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theory on reading comprehension.

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**“THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT, LINGUISTIC AND FORMAL SCHEMA
THEORY ON READING COMPREHENSION”**

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Dedications

To my parents, Quirino and Marta, thank you for giving me your unconditional love and teaching me what dedication and perseverance mean, you are my biggest motivation. This also goes for my siblings, Alejandra and José, thank you for your support and affection. To the other members of my family Antonia, Oscar, Agnelia and Eduardo, thanks for backing me and being a great example of life.

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Table of Contents

Dedications	1
Acknowledgments	2
Table of Contents.....	3
ABSTRACT	5
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.0 Overview.....	6
1.1 Justification.....	8
1.2 Purpose of the study	8
1.3 Research questions	9
1.4 Significance of the study	9
1.5 Theoretical context of the research	9
1.6 Research setting	10
1.7 Conclusion	10
CHAPTER II: Literature Review	11
2.0 Overview.....	11
2.1 Schema Theory	11
2.2 Schema	12
2.3 Schemata.....	13
2.3.1 Formal Schema.....	14
2.3.2 Content Schema.....	15
2.3.3 Linguistic Schema	16
2.4 Reading.....	16
2.4.1 Reading Process	17
2.4.2 Reading comprehension.....	18
2.5 Conclusion	20
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	21
3.0 Overview	21
3.1 Method.....	21
3.2 Context	21
3.3 Participants	22

3.4 Instruments	22
3.5 Procedure	23
3.6 Conclusion	24
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS	26
4.0 Overview	26
4.1 Research Questions	26
4.2 Analysis	26
4.2.1 Instrument's first stage.....	27
4.2.1.1 Analysis and findings on students' reading comprehension	27
4.2.1.2 The influence of the types of schema on the reading process	29
4.2.2 Instrument's Second Stage.....	35
4.2.2.1 The importance of the three types of schema	35
4.2.3 On the absence of one or more types of schema within the reading process	37
4.3 Conclusion	38
CHAPTER V: STUDY CONCLUSIONS	39
5.0 Introduction.....	39
5.1 Limitations of the study.....	39
5.2 Directions for further research	39
5.3 Conclusions.....	40
REFERENCES	41
APPENDIX A.....	43
APPENDIX A.....	44
APPENDIX B.....	45

ABSTRACT

This investigation focuses on the study of the schema, it seeks to understand how content, formal and linguistic schemas influence the reading comprehension process. This study analyzes the importance of the three schemas as well as the effects that arise in their absence. The research takes place at a public university located in the state of Puebla in central Mexico. The subjects are 30 participants from two groups with 15 students each. Both groups were studied through an instrument consisting of two stages. The first stage includes a reading comprehension test and the second stage is survey about students' opinions on the reading test, both stages of the instrument contribute to the overall results. The results of the first stage were plotted and analyzed numerically, whereas those obtained in the second stage were selected based on the content and quality of the information for analysis. This paper aims to show the relevance of the three types of schema (content, formal and linguistic) and the way in which each schema affects (positively or negatively) the construction of meaning from reading. Once the data were analyzed, it was concluded that the lack of knowledge within any of the schemas significantly affects the comprehension of a text, regardless of whether there is knowledge of the characteristics and elements that constitute each schema. Because this research was done using a single text to analyze the three types of schema it would be interesting to design three different texts whose purpose is to study each schema in a particular manner.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Reading is a complex process that leads the interpretation of information from printed texts (Goodman, 1967). Moreover, reading is an interactive process since readers make use of many skills intended to construct meaning from words, sentences, ideas and concepts. In addition to this, the reading purpose may vary according to the reader. Thus, this activity is usually carried out in order to acquire new knowledge, to search for relevant information, to answer specific tasks and to support the reader's ideas intended to substantiate their arguments (Khaki, 2014). When the reader has a clear purpose when performing the act of reading it generates motivation, which makes this process a meaningful and enriching activity (Bojovic, 2010). That is to say, reading without comprehension cannot take place since it requires to interpret the correct meaning from the text (Katims, 1997).

According to the (RAND) Reading Study Group (2002), reading comprehension is defined as a process in which the reader takes out information and set up a meaning from the printed text at the same time. Furthermore, reading comprehension is carried out through the interaction of the text, the reader and the purpose. Each one of these elements is related within a sociocultural context that is defined by the reader and that also interacts with each concept. As a Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016) stated, reading comprehension does not gather meaning from each writing element but the understanding of the text as a single idea. Thus, the purpose of reading comprehension is to construct meaning from the text and to contrast that meaning with the reader's "schema" (background knowledge) (Anderson et al., 1985).

When the act of reading takes place, the reader's schema plays an important role as it helps in the construction of a mental representation of the text meaning. In this sense, the schema can be defined as the reader's prior information created through experiences which

contains its own definitions of concepts (Vurdien, 1994). Likewise, the schema also allows the storage of new information within small units or schemata inside the reader's long-term memory (Anderson et al., 1984). Thus, the schema has an important role in the process of reading and understanding texts since it is the medium through which the reader interprets the author's message. For this reason, many authors have shaped the schema theory which tries to explain the interaction of each element of the reading process and the comprehension of the written text (Vurdien, 1994).

Carrel (1987) establishes three different types of schema that constitute to the reader's background knowledge and through which the meaning is constructed. First, the content schema is defined as that previous cultural knowledge and experiences possessed by the reader. This type of schema is positioned as the most important since the reading must be interpreted within a cultural context. Second, the linguistic schema refers to the knowledge of language elements ranging from grammar to vocabulary. Language knowledge allows the reader to decode each element of the sentence and interpret it. Third, the formal schema is defined as the knowledge about the different existing textual genres. This knowledge allows the reader to identify the type of text that is read through its structure, the type of language used and the organization of its textual or pictorial elements. In essence, the three types of schema enable the reader to construct a proper meaning based on the printed text. Each schema configures a network of concepts with its own definitions which shape the interpretation of the message seen from the point of view of the reader. Generally speaking, the importance of this research relies in the use of the three types of schema by the student and the importance of its influence in reading. Thus, the present work attempts to illustrate if LEI BUAP students make use of the three types of schema during their reading process as

this will help readers (students) to develop strategies that allow them to understand a text critically.

1.1 Justification

Reading is one of the main processes by which students learn a language. This process makes use of the schema theory (Shuying An, 2013) as it studies the use of the reader's prior knowledge and the text understanding. Several researchers have shown that schema helps to improve the students reading skill (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Goodman, 1967; Khaki, 2014; Rumelhart, 1980). However, LEI students seem to face problems when reading which affects their performance when they write academic texts. It is worth mentioning that this type of study has not been carried out within the LEI program before, thus, this study would provide more information regarding this theory. In this research, thirty students will read a texts to determine if and how they make use of the three types of schema. Likewise, they will answer an open-ended questionnaire in order to gather information concerning their reading process. Therefore, the objectives of the present study are outlined as follows.

