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**“Study on the effectiveness of extensive reading approach to enhance reading comprehension by CFL students”**

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**“Study on the effectiveness of extensive reading approach to enhance reading comprehension by CFL students”**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my brother who, indirectly, helped me to be where I am.

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## ABSTRACT

Extensive reading is an approach to reading instruction whose objective is to develop reading comprehension and fluency in a free, friendly, and motivating environment (Tudor and Hafiz, 2005; Day and Bamford, 1998; Nation & Waring, 2020). It has been used to teach and encourage learning of foreign languages by students around the world. Many researchers have pointed out the importance of analyzing reading as a skill from various sources and perspectives (Nafa, 2022; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). This enriches the idea of considering reading as an interconnected ability that considers comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. The purpose of this research is to implement a case study about the perceived effectiveness on reading comprehension by beginner students of Chinese as a Foreign Language in a private school in central Mexico. This study examines the data from comprehension and fluency assessment in reading Chinese, as well as information about opinions and attitudes towards the use of the extensive reading approach. The results from this study show the relevance of applying extensive reading to enhance reading skills related to word recognition and vocabulary as well as contextualizing fluency and comprehension in reading.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

Introduction	
1.1 Rationale of the topic selection	2
1.2 Significance of the Study	2
1.3 Context of the research	3
1.4 Aim of the study	3
1.5 Objectives	4
1.6 Research questions	4
1.7 Conclusion	4

## CHAPTER II

Literature Review	5
2.1 Reading	5
2.1.1 Early Lenses	6
2.1.2 Behavioral Lenses	6
2.1.3 Constructivist Lenses	8
2.1.4 Developmental Lenses	9
2.1.5 Physiological Lenses	10
2.1.6 Affective Lenses	11
2.1.7 Social Learning Lenses	12
2.2 Extensive reading	14
2.3 Reading comprehension in a foreign language	16
2.3.1 Word recognition	17
2.3.2 Vocabulary knowledge	17
2.3.3 Morphology, Syntax, and Discourse Knowledge	17
2.3.4 Comprehension processing	18
2.3.5 Extended Exposure	18

2.3.6 Fluency	19
2.3.7 Motivation	19
2.4 Chinese as a foreign language	20
2.5 CFL in Mexico	24
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	26
Research methodology	26
3.2 Context	29
3.3 Participants	29
3.4 Research Instrument	30
3.4.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test	30
3.4.2 Interviews	31
3.5 Description of the Overall Research Design	32
3.6 Data Analysis	37
3.7 Conclusion	38
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	39
Results	39
4.1 Findings	39
4.1.1 Interviews	41
4.2 Answers to Research Questions	46
4.3 Discussion	47
4.4 Conclusion	47
<b>CHAPTER V</b>	49
Conclusion	49
5.1 Research contributions	49
5.2 Limitations of the Study	50
5.3 Suggestions for Further Research	50
5.4 Reflection	51
5.5 Conclusion	51
REFERENCES	53
Appendix A	61

Appendix B	65
Appendix C	68
Appendix D	68
Appendix E	69

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. Tones in spoken Chinese on a five-level scale.	20
Fig. 2. Basic strokes that form every character in modern Chinese.	21
Fig. 3 Examples of radicals ('water', 'hand', and 'walk') in sample characters.	22
Fig. 4. Pattern perception training figures for Chinese characters.	22
Fig. 5. Vocabulary list from the HSK (Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì, 汉语水平考试), Level 1.	24
Fig. 6. Students from Instituto Cultural Chino Huaxia, A. C.	25
Figure 7. The process of a Case Study research (Yin 2018).	27
Figure 8. Research areas in L2 reading research.	28

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants	29
Table 2. Reading material used in the pre-test stage to measure fluency and assess reading comprehension.	34
Table 3. Graded readers given to students during the extensive reading program.	35
Table 4. Reading material used in the pos-test stage to measure fluency and assessing reading comprehension after finishing the extensive reading program.	36
Table 5. Pre-test Reading fluency assessment for "My teacher is a Martian".	39
Table 6. Reading comprehension assessment for "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival".	39
Table 7. Post-test Reading fluency assessment for "My teacher is a Martian"	40
Table 8. Reading comprehension assessment for "Bao Zheng and the Case of the Ox's Tongue".	40

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to study the effectiveness of using extensive reading to enhance reading comprehension, specifically in terms of retrieval of information and inferencing, by language students who are practicing the reading skill in Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL). Chinese is a language that differs from western languages, for instance, in the use of lexical tones and logographic characters, which pose difficulties for the learner (Li and Yang, 2018). Those differences can make the study of CFL challenging, specifically when practicing reading skill. This research uses a qualitative approach and a descriptive methodology, and it is focused on students that are practicing reading in CFL as a basic user, which means A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Extensive reading is an approach that involves learners to independently read a large number of texts at the proper level for them (Nation and Waring, 2020). They read independently as their level of proficiency may differ from their classmates, and they read silently as the reading speed is relevant to read as much as the learner can. Other types of this technique include using graded readers, which are books that are written with rigorous vocabulary control and with concern of other aspects impacting comprehensibility, for instance grammatical difficulty, sentence complexity, use of illustrations, and simplicity of plot. They are designed to cover specific levels within the CEFRL (Nation and Waring, 2020). Graded readers are relevant in extensive reading because realia or authentic material might not always meet the needs of the learners and might impact negatively on the reader's motivation. Moreover, graded readers deal with other factors as context and cognitive levels of the text (Jacobs, 2012). Those factors are relevant when designing

reading practice exercises, vocabulary acquisition, or reading comprehension tasks. Many studies value the link between context and the practice of reading (Samah and Jusoff, 2008).

