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**LICENCIATURA EN ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS**

**“COMPARISON OF CHILDREN’S READING STRATEGIES  
IN SPANISH: GOOD AND POOR READERS “**

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“Comparison of children’s reading strategies in Spanish: Good and poor readers”

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**DEDICATIONS**

I want to dedicate this thesis to that entire people who were with me every day of my life, trying to push me to give my best one more time. To all my teachers who taught me the real sense of being a teacher and the enormous responsibility I have now; as one of them.

It is dedicated to my partners who are in the road and they are struggling with understanding how difficult may seem get their goals; nothing is impossible and with effort, perseverance and love every dream comes true one day.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the people who let me see the hard side of life, because I learnt important lessons through this process and even I was hurt I am proud of myself and all the things I have done and those are coming to be true.

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Presentation**

Public primary schools have a very important responsibility of accepting all the children as students; as a result, this may affect the development of skills of these students because not enough attention is paid to large groups to help every learner. Students at this stage learn how to develop their basic skills in their native language but sometimes they do not obtain the best results because of many factors. In one hand, we can find intrinsic factors as students' behavior, attitudes, and reactions about the activities in the classroom, grades and even the enjoyment they experiment in different situations. But in the other hand there are extrinsic factors which are not decision of the students and unfortunately affect their development; between these factors we find the role of the teacher and the attention he or she gives to each student or the habits that students learn from family.

According to Villarreal (2004), adolescents read one book a year and Mexicans in general 1.2 books a year. Anderson (1999) explains that when the students read they improve their language skills but they improve also in all subjects. Reading is an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material which meaning does not resides on the printed page; it is only in the head of the reader that creates an interaction in reading combining the words on the printed page with the reader background knowledge and experiences. Various reading skills are also used by the reader to achieve reading comprehension such as understanding main ideas, making inferences, predicting out comes, and guessing vocabulary from context. These reading skills are used separately to reading strategies and reading theory, an interesting point is that each reader and teacher will be unique in a reading classroom because they will use all the tools mentioned in a different way (Anderson, 1999).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The problem is that most of 10-year-old students are poor readers and only a little percentage are who comprehend most of what they read and they use reading to learn but, the other part are poor readers and the learning process may be affected in other subjects of the curricula. Reading must be based on comprehension and surprisingly, most of students at this age do not comprehend a text in Spanish or any other language and they have not developed those strategies that can help them to reach the objective of reading.

### **1.3 Justification**

This research is conducted as a result of the participation of the researcher as a teacher in a primary school. It was observed how difficult reading in Spanish is for children who are in a basic stage of their education and the idea is to help those students who are struggling in comprehending texts because it is a skill that is used in all the subjects and also reading is the most used tool to learn and to know the world. This thesis is part of the researcher's experience and it may be part of other's experiences; if we as new generations of researchers and teachers pay more attention to those basic differences between good and poor readers, we can make a difference in education and improve the development in reading by creating habits in parents and children. It is imperative to create consciousness about what is really important in children's education and in this way professionals can have a better view of the world.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to explore the strategies that good readers use when they read to comprehend a text and in this way, help poor readers to develop strategies in order to achieve the goal of comprehension.

### **1.5 Main research question**

The main research question that will lead the study is:

What are good readers and poor readers' habits and what are the factors that make them good and bad readers?

### **1.6 Main research objective**

The main research objective that is related to the main research question is:

To compare good readers and poor readers' habits, as well to analyze the factors that interfere in the participants reading skills.

### **1.7 Specific research questions**

The specific research questions, related to the main research question are the following:

1. What do good readers do?
2. What do poor readers do?
3. What factors affect the readers' skills?

### **1.8 Specific research objectives**

The specific research objectives that are linked to the specific research questions and contribute to offer an answer to the main research question are:

1. To identify the elements that compose the reading skill
2. To analyze the actions that good readers take in order to be efficient readers
3. To compare the actions and characteristics that differentiate efficient and inefficient readers
4. To present the influence of external and internal factors in the readers skills

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

This research will be significant to teachers in promoting reading habits in primary school children in order to improve their learning in all areas of knowledge. This study will also be beneficial to students and parents to know more about reading strategies and let them know how intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect reading development. Both teachers and students will relate these concepts when they change strategies while they are reading.

Moreover, this study will be helpful to those who are committed to improve primary education and to support to create better environments and opportunities to primary students who are starting to know the world through reading. It will also serve as a future reference for university students and researchers on the subject of reading or reading strategies intimately linked to comprehension.

### **1.10 Key Words**

**Skill:** It is an overall behavior or general class of behaviors (Cohen, 1990).

**Strategy:** strategy is the specific means for realizing a general class of behavior (Cohen, 1990).

**Comprehension:** Comprehension is the interaction of new information with old knowledge (Jimenez, 2000).

**Cognitive Development:** A progressive reorganization of mental processes as a result of biological maturation and environmental experience. McLeod, S. A. (2009). Jean Piaget

**Schema:** the organized knowledge that one already has about people, places, things, and events (Gunning, 1996).

**Schema:** The schema theory involves an interaction between the reader's own knowledge and the text, which results in comprehension (Kitao, 1990).

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter will show the main concepts in which this thesis was based. The main concept is reading and it will be described with its characteristics that may vary in different views, it is important to highlight the part in which are analyzed the different stages that human beings experiment. Everything has an order in life and Jean Piaget and Stages of Development are the basis to find out what is “supposedly” correct with 10-11 years old children. Finally, there will be a brief explanation about comprehension because it is the goal of reading and all the questions are linked with this concept; why is it so difficult to understand what you comprehend, analyze and remember things all the time and reading should be a tool to help us to grow as thinking human beings.

### **2.1 Importance of Literacy**

Literacy has never been more necessary for development; it is the key to communication and learning of all kinds and a fundamental condition of access to today’s knowledge societies. With socio-economic disparities increasing and global crises over food, water and energy, literacy is a survival tool in a fiercely competitive world. Literacy leads to empowerment, and the right to education includes the right to literacy –an essential requirement for lifelong learning and a vital means of human development (UNESCO, 2008).

The whole world is worried about the role that reading has taken during this decade because now, technology took the major attention in many ways and obviously the way we learn has been affected; that is why this research is focused on children’s reading strategies and what they are doing to be good at this activity and in this way, we as researchers help those who are not.

After all, motivation, learning, and reading achievement are intertwined. Positive attitudes increase learning, whereas poorly developed and inadequately delivered instruction reduces motivation. (Hughes, Brooker, Gambrell, & Foster, 2011).

