that the difference in means between the two average scores showed no statistically significant difference. The holistic scores obtained by the readers after participating in the cooperative pre-reading version (32%) proved to be very similar to the scores (31%) achieved by the subjects when the texts were prepared in an individual manner. Specifically, if we focus on the scores obtained in each text treated cooperatively, text 1 shows an average score of 30%, and text 3 shows a score of 33%. Similarly, text 2 and 4 reveal a total score of 31% and 30% respectively. As

the recall protocol scores show, the quantitative results seem to be less impressive than the MC scores.

When looking closely at the different levels of significance of the propositions recalled by the students, an interesting finding was revealed: The amount of level 3 propositions -the main generalizations of the text- recalled by the students when they participated in the cooperative activities is significantly higher than the amount of level 3 propositions recalled when the students completed the textbook-based individual activities.

More specifically, the average of level 3 idea units recalled for the readings prepared cooperatively was 45% in comparison with 37% obtained from the individual preparation. This finding is in line with Bernhardt's (1983) study, which pointed out that subjects had the most difficulty recalling level 2 propositions, and the least difficulty recalling level 3 propositions. The results also match with Lund's (1991) study results, which demonstrate that the number of propositions recalled by the readers differed according to the linguistic structure level of the proposition. Lund (1991), who used a modified version of the Meyer and Rice (1984) weighting system, reported that more subjects understood the propositions that were higher up in textual hierarchy. In other words, the readers comprehended more level 3 propositions, the basic propositions to build the story line of the texts. Finally, the results also follow Deville and Chalhoub-Deville's study, which also argues that subjects tend to recall more information from level 3, and less from level 2. The message that the author of the text is trying to convey is usually found in level 3 propositions, while level 2 and

level 1 add supporting and minor details respectively. As instructors, we consider of higher importance the fact that students are able to retain and recall the foremost ideas instead of the accompanying details of the text.

In line with the previous studies mentioned above, readers in cooperative classes tended to remember more level 3 propositions when guided and cooperative pre-reading activities were utilized. Since level 3 propositions are considered central to understanding the message of any given text, the fact that students in cooperative classes were able to retain more level 3 propositions when they participated in cooperative activities is a positive finding.

Regarding level 2 and level 1 propositions, the outcome differs from level 3. As observed in table 18 in chapter four, the combined average score of level 2 propositions recalled by the students was 24% when they completed cooperative activities, versus 20% when they completed individual activities. For texts 1 and 3, students obtained a mean score of 25% and 23% respectively. For texts 2 and 4, in which students completed the activities individually with no classmates' interaction, they barely reached a grade of 20%. Nevertheless, although the average of level 2 recalled ideas is higher when the students followed the cooperative approach to prepare the text, the t-test did not reveal any significant difference between both pre-reading treatments.

For level 1 propositions, the results are very similar to those obtained for level 2. The average of level 1 propositions recalled by the students in cooperative classes after being engaged in the cooperative pre-reading activities for text 1 and 3 was

17.5%, versus the 14.5% recalled by the same readers when the texts were prepared individually. As with level 2 idea units, the t-test for level 1 propositions did not display any significant difference. The figures revealed by the level 2 and level 1 recalled propositions allows us to affirm that both pre-reading treatments had a similar effect on the readers' recollection of such propositions.

Through this line of reasoning, it may be argued that the guided and structured cooperative treatment made a positive difference in the recalling process of main generalizations (level 3 idea units) by students of fourth semester Spanish, but it did not generate a significant impact on the recall of supporting generalizations (level 2 idea units) and/or text details (level 1 propositions).

The fact that the quantitative results regarding level 3 idea units are significant when the cooperative treatment is applied, is extremely positive for the reader, since level 3 idea units (cf. chapter 4) that are logically aligned, shape the summary of the text and basically form the plot of the story. Therefore, the readers can reach a full comprehension of the message that the author is trying to convey, given that the information compiled by level 3 idea units is essential and indispensable for the understanding of the text. The more level 3 idea units the student recalls, the greater the understanding of the core message of the text. A poor or partial understanding of level 3 idea units would result in a limited understanding of the entire text.

On the other hand, although level 1 and particularly level 2 propositions aid the reader's comprehension of the text with supporting details and extra information

about the content, it is possible for a reader to ignore these ideas since they are not as fundamental to the story line understanding as are level 3 idea units.

5.1.3 Summary of the results for cooperative classes

When formulating the first research question, What quantitative differences in reading comprehension are found between the scores from students involved in guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities and those completing textbook-based individual pre-reading activities, the expected result was that students would obtain higher reading comprehension scores after participating in the cooperative pre-reading activities.

In line with the hypothesis presented in chapter three, the quantity of MC questions correctly answered by the readers was significantly higher when the texts were prepared with guidance and structure within a cooperative framework versus when the texts were prepared individually. The cooperative activities seem to have activated students' relevant previous knowledge about the text topic and may have also increased the students' motivation about the text. Smith (1967) has asserted that successful activation of relevant previous knowledge and the correct use of that specific knowledge to understand a text is more often than not an indication of proficient readers (Smith, 1967).

With regard to the recall protocol the scores depict a very different outcome. As described in chapter three, the idea units of the texts were identified through a division of semantic units and these were weighed in relation to their importance to

the overall text message. It should be reminded that the participants were not trained to complete recall protocols in their own language subsequent to reading a text in Spanish. Additionally, the subjects had never completed a recall protocol before as a reading comprehension evaluation tool. With that caveat in mind there was no statistically significant difference in the overall score obtained from the ideas recalled when the readers utilized the cooperative activities versus individual activities. Nonetheless, there is a statistically noteworthy difference in the amount of level 3 idea units in favor of the cooperative treatment. With regard to level 2 propositions, readers do not seem to recall more ideas when they prepare the texts cooperatively in comparison with individual preparation. The same occurs with level 1 propositions, in which both pre-reading treatments had a similar effect on the recall of level 2 and level 1 idea units.

To conclude this section, it can be affirmed that the participants correctly answered significantly more MC test items, and recalled more level 3 propositions when the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading treatment was implemented. The number of recalled level 2 and level 1 propositions seem to be less affected by the pre-reading treatment.

5.2 Discussion of findings from quantitative analysis: Research question 2

5.2.1 Traditional learning group versus textbook-based individual pre-reading activities: MC scores

The analysis of scores obtained in the classes where traditional groups were implemented reveals interesting findings that deserve particular reflection and discussion. In response to the second research question regarding whether the traditional group treatment affected the reading comprehension of students in traditional group classes, results indicate valuable outcomes. As table 23 (cf. chapter 4) displays, the three classes seem to have obtained superior MC scores from the assessments of text 1 than from texts 2, 3, and 4. This phenomenon was not unexpected for the researcher, since noticeable high scores also appeared in text 1 in cooperative classes that compared cooperative exercises to textbook-based individual activities. Additionally, the high MC scores obtained from text 1 also coincided with the results obtained by the sample of students who piloted the assessment tools and the texts.

The most remarkable aspect of the MC results is found in the mean score of the traditional group. The scores obtained by students who participated in traditional group activities, without the instructor's guidance, showed no improvement, when compared with student's scores from individual activities.

As table 22 shows, the combined MC scores revealed by the textbook-based individual treatment reached 77% of correct answers, whereas the traditional group treatment scores only reached 69%. For that reason, the statistical evaluation showed that the difference in means between the two treatments, traditional group versus textbook-based individual, is statistically significant, favoring the individual approach.

It is important however to carefully observe the MC results obtained in each text. Table 23 presents a score of 84% for text 1; and 70% for text 3, both treated individually. Texts 2 and 4 presented scores of 71% and 68% respectively, with 68% representing the lowest score of all four texts.

As explained in section 5.2.1, text 1 presented less difficulty for the students than the rest of the texts. It was also assigned at the beginning of the semester when the students typically have more time to finish the required assignments.

The result of the p. value in the t-test (0.001) suggests that the individual pre-reading activities were more suitable for increasing students' reading comprehension than the traditional group practice. In other words, the traditional learning approach did not help the students comprehend more text content than the individual approach when students employed the MC test as the evaluative tool.

Conversely, as explained in section 5.2.1, students showed higher scores when they employed cooperative activities than when the students participated in textbook-based individual pre-reading. This finding implies that when cooperative pre-reading activities are applied with controlled guidance and structure, the MC scores improve

considerably. However, if the activities are implemented in a traditional group format without guidance and structure, the textbook-based individual pre-reading treatment obtains more successful results.

5.2.2 Traditional group versus textbook-based individual pre-reading activities: Recall protocol scores

The overall recall protocol results obtained from the students in traditional group activities reveal a similar pattern to the overall results from cooperative activities. As described in table 25, the overall recall protocol scores do not show any critical variation depending on the pre-reading treatment implemented. On the one hand, in the recall protocols for texts 1 and 3 (treated individually), the students achieved an average score of 26% and 24% respectively. On the other, the mean scores for texts 2 and 4, in which students followed the traditional group approach, are 26% and 25% respectively. Due to the similar average scores, the difference in means was not statistically significant. When we average the scores obtained from the two texts prepared within the traditional group, the results revealed that only 25% of the text was recalled. This score is exactly the same as when we assembled the scores from the individual treatment. This similarity in the scores confirms that the traditional group pre-reading assignment and the textbook-based individual had a similar effect on the cumulative recalling of ideas.

As mentioned in section 5.2.2, the findings obtained from recall protocols written by the students involved in cooperative activities, emerged in the analysis of

level 3 idea units. Contrary to this relevant finding, the students who implemented traditional groups did not recall more level 3 ideas when they prepared their texts individually. Both treatments; textbook-based individual and traditional group, had very similar scores, 32% and 31% respectively. Cognitively speaking therefore, it can be concluded that none of the two pre-reading treatments applied in traditional group classes, the classes that implemented individual versus traditional group pre-reading activities, proved robust enough to influence the ability of readers to understand and reproduce the main ideas (level 3 propositions) of the text when recall protocol was used as an evaluation tool.

To conclude this section, it can be suggested that the recall protocols' results retrieved in traditional group classes vary from the MC results. As illustrated in table 25, when the recall protocol scores are measured with a cumulative system, the difference between the two treatments is almost imperceptible; therefore the statistical difference is not relevant. Further investigation into the recall protocol analysis proved that both individual and traditional pre-reading treatments, similarly affected the amount of level 3 propositions recalled by the students. However, when students employed the individual pre-reading activities they recalled significantly more supporting ideas (level 2) and more details (level 1), than when they participated in traditional group activities. This finding reveals that when students work individually, they seem to retain a greater amount of supporting generalizations and minor details than when the reading assignment is prepared in a traditional group, with no guidance or structure from the instructor.

5.2.3 Summary of the scores for traditional group classes

The second facet of the study examined here questioned whether L2 reading comprehension scores differed after the readers employed a traditional group pre-reading treatment, as opposed to the textbook-based individual activities with no assistance from classmates or the instructor. As stated in chapter three, it was expected that the individual text preparation was more successful in enhancing reading comprehension than the traditional group preparation. The expected outcome was confirmed when the participants' reading comprehension was evaluated by MC tests. The participants answered a higher amount of correct MC responses when the pre-reading activities followed the individual format. It seems that traditional groups did not succeed in employing a strategy that could significantly enhance reading comprehension. Comprehension, as it has been discussed throughout the study, is facilitated by explicitly introducing schemata through adequate pre-reading activities.

A finding of the study worthy of note responds to the second facet of research question 2. In reference to the overall scores obtained from the recall protocols, the results did not prove any relevant difference. Nevertheless, when the focus was placed on a specific level of idea units, some interesting facts were revealed. The analysis showed that participants recalled an equal amount of main ideas (level 3 propositions) when they participated in individual activities or in traditional groups. The difference appeared when we focused on the supporting generalizations (level 2 propositions) and minor details (level 1). The statistical data showed that the individual treatment allowed readers to recall significantly more level 1 and 2

211

propositions. In other words, when the students completed the text homework without any interaction with classmates and/or the instructor, they managed to recall more level 2 and level 1 idea units than when they were involved in traditional groups working on the assigned pre-reading handout.

5.3 INTER-GROUP COMPARISON RESULTS: GUIDED AND COOPERATIVE VERSUS TRADITIONAL GROUP LEARNING

Perhaps the most interesting achievement of the study relates to the inter-group comparison of the scores. When contrasting the MC scores obtained from the guided and structured cooperative treatment with the MC scores obtained from the implementation of traditional group activities, a significant difference occurs. As displayed in table 33 (cf. chapter 4), the MC scores for treatments that required group work show a steady decrease throughout the semester. On the one hand, cooperative classes received a score of 88% in the first cooperative treatment, and 77% in the second. Whereas students in traditional group classes achieve 71% and 67%, respectively for the first and second traditional group learning treatment were. As the numbers illustrate, in both groups the scores declined when the students got together and prepared the text in a traditional group format.

This declining trend also occurred when the subjects employed the individual format. Consequently, there was a constant decrease in all classes when implementing the treatments. This implies that there is a usual tendency for the reading

comprehension to decrease as the course progresses. This might have been due to the gradual increase of the degree of grammar and subject difficulty of the texts, and the increase in the workload as the semester progressed. Nevertheless, despite the tendency for the scores' to decrease throughout the semester, it is important to point out that those students who participated in the cooperative activity treatment showed a less pronounced decline throughout the semester.

When the t-test application was performed for the two in-group treatment scores, several differences were revealed. It was not a surprise to notice the statistically significant difference between the first cooperative treatment score, 88%, versus the first traditional group score, 77%, as well as the relevant difference obtained from the second cooperative treatment score, 71%, in comparison with 67%, revealed by the second traditional group treatment. Also expected was the difference revealed when the scores from the same pre-reading treatment were combined into one overall score. The cooperative treatment showed 82% versus 69% for the traditional learning group treatment, as illustrated by table 36.

Thus, it can be concluded that the participants who completed the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities clearly out-scored the readers who completed the traditional group activities in the MC scores. This indicates that the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading treatment produces more correct answers on the MC examination than the rest of the treatments applied in the study. This conclusion is made with the assumption that students were at a similar level of

language proficiency, and that the increasing difficulty of the texts only reflected the difficulty sequence embedded in the natural progression of the course.

A relevant difference in mean scores also occurred when comparing those obtained from the recall protocols. The comparison between first in-group treatments, and second in-group treatments, showed a considerable statistically significant difference. For the first cooperative treatment, the readers recalled 30% of the text versus 26% recalled by the traditional group participants. For the second cooperative treatment the students recalled 33% of the text whereas the traditional group students only recalled 25%. Thus, the students who were part of the cooperative activities out-scored the students from the traditional group pre-reading activities during the first and the second time that these treatments were employed.

In both instances the t-test showed relevant differences, especially for the comparison of the second treatments, in which the t-test, displayed in table 39 (cf. chapter 4), is highly significant (.0007) at the .05 level, showing that the advantage that the guided and structured cooperative activities display, is probably not random. This proves therefore, that cooperative practices are more effective in increasing students' reading comprehension.

Furthermore, when combining the average scores obtained from cooperative treatments, 32%, and traditional group treatments, 25%, a statistically significant difference is also displayed by the t-test.

The success of the students who participated in the cooperative pre-reading activities versus the ones who were immersed in a traditional non-guided and non-

structured group represents a positive and exciting outcome. However, it is critical to make note of the fact that we compared scores from different students instead of scores from the same subjects, as was the case in the two intra-group studies employed to answer research questions 1 and 2. Even though the students were not the same subjects in the inter-group study, all were in fourth semester Spanish, taking the class simultaneously, and accountable for the same class workload. The similarities between the subjects and the conditions of the pre-reading implementation privilege the pedagogical consideration of the above results. Therefore, I am confident that the findings observed in the reading comprehension performance of the students involved in cooperative activities versus those who participated in the traditional group contribute to the broader discussion on teaching and learning FL pre-reading strategies.

Continuing with the primary goal of this study, another objective was to see whether the cooperative pre-reading activities increased the reader's comprehension of the texts. The results achieved in the inter-group study clearly reflect how subjects who used the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading treatment developed a substantial increase in the level of reading comprehension of the socio-political informative texts. The fact that, not only the MC results, but also the recall protocol results strongly favor the cooperative pre-reading treatment versus the traditional group format, suggests that the cooperative treatment made a considerable impact on the students reading comprehension. The required students' interaction

215

with the purpose of structured knowledge exchange produced a positive effect on the students of fourth semester of Spanish.