Extensive reading has been used to develop learners' abilities in reading, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition in foreign language classes. Although the majority of the Extensive Reading (ER) research and material have been conducted in EFL teaching, in general, their principles can be applied in teaching reading in FL classrooms to some extent (Day, 2015). One of those languages recently focusing on the use of ER is Mandarin Chinese, an ancient language dating back more than three thousand years, whose evolution, from logographic and ideographic roots, has resulted in a language with unique characteristics, which uses a character-based writing system with tonal pronunciation and variations geographical areas within the Chinese territory itself. Also, it is the first language in the world with the largest number of speakers. As of 2011 an estimated 40 million people have studied Chinese as a foreign language (Jiang and Cohen, 2012). Additionally, the growing expansion of Chinese interests in important areas (such as economics and trade) has made this language one of a growing demand in Mexico, for instance, one of the Confucius Institutes in Mexico reported that in 2019 they had 1200 students enrolled (UNAM, 2019).

In this chapter, the main topics of the research are introduced; the rationale of the topic selection provides reasons for having chosen the topic and the need for the research; the significance of the study intends to focus on the importance of this study and the possible impact in the field, as well as how the readers might be benefitted. Finally, the context of the research provides information about the participants and their background. Furthermore, the aim of the study introduces the objectives and the research questions from the research.

## **1.1 Rationale of the topic selection**

This study is developed to examine the effectiveness of an extensive reading approach by Mexican CFL students. It aims to comprehend how extensive reading can be used to improve learners' abilities in reading, specifically in reading comprehension. As one of the abilities that are needed to learn a foreign language, reading poses a challenge to learners, especially when studying one that is very different from their native language. For instance, reading in Chinese requires a word segmentation processing component not present in alphabetic languages (Shen, 2018). The problem remains in the necessity to understand CFL learners' when practicing Chinese reading and the need to suggest and provide techniques to enhance learners' ability to read in Chinese. There are many techniques and approaches designed to cope with the reading process in foreign language teaching, from lexicon to cognitive bases (Cao, 2018). Nevertheless, it remains the need to study each in particular contexts and demonstrate their usefulness or the lack of it. Accordingly, the focus of the research might offer benefits to the audience of the study and the ones involved in the field, which are enlisted in the significance of the study.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

Through the thorough examination of the extensive reading approach by CFL students and the analysis of the process that a learner experiences when tackling reading, this study clarifies how a specific approach as Extensive Reading helps the learner when practicing this skill. It is observed that, as Luo et al. (2013) suggest, it is most relevant to notice the specific characteristics of Chinese as a more visual language with the intention of comprehending the learner's needs. Moreover, unlike learning English or any other western language, the writing system precisely uses both brain hemispheres (Cao, 2010). Those features of Chinese involve unique and essential requirements to understand the reading practice. In this concern, this research will provide insights on the usefulness

of applying an approach as extensive reading to improve reading comprehension in CFL Mexican learners. Through the assessment made by this study, the institution where this research takes place might manage CFL programs that can effectively help students to progress in their reading skill learning. Moreover, this study can help to create programs that include techniques and materials to enhance CFL reading comprehension.

Additionally, students will be benefited from this research as it aims to provide an approach to improve their reading skills in CFL. As for future researchers, this study will contain evidence and information of CFL characteristics and an approach to develop reading skills. Therefore, the result of this research can be used for future discussions on CFL acquisition, skills and the development of instructional material.

### **1.3 Context of the research**

This research is conducted with students from CPI (Professional Centre for Languages), a private language school with fourteen years of activities in Puebla City (CPIa, n. d.). This school offers courses at different levels to learn English, German, French, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. Their objectives include leading the teaching of foreign languages through teaching techniques, teaching materials and effective teachers (CPIb n. d.). The research is aimed to be conducted in this specific context due to prior knowledge of the teaching strategies used in this school, the ease of the location, and the possibility of a close approach to the participants.

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

This study seeks to examine the insights of using the extensive reading approach with CFL Mexican students. Specifically, this research is concerned with the development of the reading skill, and their

effects on reading comprehension in order to analyze the effectiveness of this approach in both their understanding and their reading fluency rates.

### **1.5 Objectives**

These objectives are intended to fill the gaps identified by the research and to describe the expected achievements within the topic of study:

- Identify the characteristics of the reading skill in the CFL learning process by the Mexican student-participants in this study.
- Examine the results of applying Extensive Reading approach to enhance reading comprehension.

### **1.6 Research questions**

The present study will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of CFL learning, specifically regarding the development of the reading skill by Mexican students?
- Is the extensive reading approach effective to enhance the reading skill in Mexican CFL students? If so, in what sense?