## **2.2 Reading as part of literacy**

From a cognitive perspective, reading is seen as a creative and constructive activity with four distinctive and fundamental characteristics –purposeful, selective, anticipatory, and based on comprehension (Smith, 1994). According to Smith (1994), reading is more than decoding a text and these four characteristics clarify his view about reading. The first characteristic is that reading must be purposeful. It is the understanding which a reader can give to the text through the reader's intentions because each reader has a purpose to read a text. Without a purpose, reading does not give us meaningful information. The author quotes that reading must be selective because we normally only attend to what is relevant to our purposes and we do not pay attention to things we do not select to read. This activity is anticipatory in the part that we are rarely surprised by what we read and our purposes define our expectations. Finally, the act of reading needs to be based on comprehension to achieve the goal of the three characteristics mentioned above.

Effective reading instruction improves students' reading attitudes and comprehension so that they may read to learn and read for enjoyment (Ortlieb, Grandstaff-Beckers, & Cheek, 2012).

Comprehension takes a very important place when we talk about reading. As Smith (2004) states, comprehension may be regarded as relating aspects of the world around us to knowledge, intentions and expectations we already have in our brain. If we are able to analyze both, reading and comprehension are two related aspects and one depends on the other one to have a complete circle and achieve a goal that is understand a text. There is an important

point to mention in this research: our participants are children and it is necessary to clarify this idea because there is an enormous difference between every period of our lives in which we learn. We concentrate on children starting to comprehend the whole world where they are immersed so, the following part will explain the specific stage we are interested in from a cognitive view.

### **2.3 The Stages of Development and Reading**

Piaget (1976) believed that children were active participants in learning. He viewed children as busy, motivated explorers whose thinking developed as they acted directly on the environment using their eyes, ears, and hands. According to Piaget (1976), between infancy and adolescence children move through four stages of development. These are: **Sensorimotor** (0 to 2 years of life), **Preoperational** (age 2 to 7 years), **Concrete operations** (age 7 to 11 years) and **Formal operations** (adolescence). We will focus on the Concrete Operational because what we want to know is why 10-year-old children behave in certain way and this may affect their reading.

During this stage, the thought process becomes more rational, mature and 'adult like', or more 'operational'; the child has the ability to develop logical thought about an object, if they are able to manipulate it. During the Concrete Operational Stage, children gradually develop the ability to 'conserve', or learn that objects are not always the way that they appear to be. This occurs when children are able to take in many different aspects of an object, simply through looking at it. Children are able to begin to imagine different scenarios, or 'what if' something was to happen. This is because they now have more 'operational' thought. Children are generally first able to conserve ideas about objects with which they are most comfortable. Once children have learnt to conserve, they learn about 'reversibility'. This

means that they learn that if things are changed, they will still be the same as they used to be (Fogelman, 1970; Bybee, Rodger W. & Sund, Robert B, (1982).

Readers develop negative attitudes towards reading as the result of innumerable reasons but most notably from dreary experiences during their early reading education and adjustments in instructional delivery throughout grade levels.

## **2.4 Schemata**

Gunning (1996) defines a schema as the organized knowledge that one already has about people, places, things, and events. Kitao (1990) says the schema theory involves an interaction between the reader's own knowledge and the text, which results in comprehension. Each schema is "filed" in an individual compartment and stored there. In attempting to comprehend reading materials, students can relate this new information to the existing information they have compartmentalized in their minds, adding it to these "files" for future use. Based on the Schema Theory, depending on how extensive their "files" become, their degree of reading comprehension may vary (Gunning, 1996).

## **2.5 Comprehension**

Comprehension is the interaction of new information with old knowledge (Jiménez, 2000). The author points out that the idea of having background knowledge about what we are going to read, helps us to combine this information with the new input we are receiving while reading and this makes us comprehend a text as a whole, creating or modifying our schemata about certain topics.

Reading comprehension is commonly known as an interactive mental process between a reader's linguistic knowledge, knowledge of the world, and knowledge about a given topic (Rahmani & Sadeghi, 2011). The reader in his/her interaction with the text has a fundamental role because he/she is who gives meaning to reading.

In the reading process the readers play an active role (Jimenez, 2000). The author says that reading is an active skill and not a passive one; there is an interaction between the reader and the writer through the text and even if both parts do not have the same background knowledge or they do not have the same purposes and expectations, the reader and the writer through the text, share certain information and as mentioned above they both focus on comprehension. These parts of the process share information and as it is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the reader and writer have at least one purpose in common.

“Reading is also regarded as a reaction to a written text –understood as a piece of communication– assuming that the reader has a purpose in attempting to understand the writer’s communicative intent” (Wallace, 1992, p.6). This quote supports the idea about what reader and writer have in common because the reader always has a reason to select a certain text as a reader and a writer a reason to write a text. It is very interesting to realize the fact that most of the authors presented here support the four main characteristics of reading. This means that this process is not taken differently for many researchers worried about what happens with people who do not read effectively. We have theories talking about the reading process but now, our concern is why it is difficult to comprehend a text and the following sections will focus on reading comprehension strategies.

## **2.6 Reading Comprehension Strategies**

Reading strategies have been defined as the mental processes involved in accomplishing reading tasks. They help readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they read (Jiménez, 2000). The author mentions that strategies help readers to make sense of what they read and that is why strategies are necessary in this process because without them, our purposes, selections and expectations will not be effective enough to achieve the level of comprehension required when reading each text. Author refers to how

to read effectively, how to achieve goals and how to be satisfied comprehending while reading a text; if we do not make sense of what we read, our activity will be meaningless to our purposes and we will not give much importance to reading.

Cohen (1990) distinguishes skills from strategies in that “skill is an overall behavior or general class of behaviors and strategy is the specific means for realizing that behavior”. This author was chosen because it is important to make a difference between one concept and the other; sometimes we confuse words and our understanding is guided by those words; a strategy is the way we do something specific (behavior), it narrows our activities talking about the field of reading. Most people believe that using strategies is a well prepared process and we are aware of each step of this process but the reality is different and we are not able to specify which strategies we use as the following quote explains: “when we read a text, we have to use strategies together in a coordinated way, but we are not conscious of using specific strategies” (Jiménez, 2000, p. 36). In order to read, it is necessary to use comprehension strategies and each reader uses those which help him/her to make sense of the text but he/she would not be able to name them or explain them in order to make a list of what strategies effective readers use. Furthermore, it could be impossible to compare between efficient and inefficient readers without evidence of what they actually do unconsciously while they are reading. By looking at what good learners do, less successful learners might be helped (Wallace, 1992).