1.2 Purpose of the study

In this section the objectives of the following study are presented:

- To identify and determine how schema types influence LEI Ss' reading process at the Faculty of Languages, BUAP.
- To identify the manner in which formal, linguistic and content schema influence LEI Ss' reading process.

According to the objectives attempted the research questions are posed in the following section.

1.3 Research questions

In order to carry out the present study, it is important to outline the necessary questions:

1. How do the three types of schema, linguistic, formal and content may influence LEI Ss' reading process?
2. To what extent does the absence of one of the schema types affect LEI Ss' reading process?

1.4 Significance of the study

This research aims to explore the influence of the three types of schema in the students reading process through a mixed cross-sectional methodology at the Faculty of Languages, BUAP. In this case, an instrument will be applied to determine the effects of the schema within the construction of the text meaning. Likewise, it will be investigated if students use the three types of schema and how they influence the interpretation of the printed text.

1.5 Theoretical context of the research

Various investigations have explored the relationship between the schema (prior knowledge) and the reading process. Similarly, there are investigations that focus on the influence of each type of schema separately. However, none of them has explored the influence that the three schemas have on the reading process at the same time. The purpose of this study is to provide relevant information on the use of schemas in the decoding of the text in order to contribute with data that can be used for future research projects.

1.6 Research setting

The present investigation takes place in the School of Languages BUAP (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla) located in the city of Puebla, in central Mexico. The selected participants belong to the Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI). This investigation consists of the application of an instrument that will allow determining the way in which the three types of schemas influence the reading process of the students in a foreign language.

1.7 Conclusion

This research includes five chapters. In the first chapter the objectives in which this project is oriented and the relevance of conducting this investigation are established. The second chapter contains the theoretical framework in which all the concepts which structure the schema theory and reading process are defined. The third one has to do with the Methodology that this project uses such as the context, subjects, the instrument applied, the data collection process and the research development. The fourth chapter contains the analyses of the information collected and the findings. Finally, in the fifth chapter the research's conclusions are established.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

2.0 Overview

In this chapter the theoretical framework for the current study will be outlined. It is necessary to define each of the concepts and provide existing information, based on previous theories and studies to support the veracity of the data. In order to better understand the relationship of each concept and its importance within the research, they will be addressed in an orderly manner, going from the general to the particular.

2.1 Schema Theory

In recent decades, the reading process has been thoroughly investigated. In this sense, many research such as Goodman's (1967) have shown that within the reading process, the reader constructs meaning through predictions. That is to say that most of the text meaning comes from the reader and his background knowledge than from the printed text. According to Rumelhart and Ortony (1977, p. 556) "The role of background knowledge in reading comprehension has been formalized as Schema Theory" (cited in Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983). In this case, the schema theory refers to the fact that the text only guides the reader in the construction of meaning from his prior knowledge, which emphasizes the importance of the knowledge acquired by the reader.

As a matter of fact, the purpose of schema theory is to define the appropriate environment for the interaction between the text and everything the reader implies (Adams & Collins, 1977). That is why the understanding of a text is defined as an active and integral process because it requires the interrelation between textual material and self-knowledge. It is important to emphasize the configuration in which the prior knowledge works. That is to say that this acquired information works within a system called Schema within which the

new data is stored in segments called schemata distributed according to their degree of importance (Rumelhart, 1980). According to Anderson and Pearson (1984, p.259) schema theory is a model that tries to constitute the way in which knowledge is accumulated within the memory of an individual. Given that this theory has originated many investigations that show how individuals transfer and undertake knowledge. Its importance has had an impact on the creation of reading models and studies on reading comprehension.

2.2 Schema

Schema is a significant concept that needs to be understood since it has been found the basis for cognition and information processing originates from it. Based on Bartlett (1932,p. 3) “Schema is an active organization of past reactions, or experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response” (cited in Brewen & Nakamura, 1984). So that, the function of the schema is to provide experience and prior knowledge through the representation of concepts that respond to the needs of an individual. In addition, according to Rumelhalt (1980) schema is an information network whose purpose is the conceptualization of the data contained in memory. In this sense, we can say that the schema provides the base structure on which various events are decoded and interpreted to build a meaning. Likewise, it provides a synthesis of previous information stored in the brain, which leads to the understanding or prediction of new situations.

Besides these two previous definitions, Anderson and Pearson (1984) state that “schema is an abstract knowledge structure” (p. 13). To put it differently, schema encompasses all that knowledge referred to an endless number of events that vary in specific characteristics. Considering the above, it can be said that schema refers to the ordering of prior information of the individual by building a skeleton that organizes this information into

small units called "schemata" which interact with each other intended to construct a conceptual representation of new concepts.

2.3 Schemata

As mentioned, the network configured by the schema is constituted by small sections called schemata. Thus, according to Rumelhart (1980) the structure of the schema resembles a tree with different branches which connect to an endless number of small units of knowledge "schemata". So that, each schema represents key components of the concept that is being represented. In this way, the schema not only represents background knowledge but also defines how the new information is stored within it (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

Schemata are organized hierarchically and each one of them is related to each other. They do not represent definitions but all the knowledge of an individual. (McVee et al, 2005). The schemata are used to infer meanings without observing every detail of a situation. In other words, the schemata work in such a way that each schema is interrelated with other schemata to configure a cluster of information that generates the basis for the interpretation of a given situation (Rumelhart, 1980).

Although schemata are required for the interpretation of meaning, not all schemata are required during this activity and that is why within this organized and systematic structure there must be a process that regulates all the functions and activations of schemata. According to Rumelhart (1980) there are two processes that take control of the use of schemata in the information input; these processes are called "top-down" and "bottom-up" activation. First, the Top-down process is a descending process since it is done when a higher-level schema activates several lower-level schemata (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983). In this sense, the

incoming information allows the schema structure to make general predictions that trigger the activation of inferior schemata.

Due to the nature of this process, Bobrow and Norman (1975) define this process as "Conceptually Driven" (cited in Rumelhart, 1980). Second, the Bottom-up process is an ascending process because the incoming information gets into the schema through the appropriate lower level (Adams & Collins, 1977). In this way, once the information starts to be processed, the upper levels begin to activate themselves through the hierarchical structure of the schema. Thus, the Bottom-up process goes from the particular to the general, which allows it to work through ever broader levels of interpretation. As a matter of fact, the process that works from the general to the particular allows the reader to be aware of the information and also facilitates its assimilation.