### **1.7 Conclusion**

Researching the usefulness of the extensive reading approach as well as the unique characteristics of reading in Chinese might benefit the design of curriculum and creation of material to tackle difficulties that a CFL student faces when practicing this skill. Moreover, exploring the use of extensive reading can provide an understanding about the learner's skills needed at an early level, which can be of great importance as this is the beginning of the student's path to comprehend a truly different language.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

This section presents the theoretical framework and the review of the state of the art related to the research topic. The purpose is to provide a general idea towards a particular approach: the use of extensive reading, its background, the adjacent concepts and its constituent elements. In general, a review that covers the most relevant aspects of reading as a skill and its learning is proposed.

#### 2.1 Reading

Many definitions of reading can be found depending on different models and theories. Although it is commonly defined as a process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print (Urquhart & Weir, 1998), several definitions include social and cognitive frameworks. Moreover, reading involves different purposes and various processes. Grabe & Yamashita (2022) enlisted the processes associated with reading as follows.

Firstly, (1) reading is a rapid process as it is related to fluency and rate speed. We read 250 to 300 words per minute on average; (2) it is also an efficient process as it involves many processing skills that must work together: word recognition, meaning formation, syntactic parsing, inferencing, critical evaluation and linking to previous knowledge; (3) reading is also a comprehending process as involves understanding based on previous knowledge; (4) it is an interactive process because it implies the contribution of cognitive skills in a non-linear way; (5) it can be considered as an strategic process, due to the need of using strategies to reach comprehension; (6) it is a flexible purpose (7) and a purposeful process, as reading comprises an action with a further objective; (8) it is an evaluative (9) and a learning process that relies on procedures to assess knowledge acquisition. Finally, (10) as a linguistic process, it entails the understanding of language within a specific context.

The first two processes are related to what is considered as fluent reading, a way of reading that involves word recognition, meaning formation, and inferencing. It is worth to note that, while reading is a comprehending process, reading and comprehension are not the same: other skills such as listening and speaking involve comprehension. Reading is interactive because it involves the author and the reader. Moreover, it combines the many cognitive processes of a reader. It is strategic due to the use of skills to infer, anticipate meaning, organize and summarize information (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022). Tracey & Morrow (2017) point out the need to consider reading through many “lenses”. Each one of these perspectives referred back to models and theories from learning processes. They propose early, behavioral, constructivist, developmental, physiological, affective, social learning, and cognitive lenses.

### **2.1.1 Early Lenses**

Some educational theories that arose before the 20th century treated reading mostly from the Mental Discipline theory, Associationism, Unfoldment theory, and Structuralism. Mental discipline theory considered the mind similar to a muscle that was prone to be exercised and strengthened (Bigge and Shermis, 1992), while Associationism remarked on the connections between things as a way to learn (Sternberg, 1996). Unfoldment theory, developed by Johan Pestalozzi, states that it is necessary to raise the need of curiosity, providing a stimulating environment and the possibility to play (McKenna, 2010). Finally, Structuralism (the first major school in psychology) seeks to explain learning through the study of perceptual processes, for instance, letter and word recognition, legibility of print, and span of attention (Richards, 2009).

### **2.1.2 Behavioral Lenses**

Behaviorism states that behavior is the result of a person’s or organism’s response to stimuli, these stimuli can be manipulated to change an individual’s behavior. The most representative theories

inside behaviorism are Classical Conditioning Theory, shaped by Ivan Pavlov; Connectionism, presented by Edward Thorndike; and Operant Conditioning Theory, created by B. F. Skinner (Richards, 2009). This theoretical perspective affected the field of reading in several ways, for instance, the design of reading materials, the assessment of the reading process, reading instruction procedure, and how to understand reading (Hiebert and Raphael, 1996). Behaviorism separated the reading task in sub parts: vocabulary, comprehension, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, progression during reading (left-to-right). This interpretation originated the subskills approach where reading was broken down in multiple pieces and mastering these elements was the importance of reading instruction. For instance, each element in an exercise requires a response that must be followed by immediate feedback. Right answers received reinforcing feedback and wrong answers needed more attempts until the student's response was right. Learning to read became a process that needed the master of skills divided in sub skills (Hiebert and Raphael, 1996).

Furthermore, reading instruction was affected by behaviorism by influencing educators to focus on reading skills and giving information about them to students in an approach called 'direct instruction'. This procedure first required understanding of those skills by teachers and then they proceeded to teach them directly. Their principles were based on the teacher's unique responsibility for children's learning, the ability to identify what a student is struggling to learn, proposing ways to face individual differences, the focus on how carefully those skills are taught to secure effective learning of them, and finally, providing feedback on what they learn and their identified difficulties (Kame'enui et al., 1997). The behavioral approach is closely related to the use of extensive reading, as the latter aims to reach reading understanding far from an action-immediate feedback procedure. Extensive reading seeks to be a long-term reading strategy for enjoyment, fluency and interest without having any assessment or productive tasks (Hafiz and Tudor, 2005).