Now, attention will be focused on what researchers state about what type of reading strategies good readers use and they can help poor readers to improve their comprehension. Smith, Wallace, Jiménez and Cohen have determined that the seemingly effortless activity described as “good reading” is made up of a set of highly complex, well-developed, and well-practiced skills and abilities. Particularly impressive is the way in which good readers

actively and consciously coordinate these strategies before, during and after reading a text (Texas Education Agency). This implies that reading is a skill and if we practice developing strategies, our goal will be accomplished.

Reading comprehension is a foundation to students' overall academic success in school and a prerequisite for successful participation in most areas of adult life (Williams and Ortlieb, 2014).

Most people believe that strategies are only applied while reading as skimming and scanning but our topic is interested in the three reading moments. This means that there are strategies which focus on activities before we start reading, others that we use when we actually read and finally, others after finishing reading. That is what good readers do and their results could change the perspective that a poor reader has when he/she decides to apply them in order to comprehend a text. Therefore, the researcher will compare what good and poor readers do while reading.

Research indicates that before reading, good readers tend to set goals for their reading. They note the structure, or organization of the text, and often create a mental overview or outline the text to help them decide whether it is relevant to their goals. Typical poor readers rarely prepare before reading; they begin to read without setting goals (Scovel, 1998).

During reading, good readers read words accurately and quickly and simultaneously deal with the meanings of those words; good readers connect the meaning of one sentence to the meaning of another. If something is confusing to them, they use their background knowledge to try to clarify the meaning of phrases. On the other side, poor readers may have difficulty decoding; they read too slowly or lack fluency. As a consequence of this, they often do not comprehend much of what they read, and the attention they have to give to figure out the words keeps them from understanding the text's message. Some poor readers also are

unaware of text organization, they do not know enough about the organizational structure of the different types of texts (Smith, 2004).

After reading, good readers often think about or reflect upon what they have read. They may mentally summarize major points or events in the text or even go to other sources to find additional information about the topic. In the case of poor readers, they typically do not think about or reflect upon what they have read; they almost never seek out additional information (Pennington, 2008).

In conclusion, good readers are most strategic readers because they do activities in order to help themselves consciously or unconsciously and everything has to do with the practice of reading. The results for poor readers are negative because they often lose confidence in their ability to read; reading is difficult for them and they receive much less practice reading.

The strategies named as ‘reading comprehension strategies during research’ have been divided into subtitles as; before reading strategies, during reading strategies, after reading strategies and strategies during whole reading (The Journal of International Social Research, 2009).

The following chart shows the model of the K-W-L Strategy developed by Ogle (1986) that provides a framework that students can use to construct meaning. It is a literacy strategy that readers can easily modify to meet their needs at any level and in any content area. It is a metacognitive strategy because it is a problem-solving process that focuses on thinking about; this strategy is reader-centered, not author-centered. The letters stand for the knowledge construction process that takes place:

K – What I KNOW begins with students’ prior knowledge

W – What I WANT to learn/know students articulate their own goals

L – What I LEARNT students record what they have learnt

Table 2.1 The K-W-L strategy

What I Know	What I Want To Learn	What I Learnt
<p>Students discuss what they already know about a topic in the text they will be reading.</p> <p>Students relate new information gained from their reading to knowledge they already have.</p>	<p>Students discuss what they want to learn from reading the text and write down specific questions that they think may be answered in the text.</p> <p>Students learn to set their own purposes for reading.</p>	<p>After reading the text, students discuss what they learned from it. Students better understand what they know and what they do not know.</p>
<p>Identify difficult words, phrases and concepts in the text</p> <p>Preview the text to make predictions about its content</p> <p>Think, talk and write about the topic of the text</p>	<p>Summarize important ideas</p> <p>Make connections between important ideas</p> <p>Sequence ideas or events in the text</p> <p>Visualize characters, settings or events in the text</p>	<p>Evaluate and discuss the ideas encountered in the text</p> <p>Apply these ideas in real life situations</p> <p>Retelling the main ideas</p> <p>Discuss for further reading</p>

The first part of the column shows different activities that can be done in order to have a panoramic idea about what students already know about a certain topic. This part helps to activate the students' schema that already have in their brain, and in this way facilitate reading a text.

The second part of the chart presents activities which can be applied to the specific purpose of each column and these can vary with every reader and every text. It is necessary to clarify

that not all readers use all of them because some of them have more practice and we can see what good readers do to improve the reading in poor readers and following these steps it could be easier to comprehend a text step by step.

The last column lists some activities used to verify what students learnt during reading a text; they can be used as a review in general of all the reading activity and if the text was meaningful for them.

Finally, these reading comprehension strategies can be applied in reading in all languages depending on our native language because reading in another language needs more disciplinary activities and well-practiced strategies. It is more difficult and even today when reading books is not fashionable we need to read constantly.

## **2.7 Phonological Awareness**

Reading has a very important influence when children obtain knowledge about the world around them and it is divided in levels which define what the requirements in each part of this process are. In order to do this we need to clarify the very first level of comprehension of text that is phonological awareness, which is going to be explained.

Phonological awareness is an important factor during the reading learning process and is a strong predictor of future reading behavior (Fumagalli, Barreyro and Jaichenco, 2014).

A child's phonological awareness knowledge has been described as the best single predictor of reading performance (Gillon, 2007). When we analyze the roots of a problem, we are able to create solutions to solve it and we have read about reading comprehension but before achieving the major goal in reading we need to take a look at the first level of this activity. Phonological awareness has been described as the way children interpret words in their smaller parts; listening and speaking have an important role because this topic takes into account sounds and how readers can read written words with the correct sounds. Theories of

skilled reading emphasize the importance of efficient word recognition to the development of reading comprehension ability (Gillon, 2007).

Descriptions of poor readers typically emphasize their inability to recognize and pronounce printed words in an accurate manner (Gillon, 2007). It seems that phonological awareness is the very basic and initial part that we can analyze to understand why good readers and poor readers exist; it may be the reason why children face problems when they read a text. Phonological awareness includes those grammar mistakes, misunderstandings, incorrect pronunciation, punctuation marks problems and poor comprehension that we can see in poor readers. If we have a poor base in our educational development, problems grow and every moment later; it is more difficult to correct them because it is like starting over again.