On the other hand, the descending process helps to solve misunderstandings and allows the reader to select the possible interpretations of the incoming information. Henceforth, both processes must work simultaneously since it provides a filter in both directions of the schema which allows obtaining an interpretation that fits the needs of the reader (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983)

2.3.1 Formal Schema

According to Carrell (1987) Formal schema refers to "background knowledge about the formal, rhetorical, organizational structures of different kinds of texts" (p. 560). To put it differently, this type of schema includes all those characteristics of the text that the writer has used to give shape to the printed text and its meaning. Likewise, formal schema refers to the knowledge about different literary genres as well as types of texts. In this sense, this schema has relevant information regarding the vocabulary, grammar, structure and organization of

the text. There are several formal schemata within the reader's schema since each of these schemata constitutes a set of information related to the characteristics of the printed text.

According to Xiao-hui, Jun and Wei-hua (2007) formal schemata are defined as those abstract patterns that describe linguistic, discursive and textual concepts. These patterns guide the reader during the reading process in order to understand the meaning of the written language. By the same token, Zhao and Zhu (2012) argue that thanks to each one of the text's specific characteristics, the reader can deepen their understanding and avoid obstacles during their interpretation process. Thus, the formal schema allows relating all that knowledge concerning the elements that constitute the written text.

2.3.2 Content Schema

Content schema refers to the previous knowledge that the reader has about the area regarding the text read (Kashavarz & Atai, 2007). In this sense, prior knowledge covers the cultural knowledge and experiences of the individual in relation to the textual field. According to (Xiaho –hui et al., 2007), the importance of content schema lies in its role derived from the understanding or interpretation of information since the meaning does not come from the grammatical structures, but from the reader's familiarity with the text.

The content schema is part of the cultural knowledge that the reader possesses. In this case, this kind of schema has an impact on each element of reading process and thus guides the reader. As Al-Issa (2006) states, the content schema makes the individual reflect on the purpose of his reading and the different ways in which the text can be interpreted. Thus, it is important that the reader has prior knowledge to be able to read effectively. However, this

knowledge must be activated in order to set a referential framework for the reader (Carrell, 1987).

2.3.3 Linguistic Schema

The linguistic schema refers to all that knowledge related to the syntax, semantics, grammar and vocabulary of the text. In other words, the linguistic schema constitutes all the necessary characteristics for the recognition of words and their relation within sentences (Jafri, 2017). It is necessary that the reader has some linguistic knowledge to interpret each element of the text. Thus, the reader must analyze and identify the lexical units of the text and its syntax. According to (Zhao and Zhu, 2012), all that information referring to linguistics helps the reader to interpret the meaning behind written texts. So that, the linguistic schema has an important role in the reading process as it is the medium through which the reader can interact with the text.

2.4 Reading

In recent years, various researchers have been carried out on the reading process, since it is one of the fundamental skills in learning a second language. According to Anderson et al (1985), reading is a complex process that allows the construction of meaning from the written text. In this sense, reading works in a holistic way since it interacts with many elements in a simultaneous way, such as the written information and the reader's knowledge. Moreover, Goodman (1998) states that reading is a systematic process that includes the perception and identification of the elements that makes up the text. Each of these elements are processed selectively in order to create perceptions of the words read that will allow the creation of meaning. Lee (1987) mentions that reading is a process of sequential perceptions and recognitions of units of language that goes from the particular to the general for their

understanding. In other words, the reading process refers to the decoding of each of the language units. The reader relates each unit to its meaning and contrasts it with their experiences. As shown above, reading is an active process that aims to build up meaning from the text (Short & Harste, 1996). However, the meaning obtained may vary because each reader has different types of experiences and knowledge. Thus, each reader must be motivated to be active during the reading and in this way it can be understood.

2.4.1 Reading Process

The reading process comprises a set of stages that develop throughout the comprehension of the text. Each of these stages is made up of various activities that the reader performs to negotiate the meaning of the reading material. Thus, this process is compound of five stages: pre-reading, reading, responding, exploring and applying (Tompkins, 2009). The first phase of the reading process refers to pre-reading. During this stage the reader is ready to activate his/her prior knowledge through setting purposes and plans prior to reading. Thus, the reader is predisposed to activate their knowledge of the world and the language by establishing contact with the title of the text or those elements that refer to reading in general. Likewise, the reader sets objectives that will be a guide during the reading process and will provide motivation.

After pre-reading, the reader performs the reading process of the textual material. In this stage, specific strategies and skills are implemented to facilitate the assimilation of information. These strategies should respond to the type of reading that the individual is performing, whether it is an independent, group or guided reading. Once the text has been read, the reader moves onto the negotiation of meaning trying to answer those questions prior to reading. In this stage, comments are developed about what is understood. In this sense, the

reader is ready to make notes, establish discussions or reflect in order to draw a prediction of the meaning. After responding to what was read, the reader makes an exploratory stage. This stage helps to locate key elements that can provide valuable information to interpret the text. Finally, the reader arrives at the last stage where everything understood is applied to a final product (written, summary, report) to give value to what is read and thus formalize the interpretation of the meaning.

2.4.2 Reading comprehension

As it has been mentioned, reading is an important process that takes place from the reader's previous knowledge. In this process, previous experiences and background information help to construct a unique meaning from the literary material or as many authors have mentioned, help to comprehend the text. According to RAND (2002) "reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (p. 11). In this case, the creation of the meaning takes place when the reader establishes a relation with the information of the writing and at the same time he/she contrasts what has been read with his/her experiences in order to conceptualize an interpretation of the author's message. Similarly, Kintsch and van Dijk (1983) establish that reading comprehension is a process through which meaning is generated. However, the main objective is not the gathering of the meaning of each text's element but the perception of the message through the reader's own mental representations. According to RAND (2002), the reading comprehension comprises three important elements, the reader, the text and the purpose of the reading. Each one of these elements interacts within a sociocultural context that is determined by the reader.

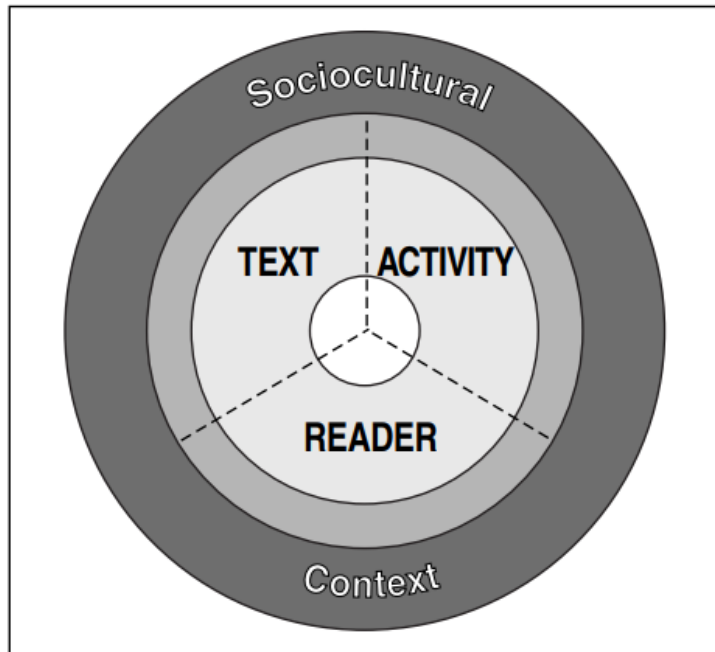


Figure 1. A Heuristic for thinking about reading comprehension.