### 2.1.3 Constructivist Lenses

Tracey & Morrow (2017) add Constructivism theory among the viewpoints on reading and define it as a perspective on learning that highlights the active construction of knowledge by people. This theory states the conception that learning can happen without observable indicators, that learning often results from a kind of hypothesis testing, and that the procedure of generating inferences is essential to the learning process. Constructivism has also been employed in the study of reading as an explanation for the way in which readers construct or understand messages during the reading process. Six constructivist theories can be identified regarding the reading process: Inquiry Learning, Schema Theory, Transactional/Reader Response Theory, Psycholinguistic Theory, Whole Language Theory, and Metacognitive Theory. Dewey (1916) established *Inquiry Learning* by underscoring the significance of problem solving, social collaboration, and motivation, centered on interest and curiosity in learning. Secondly, Bartlett (1932) and Anderson and Pearson (1984) proposed *Schema Theory* by conceptualizing the manner in which knowledge is organized in the brain and examined the implications of that organization for learning and reading. Rosenblatt (1978) suggested *Transactional/Reader Response Theory* that expands the application of Schema Theory by claiming that all readers have unique responses to reading because of the unique nature of their background schemata. *Psycholinguistic Theory* stresses the role of language in the reading process, and *Whole Language Theory* uses that information as the foundation of a philosophy of literacy learning and instruction for students. Finally, *Metacognitive Theory* stresses the importance of specific types of mental engagement during the reading process to build accurate comprehension experiences. All of these theories assume that individuals are active in the construction of their own knowledge, moreover, these theories hold current importance for both classroom instruction and research. Therefore, a constructivist approach gets closer to the foundations of extensive reading, as learners are encouraged to actively build their knowledge. Paulson and Bruder (1976) stated that in extensive

reading, reading learners complete tasks on their own with no help or guidance due to the objective of learning reading by reading. This implies that in this research learners are considered active subjects in their learning process; it encourages students to practice outside class and is aimed to create an environment where reading is beyond homework.

#### **2.1.4 Developmental Lenses**

Developmental perspective is concerned with children's literacy development. Some of the theories that have been used to explain it are described as follows. The first one is Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). In this theory, Piaget proposed that the quality of children's thinking changes over time; Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development can be utilized to recognize the learning stages through which learners' progress as they mature and their connection to literacy achievement. Maturation Theory (Morphett & Washburne, 1931) supports the notion that literacy instruction should be postponed until children are 6½ years old, allegedly the age at which kids would be most successful at learning to read. Refuting that theory, Holdaway's (1979) Theory of Literacy Development proposes that literacy development begins much earlier, at home, and is established by meaningful learning experiences. Holdaway designed some activities, for instance, the use of big books and shared reading to assist educators reproduce the types of early literacy experiences found in the homes of talented readers. Stage Models of Reading explain the stages through which children grow in the development of their word identification skills. On the other hand, Emergent Literacy Theory defines a broader set of abilities (than the Stage Models) and clarifies how these skills improve from birth onward. Lastly, Family Literacy Theory centers on the distinctive role of the home and parents in children's development of literacy. The developmental approach supports the use of the material in extensive reading. The concern on the reading experiences is shown in the use of graded readers as it is acknowledged that learners can be grouped into different levels of proficiency. As Stage models propose, learners go through scaffolded levels

where different skills can be identified. Similarly, extensive reading states that a big amount of reading material is needed to ensure skills development, and those readings must be supported with the use of level-designed material. Otherwise, if unsimplified texts or realia is used, learners would need a vocabulary of at least 5,000 words or 9,000 if they want to cover it at 98% (Nation, 2006). These theories have dealt with the notion of a scaffolded or differentiated process when learning reading. Extensive reading acknowledges these concepts and provides a framework to use specific materials. Therefore, this study assumes the relevance of a scaffolded approach and, consequently, the research is structured following the use of level-designed readings.

### **2.1.5 Physiological Lenses**

Expanding their perspectives around the act and process of reading, Tracey & Morrow (2017) include the relationship concerning physiological needs and literacy achievement. For instance, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954) indicated a predominant model showing the connection between physiological needs and academic achievement. Chopra and Tanzi (2012) presented a model of the triune brain illustrating its physical evolution, and biologically confirmed the theoretical primacy of physiological requirements. Their work examined the specific physiological needs of nutrition, sleep, and exercise and the connections between adequate nutrition and healthy brain function were emphasized. Likewise, the Sleep-Dependent Memory Consolidation Theory shows that sufficient amounts of sleep are required for learning to happen. The Exercise Hypothesis describes the benefits of exercise for academic achievement, cognitive control, memory, brain structure, and brain function. These theories and the related research indicate that physiological demands have a substantial role in brain function and academic achievement, with repercussions for literacy. Even though the principles of extensive reading pointed out by Day and Bamford (1998) do not explicitly mention the body wellness as a requisite for the development of the reading skill, they remark that "Reading is individual and silent, at the

student's own pace, and outside class, done when and where the student chooses" (Day and Bamford, 1998, as cited by Nafa, 2022, p. 137). Clearly, having the opportunity to choose when and where to read allows the student to select a part of the day when they feel rested and far from the worries of the day and. Therefore, they are able to pay attention and focus on the reading activity.