5.4 EFFECT OF THE READING COMPREHENSION MEASUREMENT TOOLS ON THE READING COMPREHENSION TEST SCORES

Chapter two, specifically the section devoted to the different reading comprehension measurement (2.1.8.7), noticeably confirms that the effect of the measurement tools when assessing L1 or L2 reading comprehension is an issue to be considered. Wolf (1993) and Shohamy's (1984) studies concluded that participants achieve higher scores when they complete MC tests in comparison with open-ended tests and/or written recall protocols.

The present study confirms the results obtained in the studies discussed in the literature review. To start with, the results from MC tests differ from the results obtained from the written recall protocols analyzed with a hierarchical idea units' template. As Shohamy (1984) hypothesized, MC questions only require comprehension and selection, but not production of thoughts, whereas open-ended questions require comprehension, thought production, and the execution of thoughts on paper, a more complex task than recognizing and selecting.

Along the same lines, the results obtained in this study seem to indicate that the selection of reading comprehension assessment tools is crucial to the final results

of the research, and it is necessary to be aware of the variations in the results depending on the reading comprehension measurement tool utilized.

5.5 OVERALL FINDINGS

The study's findings indicate that modifications in the type of pre-reading activities can positively increase the amount and type of information that intermediate-high learners of Spanish are able to understand about informative historical and socio-political Spanish texts. The most relevant findings are outlined below.

First, from the first intra-group study one can argue that guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities increase the students' reading comprehension when MC tests are used as the measurement tool.

Second, with regard to the information obtained from the recall protocols, guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities also seem to generate more level 3 idea units (the texts' main generalizations) than textbook-based individual pre-reading activities. Moreover, the final results of the second intra-group study first indicated that textbook-based individual pre-reading activities generated higher reading comprehension scores if assessed with MC instead of the traditional group treatment.

Third, in reference to the recall protocols, readers recalled more level 2 idea units, (supporting generalizations), as well as level 1 idea units, (the minor details of the text), if the pre-reading activities were completed individually. The individual

217

pre-reading treatment however did not have a significant effect on the quantity of recalled level 3 idea units. As the data in chapter four illustrates, the textbook-based individual treatment triggered the same amount of level 3 propositions as the traditional group treatment.

5.6 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study suggest that, with guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities, intermediate-high students of Spanish increase their reading comprehension of informative historical and socio-political texts. It is important, however, for students to follow the pre-reading activities' guidelines and be aware of the importance of their contributions about the text content for the group. Benefits to readers include a greater understanding of the text content and a higher command of the scaffold ideas.

As stated in chapter two, Carrell and Floyd (1987) argue that foreign language teachers must provide the student with appropriate schemata and must also teach the student how to build bridges between existing and new knowledge to increase reading comprehension. With that in mind, it could be stated that the outcomes of the present study indicate that guided and structured cooperative activities may have created the link between the reader's existing knowledge and new knowledge, which is necessary for text comprehension.

Additionally, the use of the cooperative technique in educational settings has proved to increase the oral and critical thinking skills of students (Johnson &

Johnson, 1999), given that students participate in more verbal interactions, and thus are exposed to different points of view and interpretations of the text that they will later read. In other words, the knowledge that the readers are first exposed to does not come from the textbook or their instructor, but from their peers. Positively, the verbal interactions, problem-solving activities, discussion, and personal questions that take place in guided and structured cooperative exercises raise students' motivation about controversial issues presented in the text. In addition, students not only practice oral skills, but also critical thinking skills by arriving at a general consensus before committing to a definite answer.

Disadvantages to the use of guided and structured cooperative activities include the extensive amount of time involved in the creation and/or modification of the activities in the textbook.

Finally, a second pedagogical implication was found in the analysis of the results obtained by the participants involved in traditional group activities. The use of textbook-based individual pre-reading activities serves to keep students' reading comprehension at a higher level when we compare their outcomes to the results obtained by traditional groups. This implies that grouping the students in teams with the purpose of completing the pre-reading activities, without the instructor's guidance, is not as beneficial to the students' reading comprehension as the individual activities encountered in the textbook.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This section will describe, in a summarized manner, the findings and their implications obtained from each of the two intra-group comparisons and the inter-group comparison carried out in the present study.

The first intra-group comparison compared the effects of cooperative pre-reading versus individual pre-reading activities in the cooperative classes comprised of 45 students. The comparison revealed that the guided and structured cooperative pre-reading activities assisted the subjects in the process of correctly answering more MC items than when students worked individually. These results suggest that cooperative pre-reading treatments contribute to students understanding more ideas from the text than the individual approach. Regarding the recall protocol outcomes, neither treatment, made a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension when the grading system is designed to reflect an overall score. Nonetheless, when the grading system focuses specifically on the main generalizations (level 3 propositions) the results show that the cooperative treatment significantly generated a greater recall, in comparison with the individual treatment. The same phenomenon did not occur with the supporting generalizations (level 2 propositions) and/or minor details (level 1), which were not altered by any of the pre-reading treatments. This implies that both cooperative and individual practices equally affected the recall of level 1 and 2 propositions.

The second intra-group study examined the effects of the traditional group versus the textbook-based individual format in the pre-reading phase. On this

occasion, the study consisted of 76 subjects from the three traditional group classes. The findings reveal that students correctly answered more MC items when they focused on the textbook activities and completed the task individually, than when they were involved in a traditional group with no guidance and structure. As in the case of the first intra-group comparison (cooperative vs. individual), the data regarding the recall protocol did not indicate any significant difference, both in the overall results, as well as in the main generalizations (level 3). This fact indicates that traditional group and individual activities impacted the subjects' recall protocols similarly when focusing on the cumulative score, and the recalled level 3 propositions. This unexpected outcome was found when we focused on the recall of supporting details (level 2 propositions) and minor details (level 1 propositions). The t-tests performed for level 1 and level 2 propositions revealed that when the participants completed the pre-reading task individually, with no interaction with their classmates or instructor, they recalled more supportive details and minor details than when the subjects were involved in pre-reading activities within a traditional group format. It seems that the individual space and the personal time that the students were granted to prepare the texts, allowed them to more effectively remember the major and minor details, than the traditional group activities with no structure and no substantial interaction with the instructor or other group members.

Finally, when the inter-group comparison was performed between the cooperative treatment results and the traditional group format results, the MC scores, as well as the recall protocol scores, revealed a noteworthy difference. This finding

221

suggests that the positive effect of cooperative pre-reading activities on the students' reading comprehension, when implemented following the required guidelines, which include structure of the activities and guidance by the instructor during the completion of the activities, is effective in increasing Spanish as a second language students' reading comprehension.

The findings of this study are but one piece of a larger puzzle that attempts to describe the many options available to educators as they strive to increase the reading comprehension among intermediate-high proficiency L2 readers. The results of this study can contribute to an overall understanding of the benefits to pre-reading activities. A greater comprehension of these benefits can result in a more effective implementation of pre-reading activities. Having additional prior knowledge generally aids reading comprehension, including knowledge of the world, cultural knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and linguistic knowledge" (Pang et al., 2003, p. 14). Another element that helps the process of building and accessing prior knowledge is the readers' interest in the text.

To conclude this section we argue that by carefully monitoring the format of the pre-reading activity, educators can effectively encourage students to be better acquainted with, and more interested in the content of the text. They can also motivate students to activate their prior knowledge, an invaluable tool to improve and increase reading comprehension.

5.7 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The primary limitation of this study is in relation to the results obtained from the recall protocols. At the inception of the study design it was hoped that the analysis of the templates would offer statistically significant holistic results from the recall protocols. Nonetheless, the less relevant difference encouraged the researcher to examine the recall protocol template from a perspective focused on the three different semantic levels, in which significant differences were found.

The second limitation is the fact that the cooperative pre-reading treatments were not performed at the same time than the traditional group treatments, consequently they were not performed on the same texts. The justification behind this caveat is the impossibility for the researcher to be physically present every time the cooperative and the traditional treatments were implemented.

The third and last limitation is the break down of text ideas. Even though, a second rater examined the idea division and made adequate modifications for each text template, it would have gain more objectivity if a third and a fourth rater had been included and had offered their opinion about the propositions' division.

Time for the researcher to be present in any data collection situation and financial resources were definitely a significant constrain in the study.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

The present study, as most do, concludes with more questions unanswered than answered, opening up several avenues for further investigation. The results of the present research have discussed how students of intermediate-high Spanish involved in a guided and structured cooperative pre-reading framework increase their reading comprehension.

Future research should assess students' participation in cooperative practices when they are not required to do so by the instructor's guidelines. The results would determine the effect of the teacher's instructions and the effect of interactive activities on reading comprehension. Future research should also examine the effect of the individual pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension of students who express a preference for team-oriented activities, or for those students who claim to focus better on their work when they complete the assignments independently at their own pace.

The data of the study also offers room to the researcher to investigate the impact of the three different pre-reading activities, not only in the reading comprehension, but also in the degree of motivation towards the text content. Taking into account the fact that motivation is a more subjective component of the learning process, motivation could be measured through a particular qualitative analysis of oral interviews with the participants, or in a more quantitative manner, using individual questionnaires in which the participants would have to mark down the degree of motivation before and after completing the pre-reading activities.

APPENDIXES

A. WISCONSIN PLACEMENT EXAM

Sample Questions: General Characteristics of the Test

1. Each selected test is to be completed by all students. The expectation is that students who have had one or two years of high school Spanish will answer fewer questions correctly than students who have had three or more years of high school Spanish.

2. Each module is entirely in Spanish (except for the instructions) and all questions have a fixed-choice response format.

3. The test is scored as the number of correct answers, with no penalty for guessing. Each item has only one best answer.

4. Both the Grammar/Reading Comprehension Test and the Listening Comprehension Test are designed as a test of skill and not speed. Ample time is allowed to answer questions. Sixty (60) minutes are allowed to complete the Grammar/Reading Test. Approximately thirty minutes are allowed for the Listening Comprehension Test.

Grammar and Reading Comprehension Test

The Grammar Module

The grammar module of the Spanish Placement Test deals primarily with questions of syntax. Grammatical content of the texts used in first and second year courses was analyzed noting the stage at which certain concepts were introduced and when such concepts were reviewed in the second year. Test questions were written to measure those concepts which appeared to be important to beginning study at each course level. Great care was taken in writing questions to avoid ambiguity or arcane constructions, and problems, which might require special knowledge of regional or dialectical differences. The general criterion was to write items based on

constructions of acceptable grammar and high frequency of occurrence throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Two different multiple-choice formats are used. For simpler concepts, the two-choice questions are used. Questions of higher complexity are written using four-choice formats. In general, questions are phrased positively: e.g. "which of the following choices is correct." For some types of constructions, however, the student is asked to select the work or phrase that would make the statement grammatically incorrect. To accomplish this, the committee used the following criteria:

1. No English to Spanish translation

2. No incorrect spelling or grammatically incorrect phrases in the distractors (grammatically incorrect choices would result only from the insertion of the "wrong" answer in the sentence)

3. Limitations on lexical items to those typically found in high school texts, so that this does not become a vocabulary test

4. Concentration on high frequency structures and on those, which contrast with English

5. Exclusion of items that contain a racial, cultural, or sexist bias

6. Exclusion of items that require calculation or special cultural knowledge beyond the context of the question

 7. No "trick", contrived, or whimsical questions

It is clear that there are many types of syntactic constructions which allow for a variety of acceptable alternatives or, that under certain context could be interpreted differently. For this reason, several grammatical concepts are simply not covered in this test.

The following items are representative of the kind of questions students are asked to answer.

Examples of Spanish Grammar Items

Part 1

Select one of the two possible choices to fill the blank space in the sentence:

1. El señor Pérez es _____ dentista.

    a. un

    b. No Change

2. _____ es buena para la salud.

    a. La fruta

    b. Fruta

3. ¡Pobre Pablo! Hoy _____ enfermo.

    a. está

    b. es

4. No _____ cuándo vendrán.

    a. conocemos

    b. sabemos

5. No veo _____ nadie.

    a. a

    b. No Change

6. La señora Díaz tiene _____ tres hijos.

    a. a

    b. No Change

Part 2

Select the correct choice from the four answers given:

1. ¿Preparo el almuerzo? - No, ¡no _____ Ud.!

    a. prepárelo

    b. lo prepare

    c. Io preparé

    d. Ios prepara

2. Pregúntele _____ quiere.

    a. que

    b. qué

    c. cómo

    d. quién

3. Los libros están en la tienda. ¿_____ los va a buscar?

    a. Qué

    b. Quién

    c. Cuáles

    d. Cuánto

4. ¿Qué blusa prefiere usted? - Prefiero _____

    a. el verde

    b. la verde

    c. lo verde

    d. las verdes

5. _____ agradable de la fiesta era la comida.

    a. Al

    b. El

    c. La

    d. Lo

6. No cabía duda que ellos _____ .

    a. equivocarse

    b. se equivocaran

    c. se habían equivocado

    d. se habrán equivocado

Part 3

Select the one choice which is NOT correct. Three of the choices will make the sentence grammatically correct. One will make it incorrect. Select the one that makes the sentence INCORRECT.

1. _____ los atletas.

    a. Los muchachos gustan

    b. Los muchachos admiran a

    c. A los muchachos les gustan

    d. A los muchachos les encantan

2. El accidente _____ en frente de mi casa.

    a. fue

    b. estaba

    c. ocurrió

    d. tuvo lugar

The Reading Module

An important consideration in the development of this module is comprehension of the sense of the text beyond a mere knowledge of Spanish. A large number of possible texts were considered. However, all technical, scientific, and other specialized materials, poetry and stylistically complex literature, biased or controversial readings, and texts that require wide experience in an Hispanic culture were all excluded. Passages that provided the best material for the reading test were ones that had an internal structure independent of their original purpose. As a rule, passages filled with facts but without a clearly stated point do not meet this criterion. Variety in subject matter and content was an important objective in selection of reading passages. Where possible, the various versions of the test have included narratives, advertisements, public notices, anecdotes, jokes, character descriptions, and the like.

In all cases, the original text was edited to bring it within the range of the vocabulary of the representative high school texts. Every effort was made to produce a text in which comprehension was not dependent on a key word or phrase that could not be inferred from the con text. English cognates were avoided if they were uncommon in Spanish usage. The authenticity of the original style was maintained wherever possible. Anglicized versions of the original Spanish were not used.

Two to four questions are asked after each passage. At least one item is included which is considered an "easy" item on a basic fact. In addition, one interpretative item is included on the sense or intent of the text as a whole.

The following passage and accompanying questions are typical of the Spanish Reading Module.

Example of Spanish Reading Module

Para ayudar a los clientes a calcular sus gastos mensuales, les ofrecemos un plan de pago en cuotas fijas a todos ellos. Este programa les permitirá distribuir a plazos

iguales el costo de la electricidad durante todo el año. La cuenta mensual se basará en el promedio de consumo durante un plazo de doce meses. Los primeros once meses se cobrará una cantidad fija; el último mes se ajustará la cuenta de acuerdo con lo que realmente se haya consumido.

1. Bajo este plan, es posible que cada mes se pague menos de lo que se debe.
a. Cierto
b. Falso

2. La ventaja de este plan es que uno sabe cuánto tiene que pagar cada mes.
a. Cierto
b. Falso

3. Se calcula el costo de un mes a base de lo que el cliente puede pagar.
a. Cierto
b. Falso

4. Según este programa, es posible que un cliente reciba dinero al fin del año.
a Cierto
b. Falso

The Listening Comprehension Test
The Listening Comprehension Test is constructed using many of the criteria developed for the reading passages as well as taking into consideration the types of information that could not be readily understood and retained from a single hearing such as: numbers, lists, detailed facts, complex arguments, and what could be conveyed through intonation and tone of voice (e.g., mood, emotional state). The recorded passages are relatively short (generally less than sixty seconds) and include: simulations of dialogue, one side of a telephone conversation, public announcements,

informally related anecdotes, reading of a narrative, etc. In several cases, appropriate sound effects are added to improve comprehension.