Anyone who performs the reading process and strategies for decoding and interpreting the text is called a reader. The reader must be able to manage their skills and strategies when the reading process takes place. Each one of them must respond to the handling of the reader's prior knowledge and interaction with the text. In this sense, the reader must be critical of the information and set objectives that are achieved through motivation. During the reading process, the reader starts to increase his verbal knowledge as well as his knowledge regarding the structures of the language and the subject of the text.

Equally important, the role of the text within the reading process is very significant. The construction of meaning is originated from the representations of the printed material. Each one of the representations includes the analysis of the elements of the text. There is an endless amount of texts and each one of them is different in terms of its level of difficulty or structure. However, the understanding is due to the relationship of the text, the schemata of the reader and the purpose of the reading process.

The purpose of the reading is set by the reader or an external entity. In this sense, during the process one or more purposes that are managed within activities can coexist. Each purpose is achieved through the motivation, interest and schemas of the reader. However, during the reading process, the purpose may vary each time the reader interacts with new information that allows the emergence of new questions or objectives. Thus, the understanding of the reader will improve according to the knowledge that is acquired throughout each one of the reading processes that have been performed (RAND, 2002)

2.5 Conclusion

As noted above, in this chapter the concepts that frame this research have been addressed. Each one of them has been defined based on theories and previous investigations. Likewise, each concept has been arranged in a hierarchical manner. Moreover, in the next chapter the methodology used in this research work will be explained in detail. Thus, the context, participants and instruments will be described. In this sense, this information will be presented in order to provide data related to the methodological elements that will help to answer the research questions since the methodology is the path through which an investigation gives explanation to the phenomena.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

In this chapter the methodology used in this investigation will be presented. The methods, context, participants and instruments are described in detail. A description of the data collection procedures will also be outlined.

3.1 Method

A mixed method was carried out due to the nature of this research; a mixed method enables a researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data intended to better understand the research problem (Creswell, 2012). First, quantitative data provides data numbers that can be analyzed in order to get a result that assesses the presence of the phenomenon investigated. Second, qualitative data provides a variety of perspectives and a detailed picture of the research problem. Equally important, a convergent parallel design was implemented since this design allows the collection and interpretation of data simultaneously. Thus, the data obtained through each method complements each other to cover weaknesses and strengths (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2003) In this case, 30 students were given a reading comprehension test and an opinion-questionnaire to determine what kind of schema influence their reading comprehension. Both stages of the instrument were administered simultaneously due to the limitations of time.

3.2 Context

The research was carried out in a public university located in the state of Puebla, in central Mexico. The university chosen was the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). The students selected belong to the faculty of languages, since many of them study in the English language. This place hosts hundreds of students each year who take classes in

three different periods: Spring, Summer and Autumn. The faculty of languages has two main Bachelor programs: 1) English Language Teaching (ELT) and French Language Teaching (FLT), one Master program in ELT as well, and other foreign language courses are available for university students or people outside the university. However, this research focuses on the Bachelor in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés, LEI in Spanish).

One of the main characteristics of the Faculty of Languages is that it trains future English teachers. The relevance of this aspect is that students at this school may replicate or challenge existing beliefs and opinions about what schema readings is and how it may impact language students' reading comprehension skills.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study are thirty students attending to classes in the morning, whose ages range between 20 and 29 years. Due to the changes made in the curricular plan from the 2017 generation, the summer period is only taken by students of the four-month plan. Therefore, the number of students attending in this period is smaller compared to other periods. Because of this, the participants chosen were taking the subjects of literary translation and curricular design, since these subjects presented the largest number of students during this period and their level of English would provide more insights to the present study.

3.4 Instruments

Since the present research utilizes a mixed-method approach, the instrument was designed based on this criterion and divided into two stages. The first stage of the instrument has the

purpose of measuring the reading comprehension level of the participants through a test, and the second stage seeks to collect the participants' perception regarding the three different types of schema used in the reading process through a questionnaire containing four open questions and one multiple-choice.

The first stage of the instrument is a reading comprehension test consisting of a 220-word text and eight multiple-choice questions. The text used was taken and adapted from the book *Reading Adventures* (2010). This text talks about the Lantern festival that takes place in South Korea. For its adaptation, the original format was modified and the images were omitted in order to have a standard text. Six multiple choice questions were similarly taken and adapted from the same book. In addition to this, two more questions were added in order to have more evidence of students' reading comprehension.

The second stage of the instrument is an opinion questionnaire consisting of four open questions and one multiple-choice question. The total number of questions selected was considered based on the total time that the application of both parts of the instrument would take. For the second part of the instrument, the four open questions were designed to show if there is any influence of the three different types of schema in the performance of the reading comprehension test. Likewise, students are asked to define the three types of schema and give their opinion regarding its influence during the reading process. For the multiple choice question, a list of elements related to the content, formal and linguistic schema was designed. Hence, students were asked to list each of these elements according to their importance.

3.5 Procedure

The instruments used in this research were applied in the middle of the summer period. Prior to the application, the total number of subjects offered during the morning in this period was

investigated. Thus, the two subjects with the largest number of students who were studying the intermediate semesters of the LEI program were selected. Once the previous information was obtained, the teachers were asked twenty minutes of their class to be able to apply both stages of the instrument. In both cases, the time was granted at the beginning of the class.

On the one hand, the first group of participants to whom the instruments were applied to was the one belonging to literary translation. Once all the students were inside the classroom, 3 minutes were allocated to distribute both instruments and explain in a general way the instructions for each one. After this, the participants were asked to answer the questionnaire and the comprehension reading test which took 15 minutes in total. Finally, the instruments were collected and participants were thanked for their participation.

On the other hand, the second group of participants was the one belonging to scientific/technical translation in the socio-administrative area. In this case, 30 minutes were allocated for the application of the two instruments since most of the participants arrived late to class. In this sense, 10 minutes of the total time were taken to wait for the participants. Subsequently, 3 minutes were allocated to distribute the instruments and explain the instructions for each part. Thus, the participants took 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire and the comprehension reading test. Finally, each instrument was collected and participants were thanked for their willingness and participation.