### **2.1.6 Affective Lenses**

This perspective is concerned with the link between affect and literacy learning. Theories such as Attachment Theory and Engagement Theory state that emotions, feelings, and effects can have a result on the learning process. As Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs presented them, these can be over physiological needs but below achievement demands in academic contexts. The work of Chopra and Tanzi (2012) also provide support for placing emotions in an important part of learning: as in the Physiological Lenses, the evolution of the brain showed that the area that manages emotions, the limbic system, is related to both physiological needs and higher levels of cognitive functioning. Furthermore, Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) suggests that interpersonal attachment has repercussions for literacy learning. For instance, the relationship between teachers and students can be the catalyzer for literacy achievements. Engagement Theory emphasizes the ways in which the emotions of curiosity and engagement are associated with motivation and academic success: engaged readers are mentally active, and they use metacognitive tactics to build their comprehension of the conceptual content of texts (Guthrie, 2004). Lastly, Affective Neuroscience highlights the affective dimension intrinsic in literacy learning, which has been demonstrated by neuroscientific developments that show that knowledge and emotion are not separated. Instead, the brain networks supporting emotion, learning, and memory are profoundly interconnected (Immordino-Yang, 2015). The Affective approach judges relevant to consider the feelings involved in the process of learning, extensive reading is close to this idea by giving the learner a complete sense of freedom when choosing what and when to read. Other principles of extensive reading

include experimenting pleasure as one of its purposes, and the teacher is placed as a role model and an active member of the classroom. Therefore, extensive reading relies on an effective level of engagement with the reading process. In this study, the research stage considers the motivation and feelings of the participant by gathering their beliefs in a survey after having experienced an extensive reading approach to reading. By acknowledging the participant's perceptions and feelings in this study, it is stated that emotions and engagement play an important role in learning reading skills.

### **2.1.7 Social Learning Lenses**

Considering the process of reading, Tracey & Morrow (2017) also included social learning, which emphasizes the vital role of social interaction when developing knowledge and learning. They also underscore the importance of social influences and social interaction on literacy learning. Some of these theories include the social learning viewpoint of Sociolinguistics Theory (Bernstein, 1972) that stresses the significance of oral language in literacy learning and the crucial role of social interaction in all literacy achievement. Socio-Cultural Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) underlines the effects of communities and cultures on types of interaction and on students' learning. Additionally, Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) defines how knowledge is built within individuals as a consequence of social interaction. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986) focuses on the fundamental role of modeling in human learning. Critical Literacy Theory (Freire, 1970) analyzes how literacy and literacy instruction can mean vehicles of power to ameliorate social inequalities. Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998) is similar to Critical Literacy Theory but underscores the dimension of race, while Multiliteracies Theory contemplates multimodal aspects of literacy learning (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; New London Group, 1996). All these theories share the common vision that literacy learning is social in nature, however, each one highlights a different aspect of it. These theories emphasize the social nature of learning. An extensive reading program does not really consider

having social activities to learn or develop reading skills because it considers the act of reading as a silent, personal activity (Nation & Waring, 2020). However, it can be complemented with other classroom practices such as the use of literacy centers in the classroom, shared readings, paired reading, guided reading, literature circles, morning meetings, and e-mail pals (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Even though this research does not aim to study reading skills specifically in social interaction environments, it does acknowledge the importance of developing an extensive reading program in a context that involves student-student and teacher-student interactions. It is relevant to state that other variants of extensive reading include more interaction between participants and examiners; however, for the purposes of this study it is only noted as a potential complement for further investigation.

All the previous “lenses” on reading help to understand how an act as reading has been considered through time and different theories. These approaches go beyond receiving and interpreting a written message and bear in mind the reader context, not only from a cognitive level but in an affective and physiological way. Such approaches have been effectively used in research regarding measuring reading comprehension. Nafa (2022) has also differentiated models, theories, and purposes for reading as a general framework. They derived techniques and strategies. Richards et al. (1992, cited in Hong, 2013, p. 2) propose five types of strategies in reading. These techniques are common ground for teachers that are in charge of teaching reading. They are 1) Skimming, 2) Scanning, 3) Search reading, 4) careful reading, and 5) browsing reading. Each one of these techniques aim for a specific purpose, from getting general understanding to identifying specific information. Extensive reading has been designed as a strategy that combines the principles of a careful reading with the understanding of some approaches or “lenses” listed by Tracey and Morrow (2017). These theories and techniques provide a wider understanding of what it means to learn reading from an historic perspective to a skill-focused and contextual approach. This research

recognizes the importance of the theoretical background to the design and implementation of an extensive reading approach, without a clear knowledge of these theories it would be difficult to understand both its foundations and limits. For instance, the developmental theory states the need of applying a scaffolded approach, thus the extensive reading embraces it by providing the use of graded readers; the Attachment Theory and the Engagement Theory give a more comprehensive appreciation of the contextual insights happening around learning reading. Specifically, this study is based on the advantages that extensive reading can provide as an approach to learn reading in foreign languages. The theoretical framework also works for the purpose of this research as it focuses on how Spanish speaking students learn reading in Chinese, a procedure that implies areas such as cognitive, affective, behavioural, and developmental processes.

## **2.2 Extensive reading**

Extensive reading is a strategy that relies on the previous research of reading and goes far from a simple technique to be an approach that embraces the complexity of learning, for instance, through emotions, social practices, or physiological awareness. It can be traced back to 1917 and has been proposed both as a technique and an approach for a great number of researchers. Many of those studies have stated with some differences what is now known as extensive reading with different names. For instance, Krashen, 1985, and Vaughan, 1982, as cited by Ouahiani, 2015, p.13, proposed the “Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading”, and Hill & Holden (1995) coined the term “Free Voluntary Reading”.