## **2.8 Reading strategies in children**

Effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that recognizes that reading ability is determined by multiple factors (Snow, 1998). Those factors mentioned before are divided into extrinsic factors as home literacy environment, teacher's attention given to the students when they read and the emotions that participants describe they feel when they read. In the field of intrinsic factors we can find intellectual activity or reading preferences, sensory and physical functioning and written language skills. All these factors may affect the development of reading in children and the exposure that they have in schools has a great influence in early years.

According to Snow (1998) there are two potential stumbling blocks that are known to throw children off course on the journey to skilled reading. The first one is a failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading and to acquire new strategies that may be specifically needed for reading. Nowadays, reading is taught as something automatic and

it is not shown as practice or an active process as it is mentioned before; for these reason teachers, parents and students are not able to choose the correct strategies to help themselves improve this skill. If children are not taught to create their own purposes or intentions, their own criteria, the process of teaching strategies become harder for all involved in education.

The second block that affects reading in children is the absence or loss of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading (Snow, 1998).

As we can see, these two blocks for children are intimately related and they could seem the same but they are totally different; the second one implies motivation and for most of the teachers this is the real problem. There is an enormous branch in the field of motivation, there are a lot of specialists worried about how to improve it and generations that are coming are having even more complications to solve this kind of problems.

It is imperative that steps be taken to ensure that children overcome these obstacles during the primary grades (Snow, 1998).

As Snow (1998) mentions that the conditions that appear to contribute to successful reading by schoolchildren, among the more important are each child's (1) intellectual and sensory capacities, (2) positive expectations about and experiences with literacy from an early age, (3) support for reading-related activities and attitudes so that he or she is prepared to benefit from early literacy experiences and subsequent formal instruction in school, and (4) instructional environment conducive to learning.

Reading acquisition has mainly been investigated from a psycholinguistic perspective which has been instrumental in identifying the important developmental impact of linguistic skills such as phonological awareness (Pascale, Lynne and Agnes; 2014).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter the researcher will summarize the main points mentioned above. Reading is the most important activity when learning takes place in everyday lives, even the media is becoming the main tool to learn reading is still used to comprehend what we find and to carry out this activity, it is necessary the use of strategies. This research is focused on children reading strategies in Spanish. It must be understood what is happening in the stage in which it is going to be explored to better understand the development of each child taking into account the theory showed before; children as human beings relate new knowledge with the knowledge already stored in their brains (schemata) and the question is still the same, what good readers do when they read and using the results to help poor readers. Comprehension is the objective of reading a text and in order to achieve it, the use of strategies and different activities is necessary to get better results. We need to start differentiating between strategies used by adult people who know more about the world and strategies for children who are in the primary grades in which they are learning about everything, they are ready to discover the world and even, to discover themselves as thinking human beings. In the following chapter, the methodology used in this thesis will be described

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the answers the researcher found to the research questions. Here are described the different methods used in this thesis and each method is explained to have a

better understanding. The chapter is divided in four parts in which are design, subjects, setting or context, procedures, and research instruments. These aspects are described in detail.

### **3.1 Research Design**

In this thesis, it will be used qualitative methods: observation and focus group. The fundamentals to use these qualitative methods are presented here:

“Being an observer in the classroom releases us from these concerns and affords us the freedom to look at the lesson from a range of different perspectives” (Wajnryb, 1992, p.7). This method is because the objective of this research is to explore what good readers do without interfering in their learning and without affecting their behavior in the classroom.

“Focus groups allow interviewers to study people in a more natural conversation pattern than typically occurs in a one-to-one interview. In combination with participant observation, they can be used for learning about groups and their patterns of interaction. An advantage is their fairly low cost compared to surveys, as one can get results relatively quickly and increase the sample size of a report by talking with several people at once (Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen Rossman, 1999).

### **3.2 Subjects**

The subjects in this study were 6 primary school students, three of them were considered as good readers and the other three as poor readers, according to their works previously analyzed and after 3 observations in their classroom. There are three poor readers (2 girls and 1 boy) the same as the good readers (2 girls and 1 boy). All of the students were part of the same classroom in the school and the same teacher during 1 year. They were between 10 and 11 years old, all of them native Spanish speakers.

### **3.3 Context**

Observations and the focus group took place in a public primary school in Puebla. The school has 24 classrooms, 2 bathrooms, 1 library, 1 cafeteria, 2 playgrounds, 1 office and 1 medical office. In each classroom there are between 50 and 60 students, because of this the space in the classrooms is not enough to review students' works; teacher cannot give the same attention to the students and most of the time the materials are required by the parents from the teachers. Most of the teachers do not have good working relationship and this factor may affect children because they can see how the behavior of the teachers is. Students go to school from 8:00 am to 13:00 pm and in these hours; teachers must combine all the subjects asked by the primary school program, physical education, cultural activities as festivals, ceremonies and celebrations to the different dates mentioned in the calendar. Many times students do not attend to all the subjects when they have to go cultural activities. The school is very big but each level, from kindergarten to preparatory level is divided with walls and children cannot go anywhere without the permission or company of teachers or people who are working there. As a big school, it has a lot of deficits, problems and needs to be taken into account in order to help the development of students and all generations are coming.

### **3.4 Procedures and research instruments**

In this section the research procedures are described in detail, considering the design and administration of the research instruments: interview guide, reading class observation checklist and learning portfolio.

#### **3.4.1 Reading class observation checklist**

As the first step in this methodology, observation takes place. The observations consisted of checking attitudes, behaviors and development of students in general. There were collected works of all students related to reading and writing to select those who would be part of the study. During the 3 observations, students read a text as part of the class and the teacher was observed, too. The guide for this observation is called “Reading class observation checklist”, it is divided into three columns; in the first column are written the names of the participants, in the next column are described some reading behaviors as how children read frequency words automatically, if children read independently for increasing amount of time, if children choose their own material to read and if they show interest in reading. The last column is called “Phonics” and we can see four different aspects to be observed; they are the understanding of beginning, middle and ending sounds in a word, if children can read combinations of short and long words and the use of background knowledge to decode words. The range to evaluate these aspects is from 1 to 5 being number 1 the minimal or the poorest level of development and number 5 being the maximum or better level of development.

### **3.4.2 Learning portfolio**

In order to know more about some students and their development in the rest of activities in the classroom some reading and writing works were collected. The works were classified in this order: a fable, a calaverita, reading comprehension, writing exercise. The differences between the six subjects selected were significant in all the aspects to be evaluated. These papers were classified and organized in a learning/reading portfolio in order to have evidence of the instrument and the real work of the participants; they were important to know the differences between the good and poor readers.