The speakers represent several regions in Spain and South America, but all use standard pronunciation and natural articulation. The variations in accent appear to have caused no difficulties in understanding on the part of the students.

The passage and accompanying questions following on the next page are typical of those in the Spanish Listening Comprehension Test.

Example of Spanish Listening Module

En la literatura española, hay dos personajes de fama universal. Don Quijote es el protagonista central de la primera novela moderna, "El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha". Esta novela es una sátira de los libros de caballerías, pero representa también una visión total y compleja de la vida española. Don Quijote y su compañero Sancho Panza son antitéticos; donde uno es valiente, el otro es cobarde; donde uno es idealista, el otro es práctico. Los dos se complementan para formar una imagen de España y del espanol del siglo XVII tanto como del español de hoy.

En cambio don Juan Tenorio, personaje de ficción en dos dramas, uno del siglo XVII y el otro del siglo XIX, es un hombre irrespetuoso, cínico, satirico, irresponsable, egoísta, gran amante de las mujeres, héroe rebelde y finalmente símbolo del machismo latino. Pero es una personalidad que, por su espíritu de independencia, libertad y deseo de romper con los convencionalismos sociales cautiva la imaginación de los españoles y de todo el mundo.

1. Don Quixote _____.

a. es irrespetuoso y cínico.

b. es el personaje principal de una novela.

c. es como su fiel compañero, Sancho Panza.

d. es la imagen opuesta con respecto al carácter nacional de España.

2. Don Juan Tenorio _____ .

a. es cobarde.

b. representa el idealismo del machismo latino.

c. refleja la ficción típica del siglo diez y nueve.

d. refleja un deseo de independencia y de libertad que fascina a todos.

3. Sancho Panza y don Quijote _____ .

a siguen el camino práctico de la vida.

b. son personajes de los libros de caballerías.

c. representan el hidalgo de la novela moderna.

d. son muy diferentes, pero juntos forman un cuadro del español de hoy.

B. STUDENT CONSENT FORMS

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE PRE-READING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

Conducted by: Lucia Osa-Melero tlph: 232 4528
Of The University of Texas at Austin
Spanish and Portuguese
Dear Project Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research entitled "The effects of Cooperative Pre-reading Activities vs. Traditional Pre-reading Activities in SPN 312L". After reading the description of the project activities below in which you will participate, please sign both copies of the release form and return one copy to me. You should keep the second copy for your files.

The purpose of this project is to determine the effectiveness of cooperative pre-reading activities in advanced Spanish classes vs. more traditional pre-reading activities. The activities that you will perform will be based on two texts found in your textbook.

First, you will be asked to interact with two or three classmates in your class and share your knowledge about the topic in the text to complete the questions and discuss them for 20-25 minutes.

Second, you will fully read the text at home, trying to understand its meaning.

Third, when you come back to class you will be asked to recall all the information in English that you remember from that particular text in the form of a written summary including as many details as possible.

Next, your recall protocol will be analyzed in order to infer the quantity and quality of your reading comprehension. You will also complete a short answer questionnaire and a multiple-choice questionnaire with 10 to 11 items about the text content.

I have chosen you for this project because you are registered in the SPN 312L advanced Spanish class. The only thing that you have to do is to read the specific text as you would read any other text for your class. Your participation will be more helpful to me if you try to do your best when recalling the story trying to give me as much information as possible about the text.

I estimate that the writing will last for 30-40 minutes and 5 more minutes for the multiple-choice. It will be a total of 150 minutes approximately, two hours and a half.

Your written recall protocol will be used for research purposes only, and your name will not be used in any materials published with the project. In exchange I will be able to help you with reading challenges or grammar questions that might arise. You will not receive any monetary compensation for your participation in this study.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in the project by signing the following release form. If you have any questions, please feel free please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researcher conducting the study or email her losamele@mail.utexas.edu. Her name, phone numbers, and e-mail address are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Lucía Osa-Melero

Lecturer/Coordinator

C. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS CONSENT FORM

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE PRE-READING ACTIVITY TYPES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF SPANISH IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

Conducted by: Lucia Osa-Melero tlph: 232 4528

Of The University of Texas at Austin

Spanish and Portuguese

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this project is to determine the effectiveness of cooperative pre-reading activities in advanced Spanish classes vs. more traditional pre-reading activities. The activities that you will perform will be based on two texts found in your textbook.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

Total estimated time to participate in study is two hours and a half

There are no risks involved in this study.

Compensation: There will not be monetary compensation. There are no individual benefits to participation. However, you will be helping researchers understand the effects of the application of cooperative theories to pre-reading activities.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. The cassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information will be on them and they will be kept in a

secure place, such a as a locked file cabinet in my office. Tapes will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator and the tapes will be erased. Tapes will be erased after they are transcribed and coded. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board, have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Risks: The risks associated with participation are no greater than those of everyday life.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

If you choose not to participate in the study, an alternative assignment is available from your instructor.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.
Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.
Signature:_____ Date:_____

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent
Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

D. INTRUCTORS' QUESTIONNARIE

Spring 07

Please complete the following questionnaire and respond briefly to the questions below

Name:

Country of origin:

Age:

Specialization or field:

Years of experience teaching Spanish as a foreign language:

Years of experience as an instructor responsible for your own class:

Years of experience teaching SPN 312L:

Write a brief description of your attitude towards teaching a foreign language and the importance of it

The texts used in SPN 312L

What do you think about their length?

What do you think about their language complexity?

What do you think about their political and historical content?

Any other comment about the 4 texts used in SPN 312L?

Any other comment about the pre-reading activities used in En Contexto: Manual de lecturas y películas? Or the cooperative activities performed by the researcher?

E. MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEXT 1

1- Multiple Choice Test for "Después de la represión: España en los años ochenta"
Please, mark the response that better describes the reading. Sometimes two would work,
but only one is more accurate.

1. En España en 1936 estalló una Guerra que enfrentaba a

a) los jóvenes y los más tradicionales

b) los nacionales con ideas de derechas y los republicanos con ideas de izquierda

c) los franquistas y los fascistas

d) los franquistas de las zonas bilingües con los nacionales de la zona central

2. **Después de la guerra civil española se instauró un gobierno**

a) democrático

b) monárquico

c) dictatorial

d) comunista

3. **El propósito de Francisco Franco en España era**

a) ser parte de la comunidad europea

b) tener un país con una sola lengua y una sola cultura

c) establecer libertad de expresión en las zonas bilingües

d) establecer lazos políticos y comerciales con países latinoamericanos

4. Después de la muerte de Franco, Juan Carlos I empezó una monarquía

a) democrática

b) nacional

c) franquista

d) monárquica

5. Los años 80 fue un período de

a) innovación, experimentación y exceso

b) represión, limitaciones y castigo

c) tranquilidad, estabilidad y experimentación

d) desorden, prohibiciones y lazos con otros países

6. Los jóvenes ochentenos usaron ………… para expresar sus deseos de libertad

a) el bilingüismo

b) la música

c) la familia

d) la tradición

7. La "ruta del bacalao" era

a) una carretera muy usada por los ochenteros

b) una excursión de 3 días a diferente clubes de la costa

c) un experimento de Alaska y Dinarama

d) Un concentración de punkies en el centro de España

8. Durante los años 80 los homosexuales y transexuales

a) siguieron reprimiendo su orientación sexual

b) se convirtieron en los personajes más populares de la ruta del bacalao

c) salieron a la calle abiertamente para expresarse

d) popularizaron el consumo de heroína

9. Lo menos positivo o lo menos *divertido* de los años 80 fue que

a) se instauró de nuevo una dictadura

b) aumentó la drogadicción, el desempleo y el SIDA

c) los jóvenes decidieron expresar su orientación sexual

d) se investigó sobre las enfermedades venéreas

--Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the text content that you just read using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the vocabulary and grammatical structures using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Underline what you think about the different aspects of the text following your personal criteria

The content of this text is…   1.interesting   2.not interesting

The content of this text …

1.motivates me to read more about the topic   2.does not motivate me to read more about the topic

This text has…

1.excessive information   2.right amount of information   3.little   information

1.many complicated grammatical structures   2.accessible   grammatical   structures

        3.easy grammatical structures

Other information you want to provide?

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEXT 2

2- Multiple Choice Test for "Los años de la dictadura en Argentina y las marcas del terror" Please, mark the response that better describes the reading. Sometimes two would work, but only one is more accurate.

1. El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional perseguía a

a) los argentinos que simpatizaban con los militares

b) las personas que no estaban de acuerdo con las ideas políticas de la Junta Militar

c) las clases altas y las compañías nacionales e internacionales

d) los prisioneros que no apoyaban las ideas conformistas

2. **Durante la época de la dictadura, una de las estrategias del gobierno argentino fue**

a) encerrar en campos de detención y prisiones a miles de personas

b) obligar a la población a colaborar con la clase alta

c) detener a miembros del gobierno militar

d) organizar las marchas de las madres y abuelas de la plaza de mayo

3. **Los grupos de oposición al gobierno respondieron al gobierno con**

a) incontable apoyo

b) conformismo y paciencia

c) más violencia

d) una guerra para recuperar las islas Malvinas

4. **La mayoría de la población argentina mantuvo una actitud sumisa a causa de**

a) el terror

b) el apoyo al gobierno

c) las desapariciones de los bebés

d) el desconocimiento e ignorancia

5. En 1977 un grupo de madres decidió juntarse enfrente de la casa Rosada para denunciar

a) la actitud sumisa de los políticos

b) la desaparición inexplicable de sus hijos

c) la tortura recibida por el gobierno militar

d) la perdida de las islas Malvinas

6. Algunas familias argentinas adoptaron bebes provenientes (from)

a) madres de clase social alta

b) familias relacionadas con la Junta Militar

c) mujeres detenidas por las Fuerzas Armadas

d) abuelas a favor de la tortura y el exterminio

7. ¿Qué acontecimiento importante pasó en 1982 en Argentina?

a) muchos bebes fueron dados a los militares

b) un grupo de abuelas empezó a protestar

c) se le declaró la guerra a Inglaterra para recuperar las Malvinas

d) se realizó un juicio para encarcelar a los miembros de la Junta Militar

--Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the text content that you just read using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the vocabulary and grammatical structures using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Underline what you think about the different aspects of the text following your personal criteria

The content of this text is…   1.interesting   2.not interesting

The content of this text …

1.motivates me to read more about the topic   2.does not motivate me to read more about the topic

This text has…

1.excessive information   2.right amount of information   3.little   information

1.many complicated grammatical structures   2.accessible   grammatical   structures

3.easy grammatical structures

Other information you want to provide?

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEXT 3

3- Multiple Choice Test for "Colombia, un país fragmentado" y "María llena eres de gracia". Please mark the response that better paraphrases what you have read in the reading. Sometimes two options are appropriate, but only one is more accurate.

1. Después de la independencia de Colombia en 1810, el país

a) pasó por una etapa estable

b) sufrió varias guerras civiles

c) pasó por una guerra civil de casi 50 años

d) formó una guerra mundial

2. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán era

a) un líder populista que quería ayudar a las poblaciones marginales

b) el primer presidente que tuvo Colombia en su primera democracia

c) un guerrillero compañero de Juan Roa Sierra

d) un líder político conservador que trataba de ayudar a las clases altas

3. La gente reaccionó al asesinato de Eliécer Gaitán

a) haciendo protestas

b) formando guerrillas

c) convocando a elecciones democráticas

d) asesinando a Juan Roa Sierra

4. El Bogotazo fue

a) la primera guerra civil que sufrió Colombia

b) el comienzo de un período extremadamente violento

c) el asesinato de un político de extrema derecha

d) una protesta violenta en contra de los liberales

5. Los dos grupos guerrilleros más importantes fueron

a) el Bogotazo y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

b) las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia y el Ejercito de Liberación Nacional

c) el Ejercito de Liberación y los liberales

d) los terroristas y las Fuerzas Armadas Liberales de Cuba

6. Las AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) son

a) los ministros de defensa colombianos

b) grupos guerrilleros liberales

c) grupos paramilitares de extrema derecha

d) narcotraficantes y secuestradores

7. En los últimos 20 años, podría decirse que Colombia está fragmentada en tres partes:

a) los liberales, los paramilitares y los narcotraficantes

b) el gobierno, los militares y las autodefensas

c) la guerrilla, los paramilitares y el gobierno

d) los guerrilleros, los paramilitares y los secuestrados

8. Según la lectura, actualmente podríamos concluir que Colombia es un país

a) afectado por la violencia, la pobreza y el desempleo

b) sin guerrillas

c) donde los jóvenes no tienen dificultad para encontrar trabajo

d) con problemas políticos pero no sociales

9. Las nuevas políticas económicas del gobierno colombiano y el Plan Colombia de 1998

a) han ayudado a mejorar la economía del país

b) han causado un aumento del número de narcotraficantes

c) han aumentado la pobreza y el desempleo

d) han ayudado a expandir las plantaciones de coca

10. En Colombia, convertirse en "mulas" humanas de drogas o en sicarios son algunas de las opciones

a) que el gobierno colombiano propone para mejorar la sociedad

b) de los jóvenes colombianos para salir de la pobreza

c) que dan más seguridad y tranquilidad a los jóvenes

d) que rechazan los jóvenes colombianos a causa de su alto número de muertes

--Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the text content that you just read using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the vocabulary and grammatical structures using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Underline what you think about the different aspects of the text following your personal criteria

The content of this text is…   1.interesting   2.not interesting

The content of this text …

1.motivates me to read more about the topic 2.does not motivate me to read more about the topic

249

This text has…

1.excessive information   2.right amount of information   3.little information

 1.many complicated grammatical structures   2.accessible grammatical structures

3.easy grammatical structures

Other information you want to provide?

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEXT 4

4- Multiple Choice Test for "El Che Guevara" y "Diarios de motocicleta". Please, mark the response that better paraphrases what you have read in the reading. Sometimes two options are appropriate, but only one is more accurate.

1. Desde joven, el Che Guevara era de personalidad

a) bohemia y arriesgada

b) sumisa y controlada

c) materialista y ambiciosa

d) influenciada por el neo-colonialismo

2. El médico Hugo Pesce fue para el Che

a) un médico que le inspiró a especializarse en radiología

b) un padre que le ayudaba a planear sus viajes

c) un líder político a favor del comunismo

d) un modelo de médico comprometido con los desfavorecidos

3. El Che se convirtió en uno de los líderes de la revolución cubana porque

a) Fidel Castro lo obligó a ser parte del movimiento 26 de julio

b) fue la mano derecha de Fidel Castro durante la revolución cubana

c) formó un ejército con los guajiros en la Sierra Maestra

d) ayudó al dictador Fulgencio Batista a derrocar a Fidel Castro

4. El Che decidió abandonar sus cargos en el gobierno cubano para

a) no ser partidario del gobierno de Fidel Castro

b) empezar una lucha revolucionaria en el Congo

c) viajar por países latinoamericanos

d) informar al mundo de los abusos del gobierno de Fidel Castro a sus campesinos

251

5. La rebelión del Congo fracasó por varias razones, una de ellas es porque

a) los rebeldes adoptaron una actitud muy comprometida con el Che

b) la gente del Congo no apoyó al Che

c) los comunistas se enfrentaron al Che

d) el Che decidió concentrarse en la rebelión de Latinoamérica

6. El Ejercito de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia se formó para

a) unirse al Partido Comunista Boliviano y tomar poder del gobierno boliviano

b) ayudar a la CIA a capturar al Che

c) atacar a la revolución cubana

d) ir en contra de la dictadura de Bolivia

7. Un hecho conocido que ocurrió después del asesinato del Che fue el siguiente:

a) le amputaron los pies

b) le quemaron las manos

c) lo enterraron en La Paz, Bolivia

d) le cortaron las manos

8. El lugar donde fue enterrado el cadáver del Che

a) fue un secreto hasta 1997

b) solamente lo sabían los campesinos bolivianos

c) lo descubrió la CIA en 1997

d) lo mantuvo en secreto su familia

9. El Che se convirtió en muchas partes del mundo en un icono de revolución y de ideas

a) imperialistas

b) anti-imperialistas

c) derechistas

d) anti-revolucionarias

--Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the text content that you just read using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Rate in a holistic way the difficulty level of the vocabulary and grammatical structures using a 1- 5 scale, being 1 not difficult at all and 5 extremely difficult.