Tudor and Hafiz (2005) describe extensive reading as an enduring strategy for amusement, fluency, and interest without having any assessment or productive task. Paulson and Bruder (1976) defined the objective of extensive reading as “to learn reading by reading”. Lately, extensive reading has been used as an approach in teaching second and foreign languages. It is considered to be a way

for understanding longer texts and developing independent readers (Reynolds and Perin, 2009). It also allows readers to read a variety of texts at their own pace, concentrating on the main ideas, and these features enable positive attitudes towards reading as they become autonomous learners (Long & Richards, 1971). Furthermore, Krashen (1993) declares that extensive reading reinforces language development, idea generation and developed knowledge. Day and Bamford (1998) provided ten guiding principles for carrying out extensive reading processes:

- 1- Students read as much as possible, perhaps in and definitely out of the classroom.
- 2- A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.
- 3- Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.
- 4- The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding. These purposes are determined by the nature of the material and the interest of the student.
- 5- Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises after reading.
- 6- Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Dictionaries are rarely used while reading because constant stopping to look up words makes fluent reading difficult.
- 7- Reading is individual and silent, at the student's own pace, and outside class, done when and where the student chooses.
- 8- Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower as students read books and other material they find easily understandable.

9- Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student reads, and guide students in getting the most out of the program.

10- The teacher is a role model of a reader for students – an active member of the classroom reading community, demonstrating what it means to be a reader and the rewards of being a reader.

These principles enable a wide range of effects on language proficiency. First, it improves reading fluency and reading comprehension. Second, it improves language knowledge as learners become familiar with words and grammar. This helps learners with further reading, allowing them to use that knowledge in the other skills of listening, writing, and speaking. Third, learners enjoy what they read and come to value the skill of reading. Fourth, they gain new knowledge about the world through reading (Nation & Waring, 2020). The present study acknowledges these principles, specifically: by providing a set of varied reading material in Chinese that can be easily accessed online (points 1 and 2) and with no constraints on what material to choose or organize them in a specific order (point 3).

### **2.3 Reading comprehension in a foreign language**

Reading comprehension is an intricate task, which involves the arrangement of several distinct cognitive skills and abilities. It is dependent on satisfactory word reading: readers cannot understand a text if they cannot decode the words in it. It also depends on good language understanding, which demands comprehension of the individual words and sentences. Nevertheless, comprehension requires the comprehender to combine the sense of those words and sentences into a significant whole and that is only achievable through the building of an appropriate mental model, which is a mental representation created from information in the real, or an imagined, world (Oakhill et al. 2015). Consequently, reading comprehension is closely related to

reading skills, which permit reading ability. Understanding these skills is pivotal to recognize the complexity of reading (Jiang & Grabe, 2019).

### **2.3.1 Word recognition**

It involves an interaction of activated orthographic, phonological, and semantic and syntactic processes. Training in phonological recognition and letter-sound associations predicts later reading improvement among children and beginning readers (Ehri 2006; Wagner, Piasta & Torgesen, 2006). The automatization of letter-sound interactions is the foundation of all alphabetic reading and also supports syllabic reading systems. Just as Chinese combines information from the phonetic radical contained by characters to facilitate word recognition and uses phonological evidence at the point of lexical access (Chow, McBride-Chang & Burgess 2005; He, Wang & Anderson, 2005).

### **2.3.2 Vocabulary knowledge**

Fluent readers have an extensive knowledge about recognizing vocabulary and that is related to their reading ability: an accepted figure is that high school graduates from the U.S. know 40,000 words on average (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). This mastering of vocabulary is also related to reading comprehension in a second or foreign language, where some studies by Laufer (1992) and Qian (2002) show a relationship between vocabulary and reading. It is desirable to understand a good range of words to become fluent in a foreign or second language, although some authors indicate different quantities of vocabulary, for example Nation (2001) estimates 8,000 word families for reasonably fluent comprehension and a need of 2,000 words to begin in a vocabulary instruction.

### **2.3.3 Morphology, Syntax, and Discourse Knowledge**

Following Jiang and Grabe (2019), morphological, syntactic and discourse understanding are closely related to reading comprehension. Morphological knowledge is related to having the awareness of

word parts which can have an impact on reading development and word recognition (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). On the other hand, understanding grammar and, therefore, syntax, help to comprehend reading as their understanding is associated with comprehension abilities (Shiotsu, 2010). Finally, discourse knowledge is also integrated into reading comprehension as discourse markers, organizational patterns and discourse structures can help to reach a better awareness of text structuring and, in doing so, also help less skilled readers (Chung, 2000). Jiang and Grabe (2019) remark the need of, firstly, having this instruction as consistent and continual; secondly, the texts used for reading must be used for other purposes to identify the importance of discourse patterns; and, lastly, students must be able to communicate to teachers and classmates the discourse organization they have identified.

#### **2.3.4 Comprehension processing**

When a reader builds a semantic network of ideas taken from a text a model of comprehension is created (Jiang & Grabe, 2019). It is also backed by background knowledge, inferencing, and attitudes to text information, creating a situation model of Comprehension (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). This model emerged from the network of ideas that helps to identify the essence of the text, then, the reader decides if it is necessary, relevant, appropriate, and useful; there is a work of interpretation to decide what means to the readers themselves, and that information is stored in long-term memory. Comprehension processing enables the ability to recognize main ideas through an interpretation procedure (Grabe 2009).