3.6 Conclusion

As shown above, the methodology, context and instruments used in this research were described in order to highlight the elements that allowed the gathering of the data. Additionally, the application of the two-stage instrument was described. In this sense, this process was outlined to show each of the steps taken before and during the students'

participation. Otherwise, the results obtained in the two stages of the instrument will be analyzed and interpreted in chapter four. That is to say, that the research questions will be answered.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

In the current chapter the analyses and interpretation of data will be outlined. First, the research questions will be presented. Second, the organization of the analyses and interpretation of information will be described. Finally, the results of such analyses will be discussed.

4.1 Research Questions

The research questions of the present investigation are shown in this section. Each one of them will be answered with the data presented in the following sections:

1. How do the three types of schema, linguistic, formal and content may influence LEI students' reading process?
2. To what extent does the absence of one of the schema types affect LEI students' reading process?

4.2 Analysis

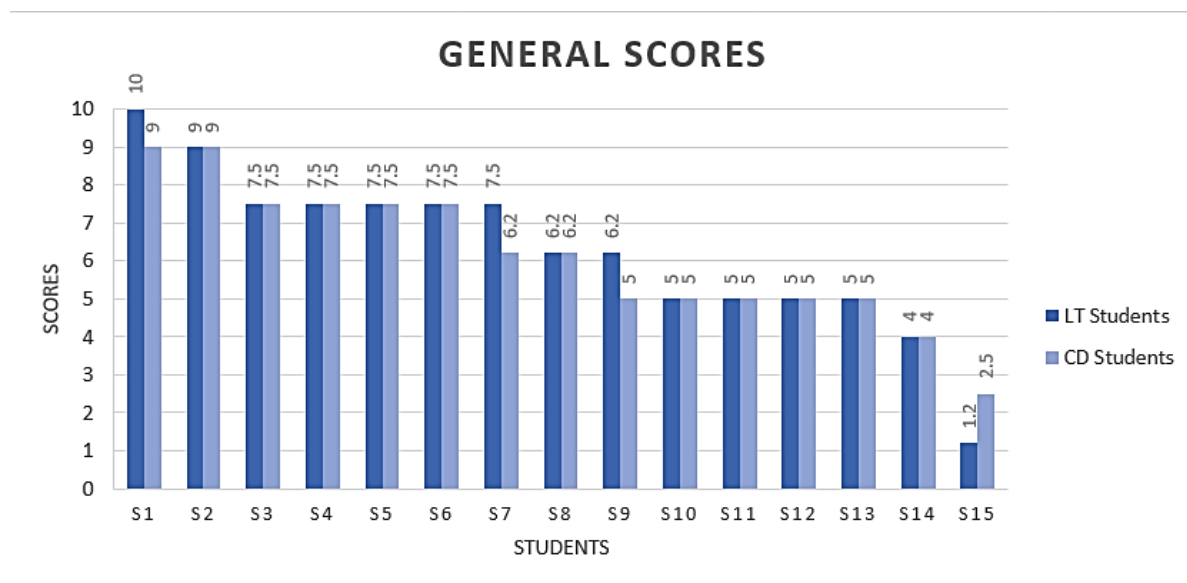
In order to answer the research questions, the analysis will be divided into two sections due to the nature of the instrument, which has been designed into two stages. Hence, the results related to the performance of the participants in the reading comprehension test (instrument's first stage) will be presented in the first section. The data obtained will be presented in numerical terms and graphs. The second section will analyze the opinions given by students in the second stage of the instrument. This section corresponds to the qualitative part of the study.

4.2.1 Instrument's first stage

4.2.1.1 Analysis and findings on students' reading comprehension

The first stage of the instrument shows the results of students' proficiency on the reading comprehension test. In this case, the data obtained will be presented by means of a graph in order to illustrate the performance of the participants. Thus, the performance of each participant will be measured through grades ranging from 0 to 10 (zero being the lowest and ten the highest). The participants' reading comprehension level will be discussed in comparison to the level students are expected to achieve according to their BA program.

Graph 1 (below) shows the general scores starting from the highest (left) to the lowest (right) from the two different groups of students analyzed. The dark blue bars display the results obtained from the Literary Translation (LT) group, and the light blue bars show the grades from the Curriculum Design (CD) group.



Graphic 1. Participants' scores related to their reading comprehension performance.

Although most participants obtained a passing grade on the reading comprehension test, the average reading comprehension proficiency is not the expected one at this level. Almost 50% of the total number of participants did not pass the reading comprehension test.

On the one hand, the LT group had nine participants with passing grades (see students 1 to 9 above). Two participants obtained 9 and 10 (see S1 – S2), while seven of these participants passed the exam by having one or two points over a failing grade, such grades range between 6.2 and 7.5 (see from S3 to S9). The rest of the participants (see S10 to S15) got grades ranging from 1 to 5 which could be considered as failing grades.

On the other hand, the CD group shows similar results. The total number of participants with passing grades is eight (see from S1 to S8). Two obtained 9 as a grade (S1- S2), while six passed the exam with a score of 6 and 7 (see from S3 to S8 above). The remaining seven participants in this group got grades ranging from 2 to 5 (see from S9 to S15) which means they failed the test. While it is true that slightly more than half of the students passed the reading comprehension test, the grades show that their performance is below what their BA program (LEI) expects them to achieve.

The expected grades were higher than the average actually obtained since the instrument used was adapted from an A2 level textbook. Students at this level should be able to read texts related to current problems worldwide and understand contemporary literature. According to the curriculum of the LEI program, it is expected that as students graduate they reach a B2 level in the use of the English language (according to the CEFR). Although the groups selected for this research have not yet completed their studies, such groups are currently within the fifth semester. This means that students are supposed to have reached at least a B1 level since the subject of literary translation requires the use of texts and theoretical knowledge for the translation of literature in English. Also, the subject of curricular design

demands critical thinking and reading, analysis of educational theories and methodologies for the design of school programs. In general, the grades obtained from the first stage of the instrument show that the performance of the participants differs significantly from what it is institutionally expected.

4.2.1.2 The influence of the types of schema on the reading process

To analyze the influence of the three types of schema in the first stage of the instrument, eight questions included in the reading comprehension test were designed in such a manner that the presence of the schemas would be implicit (See Appendix A & B). The following table (see Table 1 below) lists the types of schema (formal, content and linguistic) implicitly included in each one of the questions.