### **3.4.3 Comparisons of the reading works**

This was the last step of the research procedure. The purpose of these comparisons is to be aware of the results children obtain taking into account the differences mentioned in Chapter 2. The comparisons are made by the researcher with the teacher's help because of the time teacher shares with students; this information helps to have a better classification and a better understanding. The works were classified in this order: a fable, a calaverita, reading comprehension, writing exercise. The researcher read all the works of every students to see the differences about grammar mistakes, coherence, punctuation marks, words repeated and consistence when they wrote. The works were asked to the teacher and she shared all the information she could.

The results of these comparisons will be explained in the next chapter.

#### **3.4.4 Interview guide**

The objective of the interview (focus group) is to discover the differences between the participants who do not know the classification made; it means that when they answer questions they are not told if they are good or poor readers. This guide is composed by 10 open questions in which the researcher asks them to the 6 participants. Children and interviewer used a different classroom in the school, the focus group lasted 1 hour in which every participant was free to speak and share what they want talking about reading. The questions vary between reading habits, reading preferences and different strategies that participants already know.

#### **3.4.5 Observation checklist**

The objective of the 3 observations made in this thesis is to get general information of the students without change attitudes or behaviors because when a person is being observed may show different attitudes and the results are not real. Participants were observed firstly in a history class, the researcher identified those who participate more and who are shy and

behavior in general. The next observations were made while students read in their Spanish class. It was used a guide to the last observation in which the range to evaluate these aspects is from 1 to 5 being number 1 the minimal or the poorest level of development and number 5 being the maximum or better level of development.

### **3.5 Conclusions**

In this chapter the methodology used in this thesis used to obtain the results shown in Chapter 5, was presented. The purpose is to clarify in what conditions the research instruments were administered, the characteristics of the participants, the environment in which the research was developed; all of this trying to obtain answers to the research questions in real life. At the beginning, the design of the research instruments was difficult because the answers or what kind of information we want to get must be very specific or the research may change its objective. It is important to mention that the methodology was reviewed by the teacher in charge of the group and with permission of the administrative personnel to observe and to analyze the student's characteristics.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter reports the results obtained when the data was collected through observation and focus group. All the data is concentrated in two tables to better understand it: the first

one shows the extrinsic factors and the second one, intrinsic factors that affect reading comprehension in children. The most relevant findings are presented in this chapter.

#### **4.1 Research Questions**

In order to present the results in a consistent manner, they will be organized according to the research questions.

##### **Main research question**

What are good readers and poor readers' habits and what factors impact them?

##### **Specific research questions**

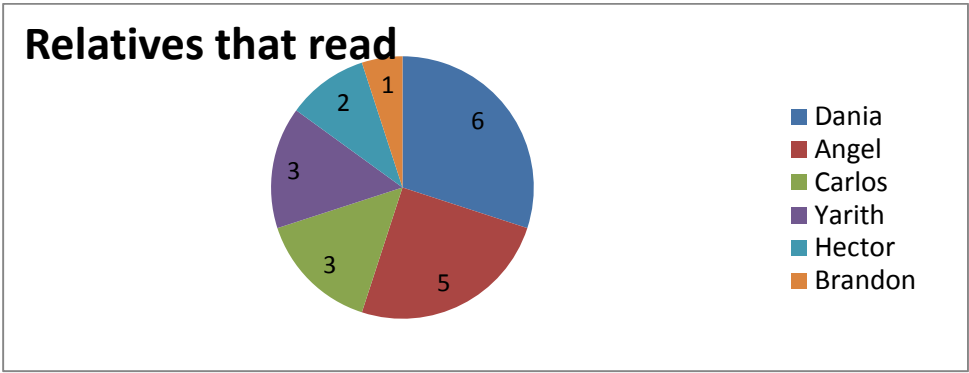
1. What do good readers do?
2. What do poor readers do?
3. What factors affect the readers' skills?

#### **4.2 Answer to the Research Questions**

**4.2.1 Extrinsic Factors.** Factors external to the individual and unrelated to the task they are performing

##### **4.2.1.1 Home literacy environment**

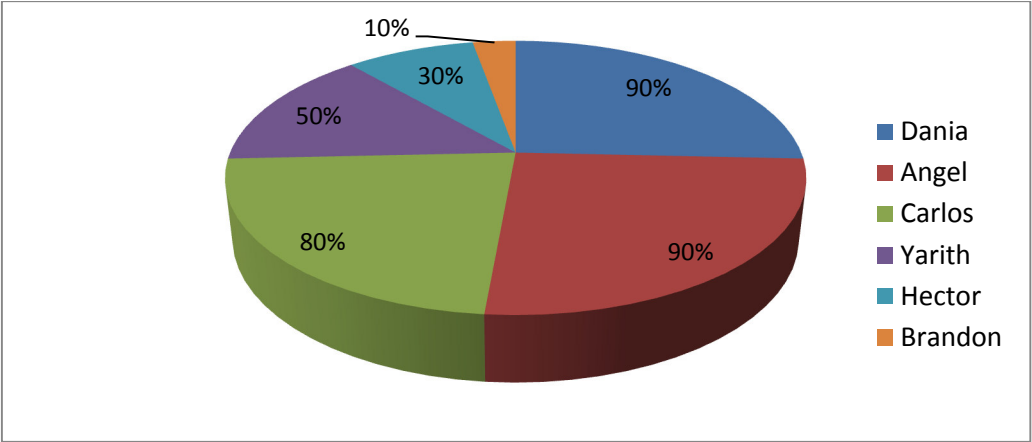
**Graph 4.1 Relatives that read**



In the graph above we can see the number of members of the families that read at home, these is participants' answers obtained from the focus group. The most significant difference is that in the case of Dania who is a good reader, she has 6 relatives who read but talking about Brandon, he only has 1 relative who reads. As Snow (1998) mentions that the conditions that appear to contribute to successful reading by schoolchildren, among the more important are each child's instructional environment conducive to learning.

**4.2.1.2 Teacher's attention while students read in the classroom**

**Graph 4.2 Attention given by the teacher while students read in the classroom**



In this graph the different attention the teacher gives to the students when they read is shown. The class lasted around 70 minutes because all the students in the classroom read in these kinds of activities. The time of teacher's attention was measured by calculating the time of

the reading class that lasted 70 minutes approximately; the researcher wrote how many minutes every subject or participant read in the class. Teacher pays more attention to those who are good readers and less attention to those who are poor readers. In the researcher's opinion, the teacher's attitude is affecting directly the development of reading in her students because she must help those who are struggling in reading without caring about the other students. The second block that affects reading in children is the absence or loss of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading (Snow, 1998).