#### **2.3.5 Extended Exposure**

Studies on reading comprehension have shown an increased ability when students are given an extended exposure to print over long periods of time (Stanovich 2000, Guthrie et al. 2004).

Introducing extensive reading in foreign and second language instruction is not recent but fairly unexplored. Elley (2000) stated that a program where students read consistently over a long time helped them to develop reading comprehension and other reading skills, however, this was only achieved by the long duration of the study. Jiang and Grabe (2019) allude to the requirement of motivation to reach a successful extensive reading approach; the need of convincing students of the benefits of extensive reading and to be encouraged to read at every reasonable opportunity with level-appropriate reading material.

### **2.3.6 Fluency**

Some studies have shown a correlation between training on word recognition and recognizing other words faster than previous attempts, even though reading comprehension has limited benefits from this instruction (Martin-Chang & Levy, 2006). In second and foreign language teaching there is not a lot of evidence to support the relationship between oral reading and comprehension, however Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008) have shown a significantly better performance on reading comprehension by students in a reading fluency training program. Their research points out the need for fluency practice on a regular basis. This is also true for repeated reading practice (Rasinski, Blachowitz & Lems 2006; Rasinski 2010) where the student reads aloud short passages until a set rate of reading speed is achieved.

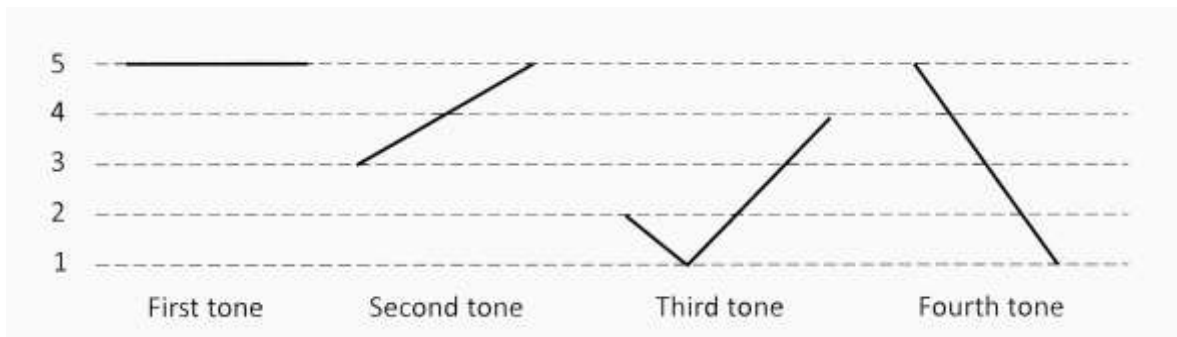
### **2.3.7 Motivation**

Even though research on motivation has limited studies focused on reading skills, some of them have shown that motivated readers are prone to read more and thus improving reading comprehension (Guthrie, Wigfield & Metsala 1999). Jiang and Grabe (2019) propose that teachers

might play an important role to encourage students to read. Moreover, emotional support from teachers and the curriculum can help readers to overcome reading development drawbacks.

## 2.4 Chinese as a foreign language

The Chinese language can be traced back to more than three thousand years ago. It is an old and rich language whose evolution has influenced all of Asia and nearby countries. Its origin and development are not entirely clear: explanations range from myths and legends to written evidence found in oracular bones and ancient turtle's shells. There is proof that Chinese writing was invented before or during the Neolithic period, following the Xia Dynasty (2100-1600 BC), generated by a need of the ruler's social classes to reassure their dominance (Rovira, 2010).



*Fig. 1. Tones in spoken Chinese on a five-level scale. Diagram designed by Li (2020).*

Chinese is a tonal language and is mostly formed by a syllabic and disyllabic structure. There are a lot of homophones in Chinese, thus, to convey different meanings, it uses different tones. Mandarin Chinese (the standard in mainland China) consists of five tones, four with different intonation (Fig. 1) and a fifth in a neutral sound (Li, 2020). The first tone is high and flat; the second tone is a rising tone, close to the intonation of a question; the third one is a falling raising tone; the fourth tone is a falling one, short and fast; finally, the neutral tone is expressed without any particular emphasis (Noble, 2018).

Chinese writing has some essential aspects: in the internal structure of the characters (the basic unit of Chinese writing) we can identify seven basic strokes and the variants that are produced from them. Each one of these strokes have a respective order and a specific direction (Fig. 2). The basic ones include horizontal (横/橫 héng), vertical (竖/豎 shù), down-left sweep (撇 piě), down-right sweep (捺 nà), bent (折 zhé), hook (钩/鉤 gōu), and dot (点/點 diǎn) (Li 2020).