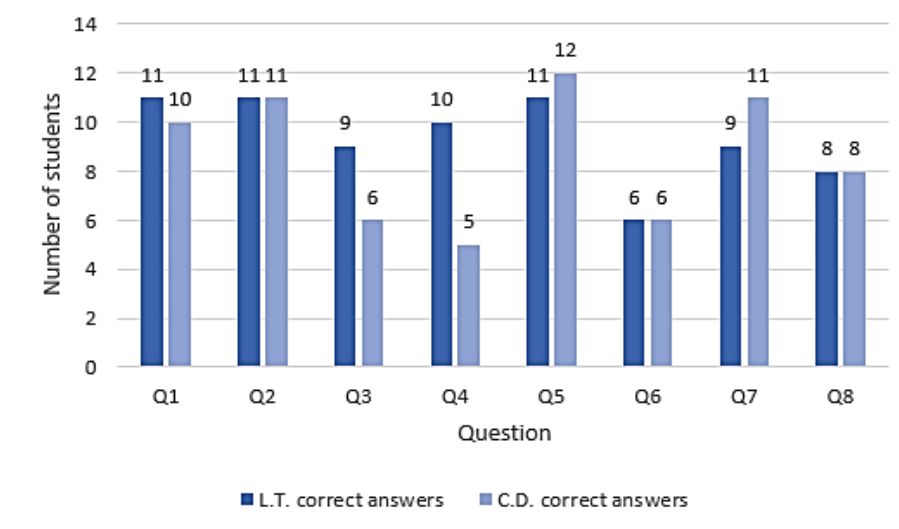
Table 1.
Question-schema relation.

Question	Kind of schema
Q1	Content Schema
Q2	Formal / Linguistic Schema
Q3	Formal / Linguistic Schema
Q4	Formal / Linguistic / Content Schema
Q5	Formal / Linguistic / Content Schema
Q6	Formal / Linguistic Schema
Q7	Content Schema
Q8	Content Schema

As shown in Table 1, three questions were assigned to show the presence of the content schema (see Q1, Q7 and Q8), two questions for the presence of the three schemas (see Q4 and Q5) and finally three others for the formal and linguistic schemas (see Q2, Q3 and Q6). It is worth mentioning that the formal schema and the linguistic schema were considered as equal since there is an overlap between these two schemes. The discourse types are included in both which present rhetorical formats and are involved in the way a text is read

comprehensively (Turton, 2016). The presence of each of the schema types can be noticed according to the total number of correct answers from the participants. That means that the greater the number of correct answers, the greater the presence of the schema. However, in some cases its influence was less compared to the rest.

Graph 2 (below) shows the presence of the three types of schema in relation to the total number of correct answers. The dark blue bars display the correct answers obtained from the LT group, and the light blue bars illustrate the total number of correct answers gathered from the CD group.



Graphic 2. Presence of the three types of schema (formal, content and linguistic) within questions.

Although the participants show certain influence from the three types of schema, it is important to analyze each one of the questions to discuss how they influenced the students reading comprehension more specifically.

Picture 1 shows the first question, which measures the presence of the content schema, and its correct answer.

1. ***The reading tells about South Korea's _____***
a. lanterns b. music c. traditions

Figure 1. Content schema question and its correct answer.

The formal and linguistic schema should influence the answer of the first question since the meaning of the correct answer (traditions see Fig. 1) had relevance in the solution of the question. However, the meaning of the word does not provide the necessary information for the schemata to be activated and thus, the presence of the content schema should be present. In this case, the participants are influenced by this schema because they can relate to the different concepts included in reading. For example, music, dance and festivals with the word "traditions", this, based on their previous experiences and cultural knowledge.

Figure 2 shows questions two and three, which measure the presence of formal and linguistic schema, and their correct answers.

2. ***According to the reading, which of these come in any different sizes.***
a. Fans b. Lanterns c. Drums
3. ***In everyday life, Korean women _____ wear bright clothes discussed in the reading.***
a. rarely b. always c. usually

Figure 2. Linguistic and Formal schema questions and their correct answers.

In relation to the second and third question, the presence of formal and linguistic schemata can be noticed. The knowledge of the grammatical functions specifically related to

the elements constituting the sentence, allow the participants to create a link between the object complement (sizes, see question 2) with the object "Laterns" in the reading.

Regarding question 3 (see Fig. 2) , the knowledge related to the meaning (in terms of time) and the functions of an adverb of frequency helped the participants to determine which of the adverbs shown in the options includes the idea of what is explained in the text.

In the cases shown above, the top-down and bottom-up processes take place (Rumelhart, 1980). Each one of them is activated when starting the reading process. In the case of the top-down process, there is an information processing within the schemata that starts from the general concepts to the most specific ones. In comparison, the bottom-up process analyzes incoming data from the particular to the general. Hence, both schemata simultaneously influence when assimilating information.

Figure 3 below shows questions four and five, which measure the presence of content, formal and linguistic schema, and their answers.

4. *The poongmulnori is probably _____.*
- a. *loud at first but then gets quiet.*
 - b. *quiet at first but then gets loud.*
 - c. *loud from the beginning to end.*
5. *People used music to _____.*
- a. *dance and celebrate demons.*
 - b. *act as a demon.*
 - c. *scare off demons.*

Figure 3. Content, formal and linguistic schema questions and their correct answers.

Although it was expected that in question number four the three schemas would manifest, only the formal and linguistic schema influenced the students' answers. They made use of their understanding of semantics in order to understand the general idea mentioned

about the sound produced by the "Poongmulnori" and to transfer it to one of the answers that had the same gist.

Likewise, there is an influence of the formal and linguistic schemas in the fifth question (see Figure 3). The solution requires knowledge of a synonym as well as a broad vocabulary. The participants showed a favorable influence from both schemas when identifying a similarity in meaning between the verbs "scare off" and "frighten away" contained in the correct answer and the text itself. It is clear that there is an absence of the content schema by the participants since most of the answers obtained show that the participants have no familiarity with South Korean culture. However, the presence of the students' content schema would have meant a better performance by providing cultural information and / or experiences regarding this South Korean tradition.

Figure 4 shows the sixth question, which measures the presence of both formal and linguistic schema, and its correct answer.

6. *In line 14, the word symbol means a(n) _____.*
a. *act* b. *thing* c. *event*

Figure 4. Formal and linguistic schema question and its correct answer.

The presence of formal and linguistic schema is presented in the sixth question (see Figure 4). The participants had to decode the lexical units and the syntactic structures of the reading. Thus, this process allowed the participants to determine the function of the word "symbol" within the text, specifically in the sentence that includes it.

On the other hand, Figure 5 below shows questions seven and eight, which measure the presence of content schema, and their correct answers.