#### 4.2.1.3 Teacher's perceptions of the participants

**Table 4.1 Participants' aspects observed by the teacher**

Participants	General aspects observed by the teacher
1. Dania	Better grades of the whole class but very shy
2. Angel	Very intelligent boy and participative
3. Carlos	Intelligent in all subjects but he does not participate
4. Yarith	Bad grades and very shy

5. Hector	Very talkative, bad grades and hyperactive boy
6. Brandon	Emotional and familiar problems. Hyperactive

As it is observed, there are some differences between good readers and poor readers because they do not have in common extrinsic factors. Some of them are more affected by the home literacy environment, it means that the family and all the people around them are making reading more difficult to them; perhaps family is the base to develop this skill.

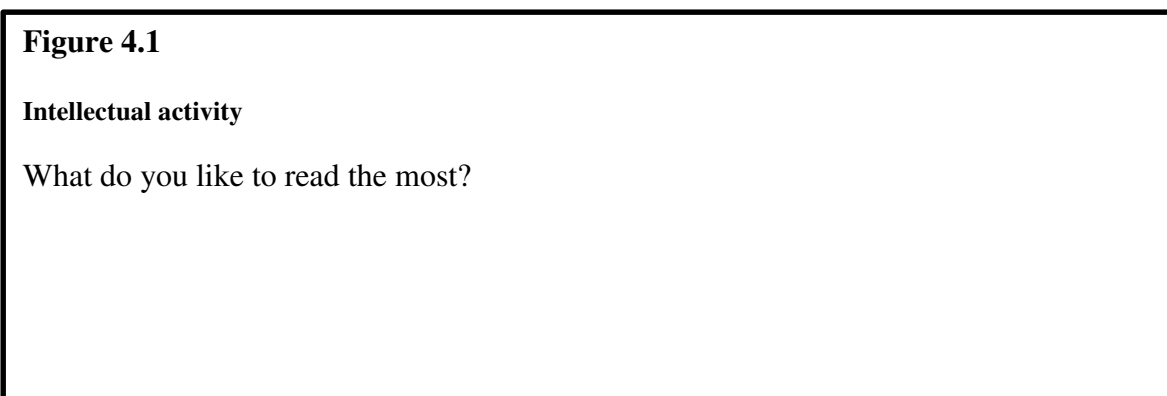
Some poor readers also are unaware of text organization, they do not know enough about the organizational structure of the different types of texts (Smith, 2004).

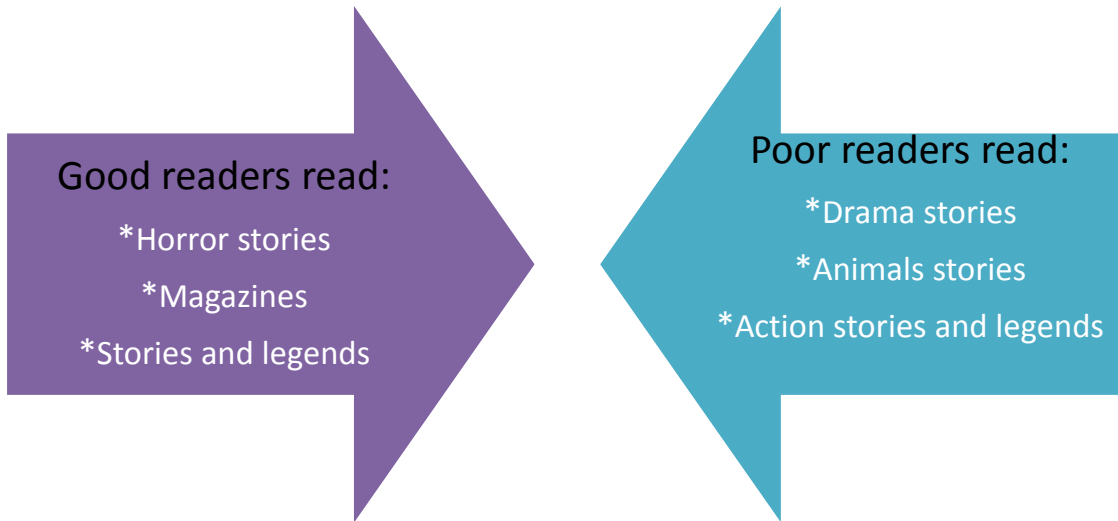
#### **4.2.2 Intrinsic Factors**

In this section, the most relevant findings related to intrinsic factors will be presented, analyzed and supported.

**Intrinsic factors** are internal desires to perform a particular task, people do certain activities because it gives them pleasure, develops a particular skill, or it is morally the right thing to do. The graphs below show the four intrinsic factors analyzed in observations and in the focus group and in the six children.

**Figure 4.2.2.1 Types of texts children read**





In the figure above are shown the reading preferences of the participants. They are separated good and poor readers and it is just the transcription of children’s answers. Something relevant here is that both good readers and poor readers agree each other in their preferences. Smith (2004) states, comprehension may be regarded as relating aspects of the world around us to knowledge, intentions and expectations we already have in our brain. If we are able to analyze both, reading and comprehension are two related aspects and one depends on the other one to have a complete circle and achieve a goal that is understand a text.

#### 4.2.2.2 Sensory functioning

**Table 4.2 Sensory functioning in reading**

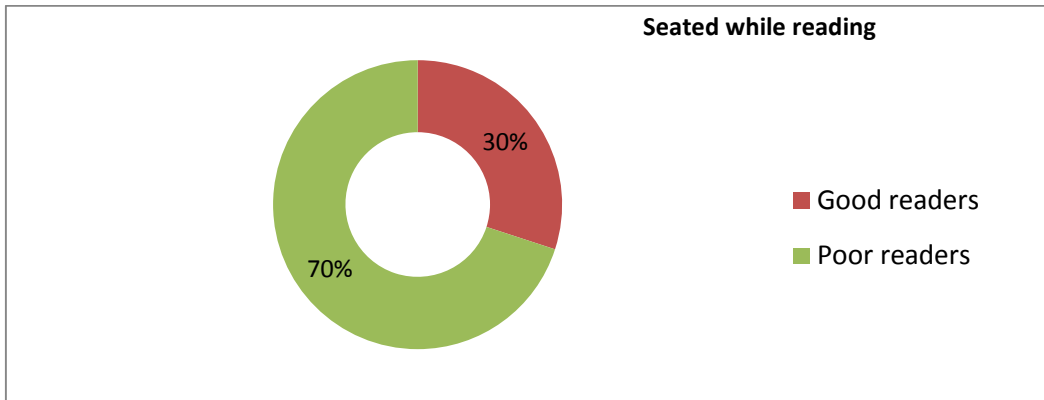
<b>Participants</b>	<b>How do you perceive reading?</b>	<b>Why do you like reading?</b>
1. Dania	Excitement	It makes you smarter