1   2   3   4   5

-Underline what you think about the different aspects of the text following your personal criteria

The content of this text is…   1.interesting   2.not interesting

The content of this text …

1.motivates me to read more about the topic 2.does not motivate me to read more about the topic

This text has…

1.excessive information   2.right amount of information   3.little information

1.many complicated grammatical structures 2.accessible grammatical structures   3.easy grammatical structures

Other information you want to provide?

F. GUIDED AND STRUCTURED COOPERATIVE HANDOUTS

GUIDED AND STRUCTURED COOPERATIVE HANDOUTS FOR TEXT 1
DESPUÉS DE LA REPRESIÓN: ESPAÑA EN LOS AÑOS OCHENTA

Guided Cooperative Pre-reading Activities (20-25 min)

Instructions

Form groups of 3/4 people and follow the instructions below before reading the text.

This is a guided collaborative activity and it must be accomplished by the 3/4 participants of the group.

As a group you need to make sure you are following the directions and understanding each other.

Exchanging opinions and talking about your own thoughts and ideas is a very important concern in this activity. Please make sure you listen to your partners, you understand them, and that they listen to you.

This is a cooperative activity, which means that all the members of the group must participate and agree on the responses.

One member will be in charge of writing the responses, but all of them will agree on them.

---

1) Miren el título de la lectura en la página 1 y las fotos de la paginas 1 , 9 y 10 de su manual de lecturas y películas. De acuerdo a las fotos, ¿cuál creen que es el significado de "España en los años 80"?

2) En la columna A, escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "represión" y en la columna B., escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "libertad".

Represión	Libertad

3) Escriban la definición de la palabra represión para incluirla en un diccionario. Añadan uno o dos ejemplos.

3) Hablen con sus compañeros sobre el enlace (link) entre la palabra "España" y la palabra "represión".

4) ¿Conocen casos de países que han vivido períodos de represión? ¿cuáles, de que forma? Compártanlo con sus compañeros y escriban notas sobre los países y el tipo de represión que sufrieron .

5) ¿Qué sucede normalmente después de periodos de represión? ¿Cómo reaccionan los ciudadanos?

6) Compartan un caso en el que uds. sufrieron represión de algún tipo. ¿Qué sucedió y como reaccionaron?

7) *Lean la siguiente historia*

En España hubo una guerra civil desde 1936 hasta 1939 entre dos bandos muy diferentes: los nacionales (de derecha) y los republicanos (de izquierda). Los nacionales eran conservadores y defendían el poder centralizado y el sistema establecido (la iglesia, el poder militar, etc.). Su líder durante la guerra fue el General Francisco Franco. Por otra parte, los republicanos eran liberales, defendían la independencia regional y la democracia y apoyaban la separación entre el estado y la iglesia. Su líder durante la guerra fue Manuel Azaña.

7. A) Describan los 2 bandos políticos de España durante la guerra civil y añadan adjetivos que crean que se relacionan con dichos bandos.

7.B) Encuentren similitudes y diferencias entre la guerra civil en España y la guerra civil en EEUU.

Similitudes	Diferencias

LOS AÑOS DE LA DICTADURA EN ARGENTINA Y LAS MARCAS DEL TERROR

Form groups of 3/4 people and follow the instructions below before reading the text.

This is a guided collaborative activity and it must be accomplished by the 3/4 participants of the group.

As a group you need to make sure you are following the directions and understanding each other.

Exchanging opinions and talking about your own thoughts and ideas is a very important concern in this activity. Please make sure you listen to your partners, you understand them, and that they listen to you.

This is a cooperative activity, which means that all the members of the group must participate and agree on the responses.

One member will be in charge of writing the responses, but all of them will agree on them.

---

1) Miren el título y la foto de la lectura en la página 35 y las fotos de la paginas 42 , 43 y 44 de su manual de lecturas y películas. De acuerdo a las fotos, ¿cuál creen que es el significado de "Los años de la dictadura en Argentina y las marcas del terror"?

2) En la columna A, escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "dictadura" y en la columna B., escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "democracia".

257

Dictadura	Democracia

3) Escriban la definición de la palabra dictadura y las definición de democracia para incluirla en un diccionario. Añadan uno o dos ejemplos.

3) Hablen con sus compañeros sobre el enlace (link) entre la palabra "Argentina" y la palabra "dictadura".

4) ¿Conocen casos de países que han vivido períodos de dictaduras?

¿Qué países piensan que han sufrido verdaderas marcas de terror?

¿Por qué estos países han sufrido terror? Compártanlo con sus compañeros y escriban notas sobre los países y el tipo de represión que sufrieron.

5) ¿Qué sucede normalmente durante periodos de terror? ¿Cómo reaccionan los ciudadanos después de estar aterrorizados?

6) ¿Han escuchado algo sobre la desaparición de jóvenes y bebés durante la dictadura Argentina? Si no escucharon nada, ¿qué creen que sucedió? Usen la imaginación

7) *Lean la siguiente historia*

La historia de Argentina del siglo XX está marcada por un hecho muy importante- la dictadura militar desde 1976 hasta 1983. En esta época, una Junta Militar tomó el gobierno por la fuerza y muchas personas fueron a la cárcel.

7. A) Durante el periodo de dictadura ¿Qué les ocurre a las personas que se oponen a la dictadura?

B) Durante el periodo de democracia ¿Qué les ocurre a las personas que se oponen al gobierno democrático?

8) Con la poca información que tienen, encuentren similitudes y diferencias entre el periodo de dictadura en España y el de Argentina.

Similitudes	Diferencias

COLOMBIA, UN PAIS FRAGMENTADO

Instructions

Form groups of 3/4 people and follow the instructions below before reading the text.

This is a guided collaborative activity and it must be accomplished by the 3/4 participants of the group.

As a group you need to make sure you are following the directions and understanding each other.

Exchanging opinions and talking about your own thoughts and ideas is a very important concern in this activity. Please make sure you listen to your partners, you understand them, and that they listen to you. This is a cooperative activity, which means that all the members of the group must participate and agree on the responses.

One member will be in charge of writing the responses, but all of them will agree on them.

---

1) Miren el título de la lectura y las fotos de la lectura en la página 67, 75 y 76 de su manual de lecturas y películas. De acuerdo a las fotos, ¿cuál creen que es el significado de "Colombia, un país fragmentado"?

2) En la columna A, escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "fractura/ fragmentado" y en la columna B., escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "unión/unido".

Fractura / fragmentado	Unión/ unido

3) Escriban la definición del concepto "país fragmentado" para incluirla en un diccionario. Añadan uno o dos ejemplos.

4) Hablen con sus compañeros sobre el enlace (link) entre la palabra "Colombia" y el concepto "país fragmentado".

5) ¿Conocen casos de países que sufren una clara fragmentación política? ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué piensan que sucede este fenómeno de fragmentación"?

6) ¿Qué sucede normalmente en los que hay una gran fragmentación política?

En un país fragmentado existen varias grupos políticos ¿Cómo crees que es la relación entre ellos?

7) ¿Han escuchado algo sobre el continuo conflicto guerrillero en Colombia? ¿qué creen que está sucediendo? Usen la imaginación

8) Lean la siguiente frase

El presente y el pasado de Colombia están muy marcados por la influencia del narcotráfico.

8. A) ¿Crees que en Colombia hay muchas drogas? ¿De qué tipo?

B)¿A qué país o países exporta las drogas Colombia?

C) ¿Por qué piensan que en Colombia el negocio de las drogas es tan importante? ¿Conoces otros negocios importantes en Colombia?

EL CHE GUEVARA

InstructionsForm groups of 3/4 people and follow the instructions below before reading the text.

This is a guided collaborative activity and it must be accomplished by the 3/4 participants of the group.

each other.

concern in this activity. Please make sure you listen to your partners, you understand them, and that they listen to you.

This is a cooperative activity, which means that all the members of the group must participate and agree on the responses.

One member will be in charge of writing the responses, but all of them will agree on them.

---

1) Miren el título de la lectura y las fotos de la lectura en la página 99, 106, 107, y 109 de su manual de lecturas y películas. De acuerdo a las fotos, ¿cuáles creen que serán algunos de los temas tratados en esta lectura?

2) En la columna A, escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "revolución" y en la columna B., escriban adjetivos y/o nombres relacionados con el concepto "imperialismo".

Revolución	Imperialismo

3) Escriban la definición del concepto "anti-imperialismo" para incluirla en un diccionario. Añadan uno o dos ejemplos de líderes anti-imperialistas.

3) Hablen con sus compañeros sobre el enlace (link) entre el "Che Guevara" y el concepto "anti-imperialismo".

4) ¿Conocen casos de revoluciones organizadas? ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué piensan que algunos países sufren estas revoluciones?

5) ¿Qué sucede normalmente en un país después de un intento de revolución? Si la revolución tiene éxito, ¿qué ocurre? Si la revolución fracasa, ¿qué ocurre?

6) ¿Han escuchado algo sobre los principios detrás de la revolución del Che Guevara? ¿Cuáles creen que eran sus ideales para empezar una revolución de tales dimensiones?

7) Lean la siguiente descripción

Los líderes revolucionarios normalmente tienen el apoyo

del pueblo, apoyan a los pobres, quieren que el propio país

controle la economía, y participan en protestas y en luchas armadas.

7. A) ¿Pueden pensar en movimientos y tendencias políticas conectadas con los ideales

de los líderes revolucionarios?

B) Es una realidad que Latinoamérica cuenta con muchos pueblos de campesinos

sumergidos (immersed) en un nivel de pobreza preocupante ¿Cuál es la relación entre la

revolución del Che Guevara y estos pueblos?

C) ¿Por qué piensas que estos campesinos pobres apoyaron los ideales comunistas del

Che Guevara?

UNIDAD 1: DESPUÉS DE LA REPRESIÓN: ESPAÑA EN LOS
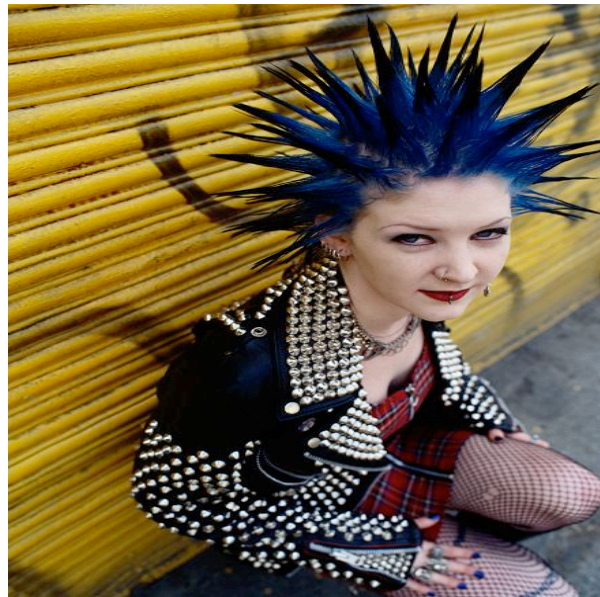
AÑOS 80

PELÍCULA: TODO   SOBRE MI MADRE

ANTES DE LEER

A.- Mapa. En este mapa de España localiza la capital del país y dos ciudades famosas.

B.- España hoy en día. Completa este cuadro con la información que sabes del país.

HISTORIA	POLÍTICA	MÚSICA
		flamenco
GASTRONOMÍA	**DEPORTES**	**ARTE**
	fútbol	
GENTE FAMOSA	**SOCIEDAD y ESTILO DE VIDA**	**OTROS DATOS**

C.- Un poco de información histórica: La Guerra Civil Española.

En España hubo una guerra civil desde 1936 hasta 1939 entre dos bandos muy diferentes: los nacionales (de derecha) y los republicanos (de izquierda). Los nacionales eran conservadores y defendían el poder centralizado y el sistema establecido (la iglesia, el poder militar, etc). Su líder durante la guerra fue el General Francisco Franco. Por otra parte, los republicanos eran liberales, defendían la independencia regional y la democracia, y apoyaban la separación entre el estado y la iglesia. Su líder durante la guerra fue Manuel Azaña.

C1.- La Guerra Civil Española. Con la información anterior, decide si estas frases describen a los nacionales (N) o a los republicanos (R).

____ Estaban a favor de la iglesia católica. Tenían la protección del Vaticano.

_____ Pensaban que la mujer no debía trabajar, sino que debía estar en la casa cuidando de sus hijos y su esposo.

_____ Muchos de ellos eran pobres.

_____ Pensaban que las mujeres tenían tantos derechos como los hombres, incluyendo el derecho a trabajar y el derecho a luchar en una guerra.

_____ Eran intolerantes con orientaciones sexuales diferentes a lo tradicional.

_____ Querían justicia social.

_____ Muchos de ellos eran militares.

_____ Consiguieron ayuda de los fascistas.

_____ Quemaron *(=burnt)* iglesias, conventos y personas religiosas.

_____ Consiguieron ayuda de los comunistas soviéticos.

D.- Conectando con mi país. Con un/a compañero/a habla sobre las semejanzas y diferencias entre los partidos políticos de España de los años 30 y los partidos políticos de EE.UU. de hoy en día. Escribe tus ideas.

_____

_____

_____

E.- Usa tu imaginación. Después de la victoria de los nacionales en la guerra civil, España entró en una dictadura que duró casi 40 años. Imagina y especula cómo reaccionaron los españoles cuando terminó la dictadura en 1975. Trabaja con un/a compañero/a y escribe tus frases aquí, usando el pretérito y/o el imperfecto.

      Ejemplo: *Yo creo que muchos franquistas escaparon a Latinoamérica.*

_____

_____

_____

F.- La lectura. Lee brevemente la lectura y responde estas preguntas.

1.- ¿De qué trata el primer párrafo?

_____

_____

2.- ¿Qué fechas aparecen en este párrafo y qué marcan estas fechas?

_____

_____

3.- ¿Qué cognados reconoces en la lectura?

_____

_____

4.- ¿Qué temas se discuten en la lectura?

_____

_____

DESPUÉS DE LA REPRESIÓN: ESPAÑA EN LOS AÑOS OCHENTA

En 1936 estalló[3] en España una Guerra Civil entre nacionales (también llamados derechistas, y/o franquistas) y republicanos (izquierdistas). Los nacionales, ayudados por los fascistas italianos y por el Vaticano, ganaron la guerra en 1939 y el general Francisco Franco se declaró Caudillo[4] de España, estableciendo una dictadura de derechas[5] que duró casi cuarenta años.