7. *Which of the following statements is not true?*
- a. *Wood painting is a symbol of "The Lantern Festival"*
 - b. *Women carry lotus flowers of all shapes.*
 - c. *Poongmulnori is one of the sights you can see at "The Lantern Festival"*
8. *Poongmulnori is _____.*
- a. *an instrument made of metal.*
 - b. *a traditional dance.*
 - c. *a traditional music that encompasses three different arts.*

Figure 5. Content schema questions and their correct answers.

Once the reading has been made by the participants, the information becomes part of their schemata. In this sense, the new cultural data within the reading allowed them to identify the sentence that is not true, which in turn did not match with the information previously read. Additionally, question eight shows a similar influence on its solution. It is true that each individual holds a cumulus of prior knowledge in terms of culture and experiences, however every time that the reading is performed, new knowledge is attached to the different levels or sets of schemata. Thus, in both cases (question 7 and 8) the same phenomenon which is influenced by the content schema is shown.

Overall, this section showed how each one of the questions contain the three types of schemas to be analyzed in this study. Therefore, the following section will present the opinions of the participants about the influence of each of the schemas in their reading process. This, in order to support the first stage of the instrument and determine the importance of the formal, content and linguistic schemas as well as the effects that arise in their absence.

4.2.2 Instrument's Second Stage

4.2.2.1 The importance of the three types of schema

The presence of formal, content and linguistic schema can be noticed in the first stage of the instrument. However, each of them had a minor or major influence on each of the questions relatively. In this case, the minor influence of the schemas is not because participants do not know the importance or function of them but to the lack of knowledge contained in their own schemas. Thus, the second stage provides the participants' perspectives on the function or influence of the three types of schemas.

The data will be shown in the form of transcripts quoting what students gave as answers on the second part of the instrument. Figure 6 shows the importance of both formal and linguistic schema based on students' opinions. In this section, the students' options were not selected according to the group they belong to but to the amount of text they wrote on their answers. Thus, the selected opinions will be divided into two groups of three students each. The first group will deal with the importance of the linguistic and formal schemas while the second will address the importance of the content schema. Student 1 (S1), student 2 (S2) and student 3 (S3) point out the manner in which these schemata influence in the reading process.

First, Figure 6 shows the opinions given by three students regard the importance of formal and linguistic schema.

S1: Grammar helps us to detect the tense (and setting) of the text and key words are useful to detect main ideas.

S2: Because key words might give you important certain points about the reading, so you start relating these points in order to understand the text; and grammar is necessary in all kind of text to be understand.

S3: Explain key words give us an idea of what are talking.

Figure 6. Transcript of the opinions given by students on the importance of formal and linguistic schema.

The influence of the formal and linguistic schema relies on the knowledge regarding the English grammar as well as the vocabulary, and semantic and syntactic structures of the language. According to the participants, grammar is important in order to understand a text because it helps to identify key elements of grammar such as tense. Similarly, having a large collection of vocabulary, the identification of key words could help to understand the main ideas of reading and thus understand its purpose. In this case, the syntactic and semantic knowledge play an important role each time a keyword is identified. Syntax helps to understand the function of the word within the sentence and semantics allows to infer its meaning based on this relationship (Yule, 2010).

Figure 7 shows the importance of the content schema based on students' opinions. The influence of the content schema is presented in the opinions provided by student 4 (S4), student 5 (S5) and student 6 (S6).

S4: Definitely; a better knowledge of the culture, better understanding of those aspects will enrich the comprehension and make it easier.

S5: It may help you understand the context better.

S6: Because if you have prior knowledge you could link your knowledge with the reading.

Figure 7. Transcript of the answers given by students on the importance of content schema.

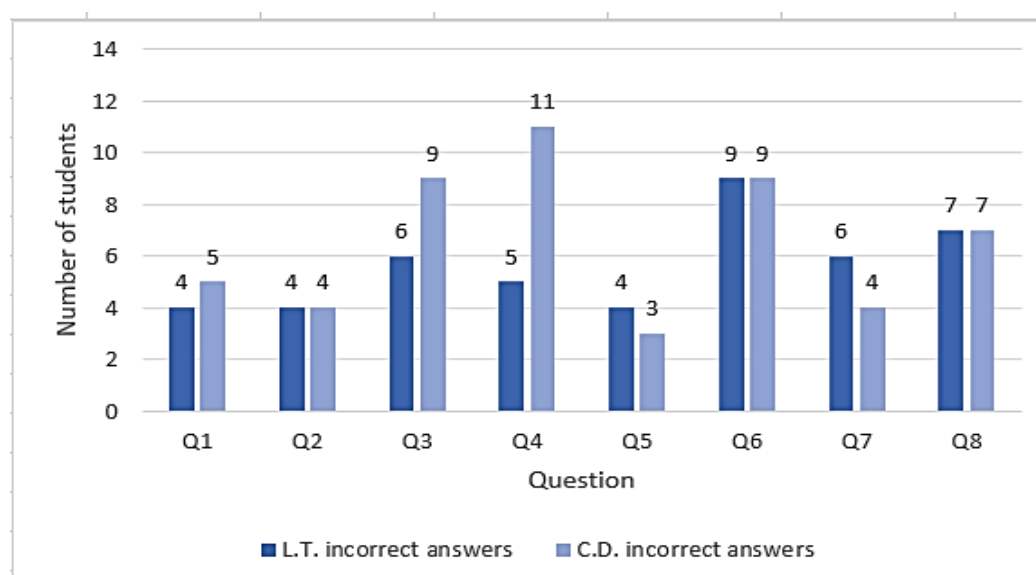
The knowledge that refers to the content schema also has a relevant influence on the comprehension of a text. Thus, the information that is presented through previous contact with the culture or situations addressed in the text allows to understand the context under which the reading is developed. Thus, the content schema does not create meaning from the theory but from the relationship created between the experiences and the text. Throughout

this section, it has become clear that the importance of this schema is derived from its role in the interpretation of data since the meaning does not come from the structures and grammatical elements but from the familiarity of the reader with the text (Xiaho -hui et al., 2007).

4.2.3 On the absence of one or more types of schema within the reading process

The absence of one or all three types of schema can prevent the reader from understanding a text. It is necessary to investigate the effect when one or more type (s) of schema are not present during the reading process.

Graph 3 shows the absence of the three types of schema in relation to the total number of incorrect answers. The dark blue bars display the incorrect answers obtained from the LT group, and the light blue bars illustrate the total number of incorrect answers gathered from the CD group.