2. Angel	Excitement and surprise	I imagine the stories and I improve my reading and writing
3. Carlos	Happiness	It is fun, I learn new things
4. Yarith	Curiosity	I improve my mentality
5. Hector	Happiness	I learn more things
6. Brandon	Sadness	I learn words

In this figure we can see how children feel about reading; the answers were obtained in the focus group. The researcher asked two questions: How do you perceive reading? and why do you like reading and this is the best way to present answers according to each participant. The answers of the good readers are more concise, seem to be more mature and from children who enjoy reading: the answers go from excitement to sadness and it is the most relevant difference. During the Concrete Operational stage, the thought process becomes more rational, mature and 'adult like', or more 'operational'; the child has the ability to develop logical thought about an object, if they are able to manipulate it (Piaget, 1976).

#### **4.2.2.3 Physical functioning (Position when children read, body movements)**

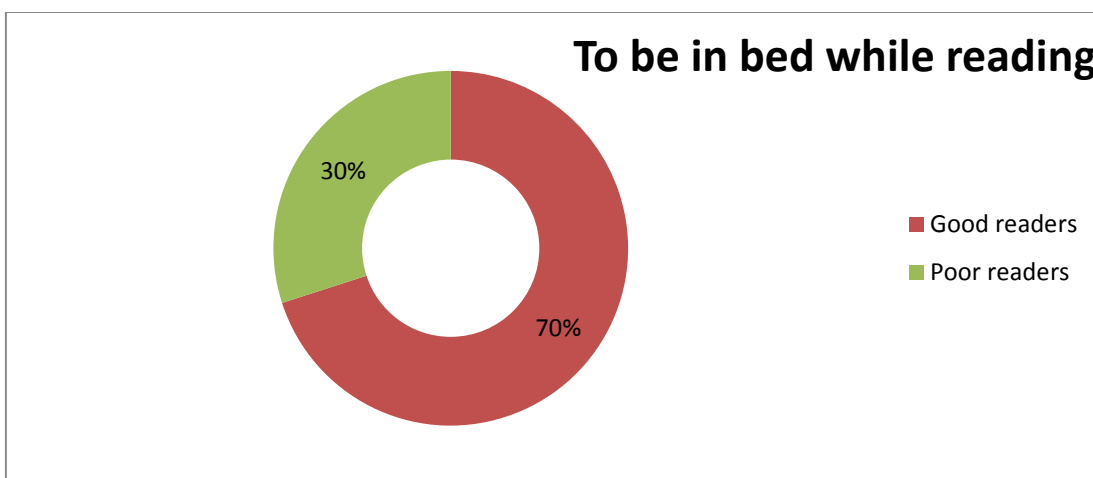
##### **Graph 4.3 Preference of being seated while reading**



In this graph is explained that poor readers prefer to be seated while they are reading, they think it is more comfortable and their comprehension is better. While good readers accept that they sometimes are seated while they read but they prefer another position. As Snow (1998) mentions that the conditions that appear to contribute to successful reading by schoolchildren, among the more important are each child's ) support for reading-related activities and attitudes so that he or she is prepared to benefit from early literacy experiences and subsequent formal instruction in school.

#### 4.2.2.4 Physical functioning (continued)

**Graph 4.4 Preference of being in bed while reading**



In this graph is explained now that good readers prefer to be in bed while they read because they feel more relaxed and they enjoy more the action of reading. It could be that good readers

prefer to be in bed while reading because when the observation took place, they felt uncomfortable in their chairs; they do not know how to accommodate their bodies in order to pay attention only to the text. The pressure in their backs is annoying and they are moving all their bodies all the time. The primary grades (Snow, 1998).

As Snow (1998) mentions that the conditions that appear to contribute to successful reading by schoolchildren, among the more important are each child's intellectual and sensory capacities.

#### 4.2.2.5 Written language skills

**Table 4.3 Comparison of grammatical mistakes**

Name	Number of grammatical mistakes in 4 different writing activities (a fable, a calaverita, a comprehension reading, writing exercise).
1. Dania	6
2. Angel	0
3. Carlos	3
4. Yarith	51
5. Héctor	25
6. Brandon	24

The last table indicates that poor readers have more grammatical mistakes when they write different types of texts. The most significant difference is that those who are good readers

have only 0 or 6 grammar mistakes in all their writing works, but if we see poor readers' grammar mistakes, the difference is enormous; they have at least 24 mistakes in the same quantity of words. As it was said in Chapter 2 in phonological awareness, grammar has to be directly related with the development of reading. Theories of skilled reading emphasize the importance of efficient word recognition to the development of reading comprehension ability (Gillon, 2007).

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

In this chapter there will be offered some conclusions based on the main findings that will allow to give a current answers to the main research questions and the subsidiary questions. At the same time some implications of the study, limitations and suggestions for further research will be presented.

## **5.1 Conclusions**

The main variable of this study was about reading strategies in children. The final findings are exposed below. These are based on the general objective of this research and the research questions.

### **5.1.1 Reading**

In order to obtain a conclusion about the main variable in this research, it is necessary to analyze what was said in the literature review about it. From a cognitive perspective, reading is seen as a creative and constructive activity with four distinctive and fundamental characteristics –purposeful, selective, anticipatory, and based on comprehension (Smith, 1994). The problem is that primary school children do not receive the necessary information to develop reading strategies in order to comprehend a text; it is the consequence of many factors as the home literacy environment in which it can be seen that those children that have family members who read are more efficient readers in contrast with those who do not. The educational environment affect in the same way the development of this activity because nowadays primary schools have a great demand and students do not receive the same quality of attention from parents, teachers and workers in a school.

In the reading process the readers play an active role (Jiménez, 2000). According to this author, teachers are committing a big mistake when they give students a passive role when they read in the classroom; they use this activity to keep quiet the students without knowing the deformed idea they are implementing in the children's brain. If a person does not have a clear idea of what he or she does and why he or she does it, his or her objectives are not reached in an efficient way. Readers need to set goals and have interaction with the text to reach the comprehension levels it requires.