Durante esta época, miles de republicanos tuvieron que exiliarse a otros países. Francia, Bélgica, Argentina, Venezuela y México son algunos de los países que recibieron exiliados españoles para ofrecerles la oportunidad de vivir en un país donde no fueran perseguidos por el gobierno. Muchos de los que se quedaron en España fueron fusilados[6] encarcelados[7] o condenados a trabajos forzosos. El lema[8] de la dictadura de Franco era: un país, una lengua, una sola cultura. Este objetivo de

---

[3] estallar: to break out, to burst
[4] caudillo: leader; el Caudillo: title used to refer to General Franco
[5] una dictadura de derechas: a right-wing dictatorship
[6] fueron fusilados: were shot; fusilar: to shoot
[7] fueron encarcelados: were imprisoned; encarcelar: to imprison

unificar España y no permitir diferencias creó una represión de ideas en muchas zonas de España, especialmente en las zonas conocidas hoy en día como zonas bilingües, tales como Galicia, el País Vasco, Cataluña, la Comunidad Valenciana y las islas Baleares. La dictadura en España se extendió desde 1939 hasta 1975, cuando murió Franco. En sus últimos años de vida, Franco nombró sucesor del poder al príncipe Juan Carlos I de Borbón con la esperanza de que éste instaurara una monarquía autoritaria. Sin embargo, en un período en que Europa se inclinaba hacia gobiernos democráticos, el monarca decidió instaurar una monarquía democrática. España vivió un largo proceso de transición al nuevo sistema. Este proceso tuvo grandes efectos en la cultura, la política, las lenguas, y sobre todo, en la manera de ser[9] de las nuevas generaciones. Después de 36 años de dictadura, los españoles se rebelaron contra todo tipo de reglas, inventando nuevos estilos de vida y disfrutando[10] al máximo del placer de sentirse más libres que nunca. Los jóvenes españoles se unieron para mostrar su creatividad, sus ideas liberales y sus deseos de progreso y modernidad. A lo largo de los años ochenta estos jóvenes se dedicaron a expresar de forma abierta y sin inhibiciones, lo que antes estuvo producido por una represión de casi cuarenta años. Uno de los deseos de estos jóvenes era poder expresar libremente su sexualidad y su individualidad. En un país en el que la homosexualidad y la

---

[8] el lema: motto, slogan

[9] la manera de ser: the way a person is or comes across

[10] disfrutaron:enjoyed; disfrutar: to enjoy

transexualidad habían sido fuertemente rechazadas, las nuevas generaciones adoptaron un estilo de vida diferente de sus padres, un estilo permisivo en el que la aceptación de lo diferente sería la regla. La música fue una de las formas de expresión más usada por los españoles. El rock se convirtió en el lenguaje de los jóvenes de la generación de los ochenta, conocidos como "ochenteros". Estas canciones llenas de deseos de libertad, presentaban temas serios, sensibles, dulces, y algunos incluso groseros. Alaska y Dinarama fue uno de los grupos más conocidos de los ochenta. Alaska era la mujer más moderna del momento. Siempre salía a escena con el pelo teñido de colores brillantes, con ropa muy llamativa, orejas repletas de aretes y una fuerte expresión de seguridad y determinismo en el rostro. Alaska y Dinarama, al igual que muchos otros cantantes "ochenteros", como los grupos Loquillo y los Trogloditas y Mecano, trataron de expresar a través de sus canciones el deseo de experimentar lo nuevo y lo desconocido. Los clubes, bares y discotecas se convirtieron en los lugares más populares de las ciudades. La mayoría de las discotecas abrían a las doce de la noche y no cerraban hasta las ocho de la mañana del día siguiente. Las concentraciones de jóvenes en las discotecas crearon a finales de los ochenta el conocido fenómeno "ruta del bacalao", asentado en Valencia. La ruta del bacalao era una excursión de tres días a diferentes clubes y discotecas cerca de la playa. Esta excursión empezaba el viernes por la tarde y acababa el domingo por la noche. Esta ruta iba acompañada de todo tipo de drogas, alcohol y música tecno. En Madrid los jóvenes también vivían su época de libertad y se juntaban cada noche en

273

los bancos[11] de los parques para tomar cervezas y en los bares y clubes, donde se

atrevían [12]a probar todo tipo de drogas, especialmente la

---

[11] el banco: bench
[12] atreverse: to dare

heroína. Los ochenta fue un período de innovaciones, experimentación y exceso. Los homosexuales, encarcelados y reprimidos durante la dictadura, salieron a la calle abiertamente. A su vez, los transexuales, ayudados por las innovaciones técnicas de la medicina, pudieron por fin someterse[13] a operaciones que les permitieran parecerse al sexo opuesto. Desafortunadamente, la libertad y el descontrol de esta década tuvieron también un lado menos divertido: la drogadicción, el desempleo [14]y el SIDA. Muchos de estos lugares de moda vieron a los jóvenes transmitirse enfermedades venéreas y contemplaron muertes repentinas[15] causadas por sobredosis de heroína u otro tipo de droga. Además, el desempleo aumentó alarmantemente, trayendo con él violencia, crimen, robos y, como un círculo vicioso, el aumento de la drogadicción. Por otra parte, el SIDA, enfermedad desconocida por la mayoría de los jóvenes de la época, iba acabando con las vidas de muchos de ellos. A pesar de todo esto, los años ochenta fueron, sin duda, una etapa esencial en el desarrollo[16] de las artes, la música y la expresión personal en España.

---

[13] someterse: to undergo
[14] el desempleo: unemployment
[15] repentino/a: sudden
[16] el desarrollo: development

UNIDAD 2: LOS AÑOS DE LA DICTADURA EN ARGENTINA Y LAS MARCAS DEL TERROR

PELÍCULA: LA HISTORIA OFICIAL

Cortesía de Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo

ANTES DE LEER

A.- Mapa. En este mapa de Argentina localiza la capital del país y tres ciudades famosas.

B.- Argentina hoy en día. Completa este cuadro con la información que sabes del país.

HISTORIA	POLÍTICA	MÚSICA
		tango
GASTRONOMÍA	**DEPORTES**	**ARTE**
GENTE FAMOSA	**SOCIEDAD y ESTILO DE VIDA**	**OTROS DATOS**
Eva "Evita" Perón		

C.- Tu opinión. La historia de Argentina del siglo XX está marcada por un hecho muy importante –la dictadura militar desde 1976 hasta 1983. En esta época, una Junta Militar tomó el gobierno por la fuerza y muchas personas fueron a la cárcel. Responde a estas preguntas sobre el tema de la dictadura.

1.- Cuando hay una dictadura, ¿qué les pasa a las personas que se oponen al gobierno?

_____

_____

2.- Cuando hay una democracia, ¿qué les pasa a las personas que se oponen al gobierno?

_____

_____

3.- ¿Estás de acuerdo con la práctica de torturar a las personas sospechosas de actos terroristas con el objetivo de obtener información? ¿Por qué?

_____

_____

4.- ¿Crees que todas las personas que están en la cárcel son culpables? ¿Por qué?

_____

_____

5.- ¿Crees que los Estados Unidos respeta los derechos humanos y civiles de los prisioneros de sus cárceles?

_____

_____

6.- Seguramente escuchaste en las noticias el tipo de trato que reciben los prisioneros iraquíes y los prisioneros en Guantánamo. ¿Que piensas de esto?

_____

_____

7.- ¿Sabes lo que es la Convención de Ginebra? ¿Por qué existe? Explica

_____

_____

8.- Si tu mejor amiga te contara que fue torturada mientras estuvo en la cárcel, ¿le creerías? ¿Qué le dirías para ayudarle a superar el trauma?

_____

_____

9.- ¿Crees que la historia oficial del gobierno es siempre la historia verdadera? ¿Por qué?

_____

_____

10.- ¿Recuerdas si alguna vez la historia oficial de tu país no fue la historia real?

_____

_____

D.- Usa tu imaginación. Algunas mujeres que fueron arrestadas por los militares durante la dictadura estaban embarazadas y tuvieron a sus hijos en la cárcel. Imagina y especula qué pasó con los bebés que nacieron allí. Trabaja con un/a compañero/a y escribe aquí lo que piensas, usando el pretérito y el imperfecto.

       Ejemplo: *Yo creo que los militares asesinaron a muchos bebés.*

_____

_____

E.- La lectura.- Lee brevemente la lectura y responde estas preguntas.

1.- ¿Cuál es el tema del primer párrafo? ¿Y del segundo?

_____

_____

2.- ¿Reconoces algún cognado?

_____

_____

LOS AÑOS DE LA DICTADURA EN ARGENTINA Y LAS MARCAS DEL TERROR

Desde 1976 hasta 1983 Argentina estuvo gobernada dictatorialmente por una Junta Militar. El 24 de marzo de 1976, las Fuerzas Armadas iniciaron la operación de persecución y aniquilación más sangrienta de la historia del país. A este período se le dio el nombre de Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. El objetivo concreto de la Junta Militar era acabar con la "subversión" (disidencia[2] política) de la forma más rápida posible. Además, según los militares, era necesario reestructurar la economía a favor de las clases altas y de las compañías nacionales e internaciones asentadas[3] en el país, con las que contaban para progresar y salir de la crisis económica que vivía el país. Para conseguir[4] este propósito, las clases medias y bajas debían mantener una actitud pasiva y Durante esta época, el gobierno utilizó la estrategia del terrorismo de Estado y puso en práctica una política de exterminio, tortura y castigo dirigida hacia las personas que mostraban desacuerdo con los objetivos del gobierno militar y abiertamente se quejaban de las practices dictatoriales. Sistemáticamente el gobierno acabó con la vida de muchos argentinos "subversivos", encerró en campos de detención y en prisiones a miles de personas, y obligó a salir al exilio a otras tantas. En muchas ocasiones, las personas detenidas eran inocentes y fueron arrestadas y encarceladas sin un juicio[5] justo. Muchas de estas personas, disidentes o no, "desaparecieron" sin dejar rastro[6].

---

[2] la disidencia: (el desacuerdo) dissent, disagreement
[3] asentado/a: (situado/a) located, situated
[4] conseguir: to achieve, to obtain
[5] el juicio: trial
[6] el rastro: trace, sign

En muchos de los casos los disidentes eran arrojados al océano Atlántico o enterrados[7] en fosas comunes[8] para que no pudieran ser encontrados. Los grupos de oposición al gobierno respondieron a la violencia militar con más violencia: cometieron secuestros[9] de empresarios[10], ataques a militares y también asaltos a cuarteles y edificios gubernamentales. La mayoría de la población argentina no se enfrentó[11] al gobierno y mantuvo una actitud relativamente sumisa, tal vez por el desconocimiento[12], ante los hechos que estaban pasando en el país. Sin embargo en 1977 un grupo de madres de desaparecidos decidió reunirse en frente de la Casa Rosada (la sede[13] del gobierno) para denunciar la desaparición de sus hijos. A partir de ese día, las Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo se reunieron todos los jueves en

---

[7] enterrado/a: buried

[8] la fosa común: common / communal grave

[9] el secuestro: kidnapping (of a person), hijacking (of a plane)

[10] el empresario: (el hombre de negocios) businessman

[11] enfrentarse a: to confront, to face

[12] el desconocimiento: ignorance

[13] la sede: seat, headquarters

esa plaza para pedir pacíficamente por el retorno con vida de sus hijos y nietos desaparecidos. Muchas mujeres detenidas por las Fuerzas Armadas estaban embarazadas y tuvieron a sus bebés en las cárceles. Muchos de estos bebés fueron robados de sus madres y más tarde entregados en adopción a familias conectadas con los militares. Las Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo pronto se convirtieron en un ejemplo internacional de lucha[14] por los derechos humanos y continúan luchando en la actualidad por recuperar[15] a los niños que fueron dados en adopción así como también por la memoria de los 30.000 desaparecidos durante la dictadura. En 1982 la Junta Militar, en un esfuerzo[16] por recuperar el apoyo de los argentinos, le declaró la guerra a Inglaterra con la intención de recuperar las Islas Malvinas *(Falkland Islands)* que habían sido ocupadas por el gobierno británico desde 1833, pero que eran consideradas por los argentinos parte del territorio nacional. Esta guerra se conoce como "Guerra de las Malvinas" o "Guerra del Atlántico Sur". En los 74 días que duró la guerra, 649 soldados argentinos y 255 soldados británicos murieron. Esta derrota[17] apresuró la caída del gobierno de los militares y causó una fuerte crisis económica y social en el país. Después de la guerra, la sociedad argentina, acostumbrada a estar en silencio y con actitud sumisa, empezó a salir a la calle con gritos de protesta e indignación hacia el gobierno militar. Estos hechos y la crisis económica que vivía el país marcaron el final de la dictadura. En 1983, regresó la democracia y asumió la presidencia Raúl Alfonsín. El nuevo gobierno realizó un juicio a las Juntas Militares, y los militares que tuvieron a su cargo el país durante la dictadura fueron condenados a prisión. Lamentablemente también se aprobaron las leyes de "obediencia debida" y de "punto final". La ley de "obediencia debida" indultaba[18] a los militares de sus

---

[14] la lucha: fight
[15] recuperar: to recover, to get back
[16] el esfuerzo: effort
[17] la derrota: defeat
[18] indultar: to pardon

delitos[19] por haberlos cometido bajo las órdenes de militares superiores. La ley de "punto final" pronunciaba inválida e injustificada cualquier investigación relacionada con las desapariciones de personas. Estas leyes permitieron que muchos militares fueran absueltos de sus crímenes. Años más tarde, durante el gobierno del siguiente presidente, Carlos Saúl Ménem, los militares encarcelados fueron indultados (se les dio amnistía) en contra de la opinión popular.

A diferencia de los gobiernos anteriores, el actual gobierno de Argentina, encabezado por Néstor Kirchner, está promoviendo una serie de eventos que sirven para recuperar la memoria de los terribles años de la dictadura. Uno de los hechos más importantes fue la declaración del día 24 de marzo (día en que comenzó la dictadura en 1976) como feriado[20] nacional—Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia. El 24 de marzo de 2006 se conmemoró el 30 aniversario del comienzo de la dictadura y fue una fecha que sirvió para que la gente de Argentina recordara y analizara en el presente los momentos trágicos vividos durante la última dictadura del país.

---

[19] el delito: crime, offense
[20] el feriado: public holiday

UNIDAD 3:

COLOMBIA, UN PAÍS FRAGMENTADO

PELÍCULA: MARÍA LLENA ERES DE GRACIA

Cortesía de Luis Quiroga

ANTES DE LEER

A. Mapa. En este mapa de Colombia localiza la capital del país y dos ciudades famosas.

B.- Colombia hoy en día. Completa este cuadro con la información que sabes del país.

HISTORIA	POLÍTICA	MÚSICA
	Álvaro Uribe	
GASTRONOMÍA	**DEPORTES**	**ARTE**
		Botero
GENTE FAMOSA	**SOCIEDAD y ESTILO DE VIDA**	**OTROS DATOS**

C.- Conectando con tu país. El presente y el pasado de Colombia están muy marcados por la influencia del narcotráfico[13]. Responde estas preguntas sobre la situación de tu país con respecto a las drogas.

1.- ¿Crees que en los Estados Unidos hay muchas drogas? ¿De qué tipo?

_____

_____

2.- ¿Está la violencia conectada a las drogas? ¿Cómo? Pon un ejemplo.

_____

_____

_____

3.- ¿Qué imagen tienes cuando piensas en un drogadicto? ¿Son todos los drogadictos así? Explica.

_____

_____

4.- ¿Conoces a alguien que consume drogas? ¿De qué tipo? ¿Por qué crees que las usa?

_____

_____

5.- ¿Por qué están las drogas prohibidas?

_____

_____

6.- En algunos países ciertas drogas son legales. En los Estados Unidos hay una controversia sobre si la marihuana debería ser legal o no. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

_____

_____

7.- Algunas personas trafican con drogas porque dicen que "no hay otra opción". En tu opinión, ¿crees que estas personas tienen otras opciones? Explica.

_____

_____

D.- Vocabulario. En este ejercicio, enlaza el vocabulario relacionado a drogas y violencia que está en la columna de la izquierda con sus definiciones de la derecha.

___	1.- Guerrilla	a.- comerciar, normalmente productos ilícitos
___	2.- Pepas	b.- droga que suele ser inyectada por la vena
___	3.- Mula	c.- grupo de hombres armados
___	4.- Traficar	d.- arrojar químicos sobre una plantación
___	5.- Terrateniente	e.- rapto de una persona contra su voluntad
___	6.- Heroína	f.- mover, mudar de lugar a lugar
___	7.- Desplazar	g.- droga estimulante extraída de la hoja de coca
___	8.- Cocaína	h.- persona rica que posee muchas tierras
___	9.- Secuestro	i.- bolsas de droga en forma de bola
___	10.- Fumigar	j.- mujer que lleva drogas de un lugar a otro

E.- Usa tu imaginación. Imagina que eres un oficial de aduana. ¿Dónde o cómo buscarías las drogas que los narcotraficantes pasan? Usa tres verbos diferentes en el tiempo condicional.

　　Ejemplo: *Miraría dentro del tubo de pasta de dientes.*

_____

_____

_____

F.- La lectura. Lee brevemente la lectura y responde estas preguntas.

1.- ¿Cuál es el tema del primer párrafo? ¿Y del segundo?

_____

_____

2.- ¿Reconoces algún cognado?