Graphic 3. Lack of the three types of schema (formal, content and linguistic)

According to the scores obtained in the first stage of the instrument it can be seen that in some specific cases there is a partial absence of the three schemas. This lack of influence

affected mainly the participants in questions three, four, six and seven. On the one hand, in cases in which the influence of formal and linguistic schemas is measured, it becomes evident that there is little knowledge of the elements and grammatical structures and vocabulary of the English language. This lack of theoretical knowledge makes it difficult for participants to understand how a text is constituted, what function each word has within a sentence, what words share the same meaning and what their meaning is based on their relation to the rest of the grammatical elements. The non-influence of the formal and linguistic schema not only does not allow to create meaning but it constrains the reader from an adequate reading process since this scheme is the medium through which the subject interacts with the written text (Zhao & Zhu, 2012).

On the other hand, there is a lack of cultural knowledge related to the central theme of the text that are the Korean traditions. In this case, since the Korean culture is foreign to the participants, the influence of the content schema is minor. However, it can also be noted that there is little knowledge related to the word "tradition", in terms of culture and experiences, which is originated by the partial absence of formal and linguistic schemas.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, an analysis of the two stages of the instrument has been presented. Each of them provide relevant data to answer the research questions that guide this work. Thus, it has been shown that the three types of schema influence the reading process in a very particular way and that their absence can hinder the interpretation of meaning. Therefore, in the next chapter the conclusions of this research will be presented taking into consideration the theory and analysis previously discussed.

CHAPTER V: STUDY CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the limitations of the study and provides some directions for further research on the same line of investigation.

5.1 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations found was that there were no target language groups as planned, since the research was conducted during the summer period. Thus, the two groups of participants used in this research were those with the largest number of students. In this case, both groups were constituted by students of different semesters which in other words means that each of them had a different level of English. This limitation had a particular impact on the part of the text in each participant as it did not conform to their level of the language. Another limitation was that the three types of scheme were measured using only one text due to time issues. Each schema was intended to be analyzed through a text specially designed for each of them.

5.2 Directions for further research

Due to the mentioned limitations above, it would be interesting to analyze how this type of research is developed in groups in which the students have a similar level of English. In this case, future studies could provide more reliable data obtained from homogeneous groups. Similarly, the use of an appropriate text at the level of the participants could further highlight the influence of the three types of schema in the students' reading process.

Although this research presents reliable data on the influence of the three types of schema, it would be interesting to investigate the influence of each of them separately. Thus,

the way in which each schema helps the reader to understand a text could be analyzed. While it is true that the three types of schema (linguistic, formal and content) work almost simultaneously in an internal process that regulates their use (Rumelhart, 1980); researching each schema may provide us with valuable information about the specific elements that convey activation of knowledge and influence the reading performance.

Even when the understanding of the reading is an individual process in which three key elements (reader, text and purpose of reading) interact within a specific sociocultural context (RAND, 2002); teachers must create the necessary conditions that help students understand the meaning of such texts. Teachers must be aware that each student has different information contained in their schemas and that due to this the reading process and the understanding of a text can be done properly or not. In this sense, teachers must be able to design activities before and after reading that help students activate their different types of schemas before reading as well as retaining the largest amount of knowledge in each of them later.

5.3 Conclusions

As shown above, the limitations that were presented during the investigation were addressed. Each of them refers to the participants, the instrument and the focus of the research. Likewise, some recommendations were presented in order to guide future research within the same area of study. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that the realization of more studies about the influence of the schemas in the reading process will provide more information about the way in which each one works and its importance in the reading comprehension.

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APPENDIX A



BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS
“THE INFLUENCE OF SCHEMA THEORY ON
READING COMPREHENSION”



Name: _____ Target Language: _____

Age: _____

Male: _____ Female: _____

I. READ THE TEXT BELLOW

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: The Lantern Festival.

1 Seoul is the site of one of the most amazing festivals in the Korean calendar – The Latern Festival. Look for it in April or May. Here are a few of the fantastic sights you can see.

Women wear traditional Korean clothes in bright greens, oinks, peaches, and purples. Some
5 of them carry fans with bright pink flowers on them. The fans can be longer than their arms!
Other women carry lanterns of all shapes and sizes.

Regular visitors to the festival suggest going to the music and dance shows to see
poongmulnori. Poongmulnori is traditional Korean drum music. It mixes dancing, acting and
acrobatics all in one. In the past, people used the music to celebrate. They also used it to
frighten away demons. The show starts with the sounds of instruments. At first, you may
10 think the noise of metal hitting can´t get louder – but it will! And the excitement grows as
the music and dances continue. By the end of the show, it´s hard not to join in!

During the festival, painting on wood is a popular activity. Try painting lotus flowers. They
are both beautiful and the symbol of festival.

The lantern festival really is a must-see for any tourist to Korea. You don´t want to miss it!

Adapted from: Lieske C. & Menking S (2010) Seoul, Korea: The Lantern Festival. New York:
National Geographic Learning.

APPENDIX A



BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS
“THE INFLUENCE OF SCHEMA THEORY ON
READING COMPREHENSION”



II. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. The reading tells about South Korea's _____.
a. lanterns b. music c. traditions
2. According to the reading, which of these come in any different sizes.
a. Fans b. Lanterns c. Drums
3. In everyday life, Korean women _____ wear bright clothes discussed in the reading.
a. rarely b. always c. usually
4. The poongmulnori is probably _____.
a. loud at first but then gets quiet.
b. quiet at first but then gets loud.
c. loud from the beginning to end.
5. People used music to _____.
a. dance and celebrate demons.
b. act as a demon.
c. scare off demons.
6. In line 14, the word symbol means a(n) _____.
a. act b. thing c. event
7. Which of the following statements is not true?
a. Wood painting is a symbol of “The Lantern Festival”
b. Women carry lotus flowers of all shapes.
c. Poongmulnori is one of the sights you can see at “The Lantern Festival”
8. Poongmulnori is _____.
a. an instrument made of metal.
b. a traditional dance.
c. a traditional music that encompasses three different arts.



APPENDIX B

BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS
“THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT, LINGUISTIC
AND FORMAL SCHEMA ON
READING COMPREHENSION”
QUESTIONNAIRE



Name: _____ Target Language: _____
Age: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

I. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR OPINION.

1. Do you consider key words and grammar points might help you understand the text better?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Why:

2. Do you consider that prior knowledge of Korean culture would help you understand the text better?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Why:

3. Order the following elements according to its importance for the comprehension of a written text. Use numbers from 1 (more important) to 6 (less important).

_____ Previous knowledge about the topic.

_____ Vocabulary knowledge.

_____ Pre-task (e.g. questions about the topic, discussion, brainstorming)

_____ Text format.

_____ Pictures.

_____ Grammar knowledge.

4. What kind of strategies do you use to understand a text?

5. Define the following concepts and say how they may help develop reading.

1. Experiences and cultural knowledge

Grammar and vocabulary knowledge

2. Textual genres and text structure knowledge