### **5.1.2 Reading strategies in children**

As Snow (1998) mentions that the conditions that appear to contribute to successful reading by schoolchildren, among the more important are each child's (1) intellectual and sensory capacities, (2) positive expectations about and experiences with literacy from an early age, (3) support for reading-related activities and attitudes so that he or she is prepared to benefit from early literacy experiences and subsequent formal instruction in school, and (4) instructional environment conducive to learning.

The author explains some conditions needed to successful reading, all of them are shown in graphs in Chapter 4; this is what makes the difference between good and poor readers. Some conditions depend on the children's decisions and behaviors but the others depend of external factors in which children are not aware of the consequences, teachers have an enormous influence in the development of all the skills taught to the students but, they have not realized about the fact that not all children are the same and they do not learn in the same way or they do not show the same results.

Ages are changing, children become more independent and unfortunately parents and teachers do not show interest to help children in this important part of their lives.

Now, to enrich the conclusion exposed above it is suitable to call for the main research question and the subsidiary research questions previously presented in Chapter I.

### **Main research question**

What are good readers and poor readers' habits and what factors impact them? The habits of good and poor readers vary a lot talking about intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Poor readers do not set goals when they read, they do not expect anything about this activity and they do not reach the comprehension level required for any requirement asked by the teacher in the classroom. Factors as home literacy environment, teacher's attention, and attitudes in the school, sensory and physical

functioning and writing skills show the big differences between those readers mentioned. All of these factors impact students without being aware of them and for this reason it is almost impossible to change habits without the participation of parents and teachers.

### **Subsidiary research questions**

1. What does the reading skill imply? Reading implies more than decoding a text, reading needs goals to be done, expectations to be worthy, purposes to be useful and its reward must be comprehension. Reading implies an interaction between the writer and the reader and the reaction of one self's schema in the brain; reading is the main tool to learn any subject in the school and it is the basis of the writing skill.
2. What do good readers do? Good readers have at least 5 family members who read for different purposes, most of them for enjoyment and pleasure. Teacher gives more time of attention to those who read effectively in the classroom, most good readers are better students; they are participative, they have better grades and they do not show emotional problems. Good readers feel happiness and curiosity while they are reading; according to their physical functioning, they prefer to be in bed while reading and finally, they show an important improvement in their writing skills with just 6 mistakes at maximum in three writing activities that contain around 400 words.
3. What do poor readers do? Poor readers have around 1 family member who read and his or her purpose generally is for requirement from another person. Teacher gives less attention to those who struggle in reading in the classroom. Most poor readers are shy, they have bad grades in general and 2 of 3 poor readers have emotional problems and they are attending to the psychologist. Poor readers feel sadness and just curiosity when they read a text; according to their physical functioning, poor readers prefer to be seated

while they are reading because they feel uncomfortable after a certain period of time. They show a low level development in their writing skill because they commit from 25 to 50 grammar mistakes in the same quantity of words that good readers.

4. What factors affect the readers' skills? The results show that the home literacy environment is a relevant factor that changes children's habits when they read. This causes a great impact in the development of reading because children are growing and learning from examples but they are not able to decide if those examples are positive or negative. The teacher's attention is an important factor too because they do not feel secure when they are reading and they change their attitudes and behaviors because of this. Their sensory functioning may affect reading because it is the way students feel about reading in general, in or out the school. If children do not like something they try to avoid as much as possible and reading is not an exception. Their physical functioning affects the development of reading strategies because if children do not feel comfortable doing an activity, the results are not enough to them and they do not want to feel uncomfortable with something, they prefer to feel secure and happy with their activities.

## **5.2 Implications**

Even though not much or enough information was obtained respect to the children's reading strategies used in the primary school, it gave clues about the aspects to change in order to improve the development of these strategies. Parents, teachers, schools and society in general must think about the real relevance reading has in our lives and it does not only serves as a hobby or a torture for those people who do not enjoy it. The most important benefit is that this study permitted to discover those factors that affect good and poor readers actions can be taken in order to help children that are struggling in this activity. If a child has a home literacy environment in which most of the family members read, he or she is going to start enjoying

reading, if they read more they will change their grades at school and teachers will see the difference in their improvement and education level. If society have more reading children, the attitudes, skills and values will change and our country will grow in different aspects, even economy may increase because there will be more prepared people; the analphabetism would disappear and we would obtain more respect from other people and other countries.

### **5.3 Limitations**

It is worthy to mention the limitations the research was in the process of this research. One limitation is that commonly in public schools it is forbidden to observe students if you are not teacher of that school. It was necessary to ask for special permission to the administrative personnel; as consequence of this the time students were observed was limited. In the focus group, teacher gave permission to the students but just one hour in which some questions were not asked and they are not included here. There were limitations in the literature review because there is a lot of information about reading strategies but the researcher needed to adapt the topic to children and obviously it is not the same. In this research were covered primary schools children of fifth grade, all of them are Spanish native speakers. The instruments were just administered in one school because of the time and the problem of permission mentioned before; all the instruments were based to clarify information only about the reading skill and the strategies children use to improve in this field.

### **5.4 Directions for further research**

As it was previously expressed, this research did not achieve enough information about the lack or loss of reading strategies in children and in what way activities were implemented to make the difference between good and poor readers less significant. This may happened because of the methodology procedures carried out.

However, it was discovered that this research points out to an important aspect: the intimate relation between reading and writing skills. It could be very significant to make studies about how the poor reading may affect the development of efficient writing skills and as a consequence of this, it would be interesting to explore how much this situation is affecting those children who are having problems in their educational improvement and in their learning process.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

Every single discovered detailed along this research could not have been possible without children that accepted to share their feelings and the way they are learning how the world is, teachers who helped the researcher to design the instruments and interpret them. Therefore, with the collected data was found out unexpected discoveries that made of this work a valuable research to focus on children reading strategies and some extrinsic factors as well as intrinsic factors that may affect the development of the reading skills.

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# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX A



# APPENDIX B

## Reading Interview Guide

1. Do you like to read? Why or why not?
2. What is your favorite thing to read?
3. Where do you like to read?
4. Do you read at home? How often?
5. Do you think you are a good reader?
6. Who is your favorite author?
7. What are your favorite two books?
8. What do you like to read about?
9. How are you going to become a better reader?
10. Do you go to the public library? How often?

Taken from: [tisforteaching.com](https://www.tisforteaching.com) (Pinterest) Reading Survey.

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