_____

COLOMBIA, UN PAÍS FRAGMENTADO

Cuando se habla de Colombia hoy, casi siempre se habla de drogas, violencia, inseguridad, secuestros [2] y de un conflicto armado que tiene a Colombia y al mundo en una constante pesadilla[3] Lamentable-mente, la violencia no es un fenómeno nuevo en Colombia, ya que el país ha tenido varias guerras civiles desde su independencia en 1810. En 1948, los tempestuosos conflictos entre los conservadores y los liberales y el asesinato del líder político Jorge Eliécer Gaitán causaron uno de los hechos más violentos en la historia de Colombia del siglo XX, *El Bogotazo.* Gaitán era un candidato político con posibilidades de ganar las elecciones de 1950.

Era un líder populista que quería cambiar la situación de las poblaciones marginales y que se oponía a los políticos conservadores que defendían los derechos de las élites

---

[2] el secuestro: kidnapping (of a person), hijacking (of a plane)
[3] la pesadilla: nightmare

colombianas. La gente de Colombia reaccionó al asesinato de Gaitán matando a Juan Roa Sierra, su asesino, y organizando muchas protestas violentas en Bogotá y en muchas otras ciudades de Colombia. *El Bogotazo* fue el comienzo de una guerra civil de 10 años conocida como *La Violencia* (1948–1958), donde por lo menos 200.000 personas murieron. Después de este período, podría decirse que el Estado colombiano quedó fracturado en dos partes: el gobierno y la guerrilla.

Las guerrillas eran grupos con ideología socialista o comunista que se formaron durante los años sesenta como reacción al favoritismo del gobierno por las clases altas y a la aceptación de la intervención de los Estados Unidos en asuntos militares y políticos de Colombia. Los dos grupos guerrilleros más importantes son el ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), en sus comienzos ligado ideológicamente a la Revolución Cubana, y las FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), que nacieron como un movimiento campesino que quería la redistribución de la tierra y reforma social. Estos dos grupos guerrilleros—en el presente considerados "terroristas" por la Unión Europea y los Estados Unidos—están en contra de la privatización de los recursos[4] naturales del país, la presencia de las corporaciones

---

[4] los recursos: resources

multinacionales en Colombia y las injusticias sociales. Para sustentarse[5], estos grupos usan diversos métodos como el secuestro y los asesinatos. En los años ochenta, para combatir la guerrilla, nacieron las AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia), grupos paramilitares de extrema derecha[6] apoyados por terratenientes[7]con mucho dinero, por carteles de drogas y por algunos sectores del ejército colombiano. Estos grupos, que también han sido acusados de asesinatos y de un gran número de violaciones a los derechos humanos, se sustentan con el tráfico de drogas y las donaciones de sus clientes. En los últimos veinte años, el aumento[8] del narcotráfico, el desplazamiento[9] de indígenas y campesinos, y la continua lucha[10] entre el ejército, la guerrilla y los paramilitares han contribuido a desestabilizar la sociedad colombiana. El narcotráfico está presente en todos estos sectores que dividen Colombia: la guerrilla, los paramilitares y el gobierno. Desde los años ochenta, el narcotráfico tiene influencia en las guerrillas, que ganan mucho dinero por "impuestos"[11] que cobran a los narcotraficantes por las cosechas[12] de drogas y por las ganancias del comercio ilegal; en los grupos paramilitares, que reciben dinero de los narcotraficantes para combatir la guerrilla; y en el Estado colombiano, que tiene mucha corrupción y no tiene las leyes necesarias para combatir el narcotráfico. En esta Colombia fraccionada y profundamente influenciada por el narcotráfico se encuentra la gente de Colombia, que está terriblemente afectada por la violencia, la pobreza, el desempleo[13] y la falta de soluciones por parte del Estado. Además, Colombia tiene un número muy alto de desplazados internos. Según el gobierno colombiano, el 71% de la gente forzada a

---

[5] sustentarse: (mantenerse) to support oneself

[6] un grupo de derecha: a right-wing group

[7] el terrateniente: landowner

[8] el aumento: increase

[9] el desplazamiento: displacement; una persona desplazada: a person displaced / forced to evacuate

[10] la lucha: fight

[11] el impuesto: tax

[12] la cosecha: crop, harvest

[13] el desempleo: unemployment

abandonar sus hogares[14] fue desplazada por paramilitares y aproximadamente el 14% por las guerrillas. Por último, las nuevas políticas económicas del gobierno de Colombia y la guerra contra el tráfico de drogas que se intensificó con el Plan Colombia en 1998 (un plan diseñado en los Estados Unidos y con una estrategia que consiste principalmente en erradicar plantaciones de coca con fumigaciones[15] aéreas) han causado un aumento de la pobreza y del desempleo que ha afectado enormemente a la población de Colombia. Para la gente de Colombia, las alternativas son escasas e involucrarse[16] en el narcotráfico parece ser una de las pocas opciones para muchos, aunque el riesgo de este trabajo sea alto. Esto lo vemos en muchas ciudades colombianas como Medellín, donde muchos jóvenes son sicarios (asesinos a sueldo para el narcotráfico), y también lo vemos cuando otros jóvenes aceptan ser "mulas" humanas de drogas y ponen en riesgo sus vidas transportando drogas hacia otros países como los Estados Unidos.

---

[14] el hogar: home, household
[15] la fumigación: spraying, fumigation
[16] involucrarse: to get involved

UNIDAD 4: EL CHE GUEVARA

PELÍCULA: DIARIOS DE MOTOCICLETA

ANTES DE LEER

A.- Mapa. En este mapa de América del Sur localiza todos los países de habla hispana, la cordillera de los Andes y el río Amazonas.

B.- Algunos países sudamericanos. Completa este cuadro con la información básica que sabes sobre los siguientes países sudamericanos.

CHILE	PERÚ	BOLIVIA
Presidenta Michelle Bachelet		

C.- Preparándote para la lectura. El tema principal de esta lectura es el Che Guevara y la situación socio-político-económica de algunos países de Sudamérica. Escoge del siguiente cuadro las características más comunes que en general tienen los revolucionarios.

Normalmente tienen el apoyo del pueblo	Ayudan a los pobres	No participan en protestas ni luchas armadas	Quieren que las corporaciones extranjeras controlen la economía
Normalmente no tienen el apoyo del pueblo	Ayudan a los ricos	Participan en protestas y luchas armadas	Quieren que su país controle la economía

D.- Otros revolucionarios. ¿Conoces a algún otro revolucionario? ¿Quién? ¿Por qué lucha o luchaba?

_____

_____

_____

E.- Usa tu imaginación. Imagina y especula cuáles son las posibles causas que contribuyen a la pobreza y la injusticia que existen en muchos países sudamericanos. Compara tus causas

con las causas que escribió un/a compañero/a. Puedes usar el tiempo presente en tus frases porque éstos son problemas actuales (=*current*).

Ejemplo: *Yo creo que los terratenientes no pagan bien a los campesinos.*

_____

_____

_____

F.- Tu opinión. Responde estas preguntas y discute con un/a compañero/a.

1.- ¿Crees que es difícil la vida y el trabajo en el campo? ¿Por qué?

_____

2.- ¿Ayuda el gobierno de los Estados Unidos a los campesinos en este país? ¿Cómo?

_____

3.- ¿Qué pasaría si los campesinos no tuvieran ayuda?

_____

4.- ¿Qué harías si fueras campesino y otra persona viniera y te robara las tierras en las que estás trabajando?

_____

5.- ¿Cómo son las personas que viven en el campo en comparación a las personas que viven en la ciudad?

_____

6.- ¿Crees que una persona que trabaja una tierra toda su vida tiene derechos sobre esa tierra? Justifica tu respuesta.

_____

G.- La lectura. Lee brevemente la lectura y responde estas preguntas.

1.- ¿Cuál es el tema del primer párrafo? ¿Y del segundo?

_____

2.- ¿Reconoces algún cognado?

_____

3.- En general, ¿de qué trata esta lectura?

_____

A LEER:
EL CHE GUEVARA

Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, conocido como "Che" Guevara, fue médico, revolucionario, guerrillero, líder militar y político, y es considerado por muchos un icono del siglo XX. Algunas personas dicen que fue un asesino muy cruel y otras que fue un revolucionario ejemplar que terminó dando su vida en la lucha por los más débiles.

Ernesto Guevara nació en 1928 en Argentina, donde vivió hasta 1951. Desde joven, y principalmente influenciado por su familia, Guevara tuvo una vida bohemia y arriesgada, rechazó la ambición de ganar dinero y condenó las influencias neo-coloniales en América Latina (sobre todo, las de los Estados Unidos y de las compañías transnacionales de los Estados Unidos). Mientras estudiaba medicina en la universidad, Guevara hizo dos viajes muy importantes que marcaron su identidad para siempre: el primero por el norte de Argentina, y el segundo por diferentes países de Latinoamérica.   Sus experiencias en estos viajes, donde tuvo la oportunidad de ver la realidad de opresión, injusticia y pobreza en que vivían muchos latinoamericanos, reforzaron[14] sus deseos de cambio social y lo fueron convirtiendo[15] en un revolucionario.

---

[14] reforzar: to reinforce, to strengthen
[15] convertirse: to become, to turn into

Después de terminar sus estudios de medicina en Buenos Aires, Argentina, vivió en diferentes países de Latinoamérica (Bolivia, Chile, Perú, México, Panamá y Guatemala), donde conoció a muchas personas de ideología socialista, entre ellos al leprólogo

Hugo Pesce. Este médico influenció mucho la formación teórica del joven Ernesto y fue para él un modelo de médico a favor de la justicia social y comprometido con los pobres y marginados.

En julio de 1955, el Che conoció a Fidel Castro, con quien comenzó a trabajar inmediatamente, y participó activamente en el "Movimiento 26 de Julio", que invadió Cuba el 30 de noviembre de 1956. Con el tiempo y con la ayuda de los guajiros[16] en la Sierra Maestra, la Revolución creció hasta triunfar en 1959 con el derrocamiento[17] del dictador cubano Fulgencio Batista. El Che se convirtió en uno de los líderes más importantes de la Revolución Cubana, ya que fue la mano derecha de Fidel Castro, el presidente del Banco Nacional de Cuba y el Ministro de Industria durante varios años.

---

[16] el guajiro: peasant (in Cuba)
[17] el derrocamiento: overthrow

A mediados de los años sesenta, el Che comenzó a abandonar sus cargos[18] en el gobierno cubano y decidió llevar la lucha revolucionaria a otros países e informar al mundo sobre las injusticias y los abusos que sufrían los campesinos de Latinoamérica a causa del imperialismo. En uno de sus viajes, el Che fue al Congo junto con otros comandantes cubanos para ayudar a los congoleses a rebelarse contra el imperialismo de Bélgica - país del cual El Congo se había independizado recientemente - y para impulsar un régimen socialista. La rebelión fracasó por varias razones – una de ellas fue que la gente del Congo no apoyó al Che – y el Che regresó a Latinoamérica. Después de su fracaso en África, en 1966 el Che regresó a Cuba para más tarde viajar a Bolivia ya que estaba convencido de que éste era el país sudamericano que ofrecía mejores condiciones para una revolución socialista – una revolución que luego podría extenderse por medio de guerrillas a todo el continente americano.

En 1966, Bolivia estaba gobernada por el dictador René Barrientos, a quien el Che quería sacar del poder. Inicialmente, el Partido Comunista Boliviano (PCB) apoyó al Che, pero luego retiró su apoyo y el Che formó el Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia. Este grupo guerrillero tenía ideales socialistas y se formó con el objetivo de

organizar a los campesinos de algunas regiones del país para luchar contra la dictadura. En 1967, abandonado por el PCB y sin ayuda de los campesinos de Bolivia, el Che y varios otros guerrilleros fueron capturados por el ejército boliviano, que tenía militares entrenados[19] y asesorados por la CIA y las Fuerzas Especiales de los Estados Unidos. Después de confirmarse su identidad, el Che Guevara - que tenía 39 años - fue fusilado[20] y sus manos fueron amputadas como prueba de su muerte. El

---

[18] el cargo: post, position
[19] entrenado/a: trained; entrenar: to train
[20] fue fusilado: was shot; fusilar: to shoot

lugar en que fue enterrado[21] su cadáver[22] permaneció en secreto hasta que en 1997 se encontraron sus restos cerca de la población de Vallegrande, Bolivia. Después de confirmar la identidad, el cuerpo del Che fue llevado a Cuba, donde fue recibido con todos los honores y enterrado en Santa Clara (donde todavía se puede visitar su mausoleo). A finales de los años sesenta, después de su muerte, el Che se convirtió en muchas partes del mundo en un icono de revolución y de ideas políticas anti-imperialistas. En la actualidad, una famosa fotografía del Che tomada por el fotógrafo cubano Alberto Korda en 1960, sigue siendo una imagen reconocida a nivel internacional cuando se la ve en pósters y en camisetas; una fotografía que probablemente hoy represente ideales bastante diferentes a los que tenía el Che.

---

[21] enterrado/a: buried; enterrar: to bury

[22] el cadáver: corpse

H. TEXT TEMPLATES

Master Template, with pausal/idea units and hierarchical arrangement
LOM 1, LOM 2 y R2

Title: Después de la represión: España en los años ochenta

Student Name: **Instructor/Class:**

Level of significance	Pausal/Idea Unit	Total recall
1	en 1936	
3	guerra civil española	
2	entre nacionales y republicanos	
1	nacionales conocidos como derechistas y/ franquistas	
1	republicanos conocidos como izquierdistas	
1	nacionales ayudados por el Vaticano	
3	nacionales ganaron la Guerra	
2	ganaron la Guerra en 1939	
3	Francisco Franco era un general	
2	Franco se declaró caudillo de España	
3	se estableció una dictadura de derechas	
2	la dictadura duró casi 40 años	
2	los republicanos se exiliaron a otros países	
1	países como Bélgica, Francia, Argentina, Venezuela y México (if they remember 2 or more, the idea is valid)	
1	estos países daban a los exiliados la oportunidad de vivir sin represion	
2	los republicanos que permanecieron en España fueron fusilados	
1	encarcelados	
1	condenados a trabajos forzosos	
3	el lema de Franco era: un país, una lengua, una cultura	
2	este objetivo creó represión de ideas	
1	especialmente en las zonas bilingües de España	
1	tales como Galicia, País Vasco, Cataluña, Comunidad Valenciana e Islas Baleares (if they remember 2 or more, the idea is valid)	
3	23) murió Franco, fin de la dictadura	
2	24) en 1975	
3	Franco nombró sucesor al príncipe Juan Carlos I	
1	Franco quería que Juan Carlos instaurara una monarquía autoritaria y éste la implantó democratica	
3	el proceso a la transición fue largo	
2	este proceso tuvo efectos en la cultura, política, lenguas y la manera de ser de las nuevas generaciones (if they remember 2 or more, the idea is valid)	

3	los españoles se rebelaron contra las reglas	
1	inventaban estilos de vida	
1	disfrutaban al máximo el placer de ser libres	
2	los jóvenes españoles se unieron para mostrar su creatividad	
2	ideas liberales y deseos de progreso y modernidad	
2	los jóvenes expresaban abiertamente lo que antes estaba prohibido	
2	expresaban su sexualidad e individualidad	
3	ahora la regla era la aceptación de lo diferente	
2	la música fue la forma de expresión más usada	
2	el rock fue el lenguaje de la generación de los 80	
2	los jóvenes de la generación de los 80 se llaman ochenteros	
2	las canciones mostraban deseos de libertad	
1	incluían tenían temas serios, sensibles e incluso groseros (if they remember 1 or more, the idea is valid)	
2	Alaska y Dinarama era uno de los grupos mas conocidos	
2	Alaska era la mujer más moderna	
1	tenía el pelo teñido de colores	
1	ropa llamativa	
1	orejas llenas de arêtes	
1	expresión de seguridad y determinismo	
1	Loquillo y los Trogloditas era otro grupo	
1	Mecano era otro grupo	
1	estos grupos trataban de expresar el deseo de experimentar lo nuevo	
3	los clubes, bares y discotecas eran muy populares	
2	las discos abrían a las 12 y cerraban a las 8	
2	este fenómeno se llama "ruta del bacalao"	
1	asentado en Valencia	
2	"ruta del bacalao" es una excursión de 3 días a clubes y discos	
1	cerca de la playa	
1	con drogas, alcohol y música tecno	
1	empezaba viernes y acababa domingo	
2	en Madrid también hubo un movimiento social	
1	los jóvenes se juntaban cada noche en los bancos de los parques	
1	tomaban cervezas	
1	tomaban todo tipo de drogas	
1	especialmente la heroína	
3	los homosexuales salieron a la calle	
2	los transexuales se sometieron a operaciones de cambio de sexo	
1	apoyados por la tecnología	
3	apareció la drogadicción, el desempleo y el SIDA	
2	los jóvenes morían	
1	en los lugares de moda	
2	se transmitían enfermedades venéreas	
2	el desempleo aumentó	
1	el desempleo trajo crimen, violencia, robos, drogadicción	
3	el SIDA acabó con muchos jóvenes	
3	los 80 fue una época esencial para desarrollar artes, música y expresión personal	

3 =Main generalization.
2 = Supporting generalization.
1 = Supporting detail
Repeated units not counted twice, they are in one unit and they are counted once.

Summary of the Participant Performance

Totals	Participant production	Comments
Total number of units Percentage ____ / 74 = ____ %		
Total posible earned points ___131 Percentage ____ /131 =_____%	%	

Templates, with pausal/idea units and hierarchical arrangement

Master Template LOM1, LOM2, R2

Title: Los años de la dictadura en Argentina y las marcas del terror

Name: **Instructor/Class:**

Level of significance	Pausal/Idea Unit	Total recall
3	Argentina tuvo una Junta military	
1	desde 1976-1983	
3	fue la persecución/aniquilación	
1	más sangrienta de la historia del país	
1	periodo llamado Proceso de Reorganización	
2	objetivo: acabar con la subversion	
2	desde el punto de vista de los militares: necesario reestructurar la economía	
2	a favor de las clases altas y las compañías nacionales e internacionales en el país (* if the student remembers one recepient, s/he will receive credit)	
2	las clases bajas y medias debían mantener una actitud sumisa	
3	el gobierno usó la estrategia del terrorismo de Estado, exterminio, tortura y castigo (* if the student remembers one of the strategies, s/he will receive credit) para los que estaban en desacuerdo con los objetivos militares	
2	el gobierno mató a muchos "subversivos" y encerró a muchos en campos de detención y prisiones	
2	los detenidos eran inocentes	
2	fueron arrestados y encarcelados sin un juicio justo	
1	muchos desaparecieron sin dejar rastro	
1	eran arrojados al océano Atlántico o enterrados en fosas comunes	
3	los grupos opuestos al gobierno respondieron con más violencia , con secuestros de empresarios, ataques a militares, asaltos a cuarteles y edificios gubernamentales (* if the student remembers one of the responses, s/he will receive credit)	
3	la mayoría de los argentinos no se enfrentaron al gobierno, mantuvieron una actitud sumisa porque desconocían lo que estaba ocurriendo	
1	en 1977	
3	un grupo de madres se reunió para denunciar la desaparición de sus hijos	
1	frente a la casa rosada	
2	se reunieron para pedir el retorno en vida de sus hijos y nietos	
1	cada jueves	
3	muchas mujeres detenidas estaban embarazadas y sus bebés fueron robados	
2	más tarde entregados en adopción	
1	a familias conectadas con los militares	

2	este grupo se convirtió en un ejemplo internacional de lucha por los derechos humanos	
2	hoy todavía luchan por recuperar a los niños y por la memoria de los desaparecidos	
1	30.000 desaparecidos	
1	en 1982	
3	se le declaró la guerra a Inglaterra guerra conocida como "Guerra de las Malvinas" o "Guerra del Atlántico Sur"	
2	para recuperar las Islas Malvinas, pues los argentinos las consideraban suyas	
1	ocupadas por el gobierno británico desde 1833	
1	la guerra duró 74 días	
2	muchos soldados de las dos partes murieron	
3	esta derrota aceleró la caída de los militares y causó una crisis económica y social	
2	después de la guerra los argentinos salieron a la calle	
1	en 1983	
3	llegó el final de la dictadura	
3	regresó la democracia	
1	asumió el poder Raúl Alfonsín	
2	este gobierno hizo un juicio a la juntas militares	
3	los militares que gobernaron el país durante la dictadura fueron condenados a prisión	
3	se aprobó la ley de Obediencia Debida: ley que indultaba a los militares por haber cometido los crímenes bajo órdenes de los superiors	
2	se aprobó la ley de Punto Final, esta ley pronunciaba injustificada e inválida cualquier investigación relacionada con las desapariciones	
3	muchos militares fueron absueltos	
1	más tarde, llegó el gobierno de Ménem	
2	los militares encarcelados fueron indultados	
1	Actualmente hay un gobierno liderado por Kirchner	
1	a diferencia de gobiernos anteriores	
2	promueve eventos para recuperar la memoria de los años de la dictadura	
2	uno de sus eventos fue la declaración del día 24 de marzo como feriado nacional	
1	el 24 de marzo empezó la dictadura en 1976	
1	el 24 de marzo de 2006 se conmemoró el 30 aniversario del comienzo de la dictadura	
1	en esta fecha los argentinos deben recordar y analizar las tragedias de la dictadura	
Total:	101	
Units	54	
Value	Points	

3 =Main generalization.

2 = Supporting generalization.

1 = Supporting detail

Repeated units not counted twice, they are in one unit and they are counted once.

Summary of the Participant Performance

Totals	Participant production	Comments
Total number of units Percentage _____ /54 = _____ %		
Total posible earned points ___/101 Percentage ____ /101 =_____ %	%	

Templates, with pausal/idea units and hierarchical arrangement

LOM1, LOM2, R2

Title: Colombia, un país fragmentado

Name: **Instructor/Class:**

Level of significance	Pausal/Idea Unit	Total recall
3	Colombia es sinónimo de conflicto	
1	desde la independencia de Colombia	
1	en 1810	
2	ha habido varias guerras	
1	en 1948	
2	había muchos conflictos entre conservadores y liberales	
3	el asesinato de Eliécer Gaitán, (El Bogotazo), causó violencia	
1	Gaitán era un candidato a la presidencia	
1	de 1950	
3	su objetivo: cambiar la situación de la población marginal	
2	opuesto a los conservadores	
2	los conservadores defendían los derechos de la élite colombiana	
2	La gente colombiana reaccionó al asesinato de Gaitán y mató a Juan Roa Sierra	
3	El "Bogotazo" fue el comienzo de una guerra civil de 10 años	
1	conocida como "La Violencia"	
1	1948-1958	
1	20.000 personas murieron	
3	Colombia quedó fracturada en 2 partes: gobierno y guerrilla	
3	las guerrillas eran grupos con ideología socialista	
2	se formaron como reacción al favoritismo del gobierno por las clases altas	
1	y a la aceptación de EEUU en asuntos militares y políticos	
2	ELN y FARC son los más importantes	
1	nacieron como un movimiento campesino	
2	buscando la redistribución de la tierra y reforma social	
1	UE y EEUU los considera terroristas	
2	AUC, grupos militares de extrema derecha	
2	apoyados por terratenientes con dinero, por carteles de droga y por sectores del gobierno	
2	han sido acusados de asesinatos y violaciones de los derechos humanos	
1	se sustentan con el tráfico de droga y donaciones	
3	el narcotráfico está con la guerrilla, los paramilitares y el gobierno	
3	la gente colombiana está afectada por… la violencia, la pobreza, el desempleo y la falta de soluciones; (* if the student remembers one	

	of the causes, s/he will receive credit)	
2	Colombia tiene un número alto de desplazados internos	
1	el 71% de los desplazados lo hizo por los militares	
1	el 14% por las guerrillas	
3	Plan Colombia, diseñado por EEUU para erradicar las plantaciones de coca	
1	con fumigaciones aéreas	
1	en 1988	
2	ha causado aumento de la pobreza	
3	las alternativas de trabajo para los colombianos son escasas	
2	involucrarse en el narcotráfico es una de las pocas opciones	
1	en ciudades, como Medellín	
2	algunos jóvenes se convierten en sicarios	
2	o en mulas humanas	
1	y arriesgan su vida trasportando droga a EEUU	
Total:		
Units	44	
Value	80 Points	

Key to *Significance Level* rating:
Please read the attachment for a clear and precise understanding of these concepts
3 =Main generalization.
2 = Supporting generalization.
1 = Supporting detail
Repeated units not counted twice, they are in one unit and they are counted once.

Summary of the Participant Performance

Totals	Participant production	Comments
Total number of units ____/ 44 Percentage ____/44 = ____%		
Total posible earned points ___/80 Percentage ____/80 =_____%	%	

Templates, with pausal/idea units and hierarchical arrangement

LOM1, LOM2 and R2

Title: El Che Guevara

Name: **Instructor/Class:**

Level of significance	Pausal/Idea Unit	Total recall
3	Ernesto Che Guevara fue médico, revolucionario, guerrillero, militar y politico (* if the student remembers two of the descriptive adjectives, s/he will receive credit)	
2	es un icono del siglo XX	
1	algunos afirman que fue un asesino cruel	
1	otros que fue un revolucionario ejemplar	
1	nació en 1928	
2	en Argentina	
2	tuvo una vida bohemia y arriesgada rechazando ganar dinero	
2	condenó las influencias neo-coloniales en América Latina	
1	sobre todo las de EEUU	
1	mientras estudiaba medicina	
3	hizo dos viajes muy importantes que marcaron su personalidad	
1	1) al norte de Argentina	
1	2) diferentes países de Latinoamérica	
3	los viajes vio la opresión, injusticia, y pobreza de muchos latinoamericanos	
2	los viajes aumentaron sus deseos de cambio social	
1	Tras terminar de estudiar vivió en varios países de Latinoamérica	
2	en estos países conoció a muchas personas de ideología socialista	
2	a Hugo Pesce, fue para el Che un modelo a seguir	
2	en 1955	
3	conoció a Fidel Castro	
2	trabajó con él inmediatamente y participó en el "movimiento 26 de julio"	
1	movimiento que invadió Cuba en 1956	
3	la revolución triunfó	
1	con ayuda de los ciudadanos	
1	en 1959	
1	derrocaron al dictador Fulgencio Batista	
1	Che era uno de los líderes más importantes de la revolución cubana	
3	Che fue la mano derecha de Castro, presidente del Banco Nacional de Cuba y Ministro de Industria	
1	Che abandonó sus cargos	
1	a mediados de los 70	
3	para llevar la revolución a otros países	

2	e informar sobre las injusticias y abusos hacia los campesinos Latinoamericanos	
3	Che fue al Congo	
2	para ayudar a los congoleses a rebelarse contra el imperialismo belga e impulsar un régimen socialista	
2	la rebelión fracasó	
1	la gente del Congo no apoyó al Che	
1	tras su fracaso en Africa regresó a Cuba	
2	quería ir a Bolivia para empezar allí una revolución	
2	creía que Bolivia era el país con mejores condiciones para empezar la revolución socialista	
3	y luego extenderla a todo el continente americano	
1	Bolivia estaba gobernada por el dictador René Barrientos	
1	en 1966	
2	primeramente PCB (partido comunista boliviano) apoyó al Che	
1	luego retiró su apoyo	
2	Che formó ELN (ejercito de liberación nacional)	
2	el objetivo era organizar a los campesinos para luchar contra la dictadura	
1	en 1967	
3	Che y otros guerrilleros fueron capturados	
2	por el ejército boliviano	
2	con militares entrenados por la CIA y Fuerzas Especiales de EEUU	
3	Che fue asesinado	
1	sus manos fueron amputadas como prueba de su muerte	
1	el lugar donde se enterró fue secreto	
1	en 1997	
2	encontraron sus restos en Bolivia	
2	tras confirmar la identidad se llevó el cuerpo a Cuba	
1	en Cuba recibieron sus restos con honores	
1	lo enterraron en Santa Clara	
1	a finales de los 70	
3	Che se convirtió en un icono de revolución e ideas anti-imperialistas	
2	actualmente su famosa fotografía es una imagen reconocida a nivel internacional	
1	se puede ver en pósters y camiseras	
2	hoy en día representa algo diferente a los ideales que tenía el Che	
Total:		
Units	63	
Value	109 points	

3 =Main generalization.
2 = Supporting generalization.
1 = Supporting detail

Summary of the Participant Performance

Totals	Participant production	Comments
Total number of units Percentage ___/63 = ____%		
Total posible earned points ___/109 Percentage ____/109 =____%	%	

I. TERMINOLOGY DEFINITIONS

Idea Unit: An *idea unit*, also called a *linguistic unit* by Bransford and Franks (1971), and Carrell (1983), and an *information unit* by Roller, (1990) is the smallest number of words necessary to express a thought or idea.

Level 3: Main generalization: A proposition asserting a basic and fundamental idea of the text. The main generalizations logically aligned will form the summary of the text. The information it adds to the text is essential and indispensable.

Level 2: Supporting generalization: A proposition that supports, gives evidence and/or justifies the main generalization. Its importance in the text is subordinate to the main generalization. The information it adds to the text usually accompanies the main generalization. The supporting generalization is somewhat necessary to rebuild the summary of a text.

Level 1: Supporting detail: It is the smallest unit of the text subordinated to supporting generalization and main generalizations. The information it adds to the whole text is the least important, a mere detail. The supporting detail is not essential to rebuild the summary of a text.

References

Aaron, P. G. (1997). The impending demise of the discrepancy formula. *Review of Educational Research*, *67*, 461-502.

Adair-Hauck, B. (2000). Using a story-based approach to teach grammar. In J. L. Shrum & E. W. Glisan (Eds.), *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction.* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Anderson, R. C., Reynolds, R. C., Schallert, D. L., & Goetz, E. T. (1977). Frameworks for comprehension discourse. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, *14*, 367-381.

Arcuri, G. (1990). Pre-Reading and Pre-Writing activities to prepare and motivate foreign language students to read short stories. *Hispania*, *73*(1), 262-266.

Aron, H. (1986). The influence of background knowledge on memory for reading passages by native and nonnative readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, *20*(1), 136-140.

Aweiss, S. (1993). Comprehension assessment measures in second and foreign language reading. (*ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED366 255*).

Barlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barnett, M. A. (1989). *More than meets the eye: Foreign language reading. Language in education: Theory and practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bauso, J. (1988). The need for pre-reading instruction. (*ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 298 270*).

Bell, A., J. (1994). Let grades be emphasized. Paper presented at the Education Communication Association, Washington D.C.

Berkemeyer, V. C. (1989). Recall protocol data: Some classroom implications. *Die Unterrichtpraxis*, *21*(3), 131-137.

Bernhardt, E. B. (1983). Three approaches to reading comprehension in German. *Modern Language Journal*, *67*, 111-115.

Bernhardt, E. B. (1983b). Testing foreign language reading comprehension: The immediate recall protocol. *Die Unterrichtpraxis*, *16*(1), 27-33.

Bernhardt, E. B. (1991). *Reading development in a second language*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp.

Bernhardt, E. B., & Berkemeyer, V. C. (1986). *Reading in the foreign language: listening, reading and writing: analysis and application*. In B. H. Wing (Ed.). Middlebury, VT.

Bernhardt, E. B., & Berkemeyer, V. C. (1988). Authentic texts and the High School German learner. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, *21*(1), 6-28.

Bernhardt, E. B., & Deville, C. W. (1991). Testing in foreign language programs and testing programs in foreign language departments: Reflections and recommendations. In R. V. Teschner (Ed.), *Issues in language program direction: Assessing foreign language proficiency of undergraduates*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, Inc.

Bernhardt, E. B., & James, C. H. (1987). The teaching of comprehension in foreign language learning. Paper presented at the Birckbichler, Diane W., Ed. Proficiency, Policy, and Professionalism in Foreign Language Education. The 1987 Central States Conference.

Biemans, H. J. A., & Simons, P. R. J. (1996). CONTACT-2: A Computer-Assisted Instructional Strategy for Promoting Conceptual Change. *Instructional Science*, *24*(2), 157-176.

Brody, C. (2004). The past and future of cooperative learning: Perspectives from leaders in the IASCE. Paper presented at the IASCE, Singapore.

Bruffee, K. A. (1995). Sharing our toys: Cooperative learning versus collaborative learning. *Change*, *27*(1), 12-18.

Carrell, P., & Floyd, P. (1987). Effects on ESL reading of teaching cultural Content schemata. *Language Learning*, *37*(1), 89-108.

Carrell, P. L. (1984). Schema theory and ESL reading: Classroom implications and applications. *The Modern Language Journal*, *68*(4), 334-343.

Carrell, P. L. (1984a). Evidence of a formal schema in second language comprehension. *Language Learning*, 34(2), 87-112.

Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1983). Schema Theory and ESL Reading Pegadogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 553-573.

Casanave, C. P. (1988). Comprehension monitoring in ESL reading: A neglected essential. *TESOL Quarterly*, *22*(2), 283-302.

Cesar, M. (1998). Social interactions and mathematics learning. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of International Mathematics Education and Society Conference.

Clements-Davis, G. L., & Ley, T. C. (1991). Thematic preorganizers and the reading comprehension of tenth-grade literature students. *Reading Research and Instruction, 31*(1), 43-53.

Coady, J. M. (1979). *A psycholinguistic model of the ESL reader*. In R. Mackay, B. Barkman & R. R. Jordan (Eds.), Reading in a second language: Hypotheses, organization, and practice (pp. 5-12). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Rowley.

Common European framework for languages learning, teaching, assessment (MCERL) (2001).

Davis, B. G. (1993). *Tools for Teaching* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

De Vries, R. (1997). Piaget's social theory. *Educational Researcher*, *26*(2), 4-17.

Denner, P. R., Rickards, J. P., & Albanese, A. J. (2003). The effect of story impressions preview on learning from narrative. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *71*(4), 313-332.

Deville, C. W., & Chalhoub-Deville, M. (1993). Modified scoring, traditional item analysis, and Sato's caution index used to investigate the reading recall protocol. Paper presented at the Annual Language Testing Research Colloquium.

Dewey, J. (2004). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Mineola, NY: Dover publications, Inc.

Dochy, F. J., & Alexander, P. A. (1995). Mapping prior knowledge: A framework for discussion among researchers. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *10*(3), 225-242.

Elmore, & Zenus. (1992). Enhancing social-emotional development of middle school gifted students. *Roeper Review*, *24*, 5-11.

317

Eskey, D. E. (1997). Models of Reading and the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Student: Implications and Limitations. Focus on Basics, 1 (A-D).

Fiene, J., & McMahon, S. (2007). Assessing Comprehension: A classroom-based process. *The Reading Teacher*, *60*(5), 406-417.

Fountas, C. I., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Frances, S. M., & Eckart, J., A. (1992). The effects of reciprocal teaching on comprehension. *(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 350 572).*

Fung, I. Y., Wilkinson, I. A., & Moore, D. W. (2002). L-1 assisted reciprocal teaching to improve ESL students' comprehension of English expository text. *Learning and Instruction*, *13*(1), 1-31.

García, M.; Osa-Melero, L.; Sacchi, F. & Theodoridou, K. (2007) *En contexto: Manual de lecturas y peliculas.* Customized edition for University of Texas at Texas at Austin. New York: McGraw Hill.

Goodman, K. S. (1968). *The psycholinguistic nature of the reading process*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Hague, S. (1986). Learning to read and reading to learn: Bridging the gap in second language acquisition. *Hispania*, *69*(2), 400-402.

Haladyna, T. M. (2004). *Developing and validating multiple-choice test items* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Harper, S. N. (1988). Strategies for teaching literature at the undergraduate level. *Modern Language Journal*, *72*(4), 402-408.

Henry, J. (1990). Enriching prior knowledge: Enhancing mature literacy in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education*, *61*(4), 425-446.

Hobson, D. (2001). Action and reflection: Narrative and journaling in teacher research. In G. Burnaford, J. C. Fischer & D. Hobson (Eds.), *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry* (pp. 7-27). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Horwitz, E. K., Bresslau, B., Dryden, M., McLendon, M. E., & Yu, J.-F. (1997). A graduate course focusing on the second language learner. *Modern Language Journal, 81*(4), 518-526.

Hosenfeld, C., Cavour, I., Bonk, D., Baker, L., & Alcorn, M. (1993). Activities and materials for implementing adapted versions of reciprocal teaching in beginning, intermediate and advanced level of instruction in English, Spanish and French as a second language. *(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED370 354).*

Hudson, T. (1982). The Effects of induced schemata on the "short circuit" in L2 reading : Non decoding factors in L2 reading performance. *Language Learning*, *32*(1), 1-31.

Hung, C. M. (1990). The effects of pre-reading instruction on the comprehension of text by ESL readers. *The English Teacher*, *9*.

Jenks, C. J. (2002). Teaching reading strategies to English language learners. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 479 134*, 1-13.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1978). Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning. *Journal of Research and Education*, *12*(1), 3-15.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson , R. T. (1982). Effects of cooperative and individualistic instruction on handicapped and non-handicapped students. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *118*, 257-268.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson , R. T. (1999). *Learning Together and Alone*. Needhan Heigths, Massahusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Massachusetts.

Johnston, P. H. (1983). *Reading comprehension assessment: A cognitive basis*. Newark: International Reading Association.

Kintsch, W., & Dijk, v. (1978). Toward a model of text comprehension and production. *Psychological Review*, *85*, 363-394.

Kramsch, C. (1985). Literary texts in the classroom: a discourse. *Modern Language Journal*, *69*(4), 356-366.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English.

319

Krashen, S. D. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the Input Hypothesis. *Modern Language Journal*, *73*(4), 440-463.

Krol, K., Jansen, J., Veenman, S., & Van der Linden, J. (2004). Effects of a cooperative   learning program on the elaborations of students working in dyads. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 10(3), 205-237.

Kumpulainen, K., & Kaartinen, S. (2002, June). The situated processes of participation in dyadic problem solving: Focus on students´ social interaction, cognitive strategies and mathematical language. Paper presented at the Fifth Congress of the International Society for Cultural Research and Activity Theory (ISCRAT).

Lampe, J. R., Rooze, G. E., & Tallent-Runnels, M. (1996). Effects of cooperative learning among hispanic in elementary social studies. *Journal of Educational Research*, *89*(3), 187-191.

Lee, J. F. (1986b). Background knowledge and L2 reading. *Modern Language Journal*, *8*(201-211).

Lee, J. F., & Riley, G. L. (1990). The effect of prereading rhetorically-oriented frameworks on the recall of two structurally different expository texts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *2*(1), 25-41.

Lee, J., & Van Patten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Lund, R. J. (1991). A comparison of second language listening and reading comprehension. *Modern Language Journal*, *75*(ii), 196-204.

Mallow, F., & Patterson, L. (1999). *Framing literacy: teaching/learning in K-8 classrooms*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers.

Merriam, S., B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, B. J. F. (1975). Identification of the structure of prose and its implications for the study of reading and memory. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *7*, 7-49.

Meyer, B. J. F., & Rice, E. (1984). *The structure of text. Handbook of reading research*. New York: Longman.

Mills, B. (1992). How cooperative learning can fulfill the promises of the seven principles. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching newsletter*, *2*(winter).

Mitchell, I., & Swarbick, A. (1994). *Developing skills for independent reading.* London , UK: Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research.

Munby, H. (1979). Philosophy for children: An example of curriculum review and criticism. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *9*(3), 229-249.

Nicol, D. (2007). E-assessment by design: using multiple-choice tests to good effect. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *31*(1), 53-64.

Nolan, T. (1991). Self-questioning and prediction: Combining metacognitive strategies. *Journal of Reading*, *35*(2), 132-138.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Oden, S. (1987). Alternative Perspectives in Children's Peer Relationships. In T. D. Yawkey & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), *Integrative processes and socialization: Early to middle childhood.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, Inc

Omaggio, A. (1993). *Teaching language in context (2 ed.).* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Oxford, R., & Scarcella, R. (1994). Second Language Vocabulary Learning Among Adults: State of the Art in Vocabulary Instruction. *System*, *22*(2), 231-243.

Oxford, R. L. (1997). Cooperative Learning, Collaborative Learning, and Interaction: Three Communicative Strands in the Language Classroom. . *Modern Language Journal*, *81*(4), 443-456.

Palincsar, & Brown, A. L. (1985). *Reciprocal teaching of comprehension strategies: A natural history of one program for enhancing learning*: Center of the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Pang, E. S., Muaka, A., Bernhardt, E. B., & Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Teaching reading*: International Bureau of Education, Geneva (Switzerland); International Academy of Education, Brussels (Belgium).

Parviz, P. (2003). Schema theory-based pre-reading tasks: A neglected essential in the ESL reading class. *The Reading Matrix*, *3*(1).

Pearson, & Tierney. (1984). *On becoming a thoughtful reader: Learning to read as a writer. In Becoming a Reader in a Complex Society*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Pearson, P. D., Roehler, L. R., Dole, J. A., & Duffy, G. G. (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In I. S. J. Samuels & A. E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Peregoy, S., F, & Boiley, O., F. (1997). *Reading, writing & learning in ESL (2nd ed).* New York: Longman.

Phillips, J. K. (1984). Practical implications of recent research in reading. *Foreign Language Annals*, *17*(4), 285-296.

Piaget, J. (1965), originally published in 1932). *The moral judgement*. London: Free Press.

Pichette, F. (2005). Time spent on reading and reading comprehension in second language learning. *Canadian Modern Language review*, *62*, 243-262.

Pressley, M. (2002). *Reading Instruction That Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching. Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy (2nd).* New York: Guilford Publications.

Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). *Verbals protocols of reading: The nature of constructively responsive reading*. New Jersey, US: Reading, English, and Communication.

Pyrczak, F. (1975). Passage dependence of reading comprehension questions: Examples. *Journal of Reading*, *18*, 308-311.

Richards, J. C., & Lokhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Routman, R. (2002). Teacher talk. *Educational Leadership*, *59*(6), 32-35.

Santrock, J. (1997). *Life-span development (6th edition).* Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark Publishers.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (1994). Cooperative learning and middle schools: What would it take to really do it right? *Theory into Practice*, *33*(3).

Schallert, D. C. (1976). Improving memory for prose: The relationship between depth of processing and context. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, *15*(621-32).

Schallert, D. C. (1982). The significance of knowledge: A synthesis of research related to schema theory. *Reading Expository Material*, 13-48.

Schultz, R. A. (1983). From word to meaning: Foreign language reading instruction after the elementary course. *Modern Language Journal*, *2*, 127-134.

Searls, E. F. (1983). An advanced organizer is...all or none of the above. *Reading Horizons, 23*(4), 242-248.

Shachar, H., & Sharan, S. (1994). Talkikng, relating, and achieving: Effects of cooperative learning and whole-class instruction. *Cognition and Instruction*, *12*(4), 313-354.

Sharp, A. (2002). Chinese L1 school children reading in English:
The effects of rhetorical patterns. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14(2).

Shohamy, E. (1984). Input and Output in Language Testing 159-166 in Culhane, T., Klein Braley, C., and Stevenson, d. *Occasional Paper*, *Practice and problems in*   *language testing*.

Siegel, C. (2005). Implementing a research-based model of cooperative learning. *Educational Research*, *98*(6), 339-349.

Slavin, E. R. (1991). Synthesis of Research on Cooperative Learning. *Educational Leadership, 48*(5), 71-82.

Smith, H. K. (1967). The responses of good and poor readers when asked to read different purposes. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *3*, 53-83.

Smith, J. (2001). *Modeling the social construction of knowledge in ELT teacher education.* Oxford University Press, *55*(3), 221-227.

Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward a R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S Department of Education.

Song, M. (1997). Let's try another alternative! Teaching reading with authentic printed materials, reading activities, and the eclectic way of teaching. *(No. ED414743):* University of Korea

Spencer, D., & Sadoski, M. (1988). Differential Effects among Cultural Groups of Prereading Activities in ESL. *Reading Psychology*, *9*(3), 227-232.

Steffensen, M. S., Joag-Dev, & Anderson. (1979). A cross-cultural perspective on reading comprehension. *Reading research Quarterly*, *15*(310-19).

Stevens. (1980). At risk for school failure. A comparison of the competence and the performance under stress of at-risk and normal seventh graders. *Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association* (88th, September 1-5), Montreal, Quebec, Canada,.

Stevens, R. J., & Slavin, R. E. (1995). Effects of a cooperative learning approach in reading and writing on academically handicapped and non handicapped students. *Elementary School Journal*, *95*, (3).

Stevens, R. J., & Slavin, R. E. (1995). The cooperative elementary school: Effects on students' achievement, attitudes, and social relations. *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*, 321-351.

Strangman, N., Hall, T., & Meyer, A. (2003). Background Knowledge with UDL (funded by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs): *National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum*.

Swaffar, J. K., Arens , K. M., & Byrnes, H. (1991). *Reading for meaning: An integrated approach to language learning*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Swain, M., & Miccoli, L. S. (1994). Learning in a content-based, collaboratively structured course: The experience of an adult ESL learner. *TESOL Canada Journal*, *12*(1), 15-28.

Tse, L. (1996). When an ESL adult becomes a reader. *Reading Horizons*, *37*(1), 16-29.

Tudge, J., & Caruso, D. (1989). Cooperative problem-solving in the classroom. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, (ED310881),* Urbana, IL.

Ulijn, J. M., & Strother, J. B. (1987). Interlanguage and EST writing: Some syntactic evidence. *ESP Journal*, *6* (99-112).

User, T. (1993). *The effects of pre-reading activities on reading comprehension*. Unpublished M.A Thesis, Kean College of New Jersey.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, M.A: Harvard University Press.

Walter, C. (2004). Transfer of reading comprehension skills to L2 Is linked to mental representations of text and to L2 working memory. *Applied Linguistics*, *25*(3), 25.

Wells, D. (1986). The assessment of foreign language reading comprehension: Redefining the task. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 19*(2), 178-184.

Westmyer, S. A. (1994). Classroom communication, classroom environment, communication apprehension, and cognition in college classrooms. Paper presented at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association

Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Pshychology for language teachers*. Cambridge U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Wolf, D. F. (1993). A comparison of assessment tasks used to measure FL reading comprehension. *Modern Language Journal*, *77*(4), 473-489.

Yeh, Y. C. (2006). The interactive effects of personal traits and guided practices on preservice teachers' changes in personal teaching efficacy. *British Journal of Education Technology*, *37*(4), 513-526.

Young, D. J. (1999). Linguistic simplification of SL reading materials: Effective instructional practice. *Modern Language Journal, 83*(3), 350-366.

Zhicheng, Z. (1992). The effects of teaching reading strategies on improving reading comprehension for ESL learners. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Knoxville, TN.

Vita

Lucía Osa-Melero was born in Valencia, Spain on August 29, 1975, the daughter of Cayo Osa and Amparo Melero. After receiving her high school diploma from Instituto Blasco Ibañez, she attended Universitat de València, where she specialized in English Philology. In 1998, she received her 'Licenciatura' (B.A.) from the same university after spending the academic year 97-98 in Ghent as an Erasmus student. After obtaining her B.A she attended University of Iowa, to study foreign language education. She received a Master of Arts Diploma in foreign language education and a Master of Arts in Teaching Spanish as a second language. While studying, she worked as a teaching assistant and taught Spanish at the same institution. She was also honored with the University of Iowa Outstanding Teaching Assistant 2003 award. After graduation, she moved to Austin, TX where she still works as a lecturer and language coordinator. In October 2004, she entered into the doctorate program at the department of English and German Philology at the Universitat de València to complete her doctoral studies with a concentration on the teaching of foreign languages. During her PhD studies she has worked as a translator, ESL instructor, study abroad instructor, and Community Service Learning coordinator in the department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas. In 2007, she co-authored *En contexto: Manual de lecturas y películas*. New York: McGraw Hill. (with M. García, F. Sacchi, & K. Theodoridou) and in 2009 she co-author a Spanish second-year textbook with a focus on the community service learning *En Comunidad: Comunicación y Conexión*. New York: McGraw Hill. (with P. Nichols, J. Johnson, & L. Lemley). In 2009 the department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas offered her the position of supervisor and coordinator of the upper division advanced grammar and composition courses.

This dissertation was typed by the author.