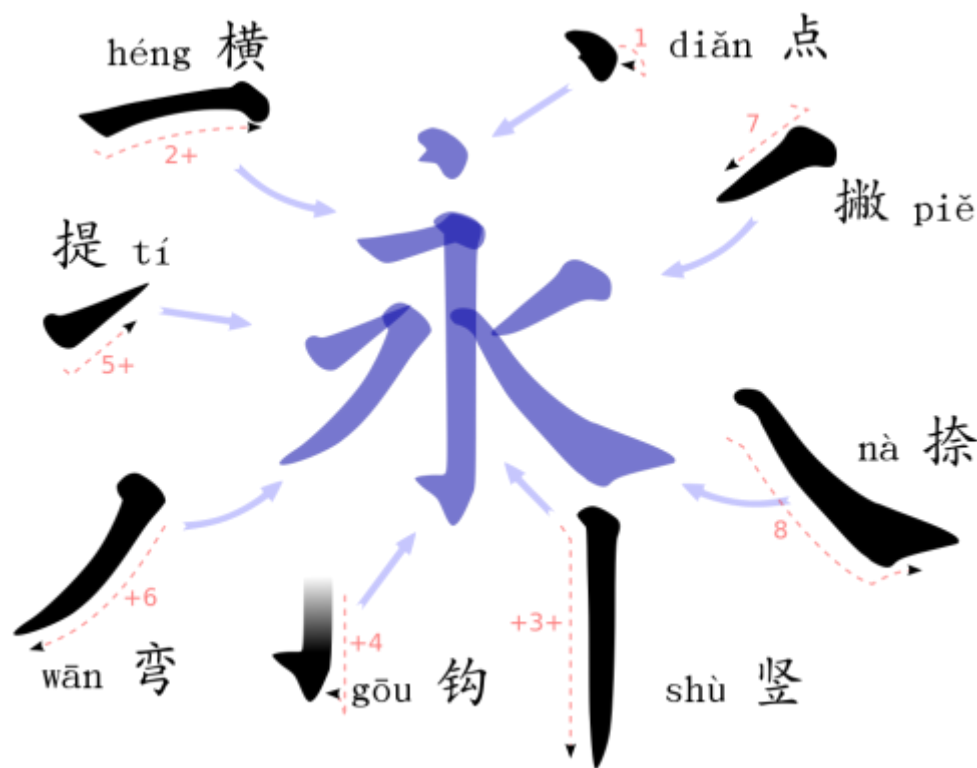


Fig. 2. Basic strokes that form every character in modern Chinese. They are depicted in the 永 (water) character. 8 strokes of 永.png, Public Domain. (Wikimedia commons, 2020).

Each character in the Chinese script can be recognized through the use of radicals. Radicals are a group of recognizable elements in each character, which give it either a meaning or a phonetic value (Chen et al, 2013). There are many radicals, but the most common barely exceed a hundred (Zhang, 2007). Each of the radicals has a meaning that rests on the pictographic and ideographic roots of

Chinese, and they have meanings or correspondences with elements or basic representations of nature or everyday life. This can be observed in the radicals ‘sun’, ‘moon’, ‘water’, ‘mouth’, ‘wood’, ‘fire’, ‘hand’, ‘person’, ‘woman’, ‘son’, etc. (Figure. 3).

Radicals	Sample characters		
氵 ‘water’	河 <i>hé</i> ‘river’	淹 <i>yān</i> ‘to submerge’	渴 <i>kè</i> ‘thirsty’
扌 ‘hand’	指 <i>zhǐ</i> ‘finger’	打 <i>dǎ</i> ‘to hit’	折 <i>zhé</i> ‘to fold’
辶 ‘walk’	边/邊 <i>biān</i> ‘edge’	达/達 <i>dá</i> ‘to arrive’	远/遠 <i>yuǎn</i> ‘far’

Fig. 3. Examples of radicals (‘water’, ‘hand’, and ‘walk’) in sample characters. (Li, 2020).

Moreover, radicals can be found in specific parts of the characters, for instance: at the left, top, and right. They can also be built with more than one radical, conveying meaning or phonetic information (Zhang, 2007). Orton & Scrimgeour (2019) have mentioned that an approach to just noticing, discriminating, and remembering structural patterns creates a way into literacy from a starting line (Fig. 4). This impacts recognition skills, as Chinese is different from an alphabet based language and reading characters requires dissimilar eye movements than those from linear strings of Roman alphabets.

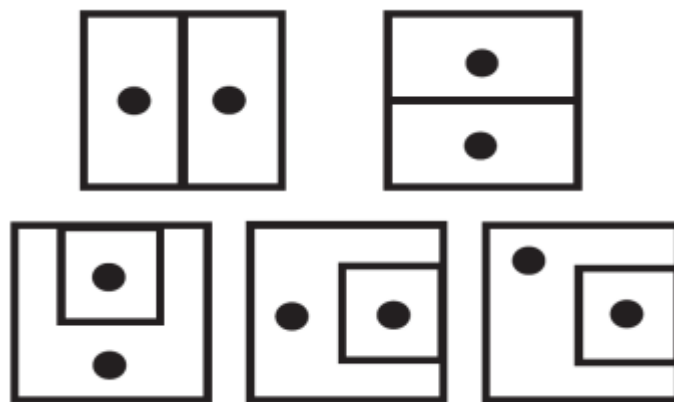


Fig. 4. Pattern perception training figures for Chinese characters. Radicals are constituent elements in these patterns. Exercise cards by Orton & Scrimgeour (2019).

Finally, another important feature of the Chinese language that is related to its instruction as a second or foreign language is the use of vocabulary lists or groups. The introduction of Chinese characters to a basic level student can be directed according to various criteria. One of them is based on the learning of the most common vocabulary, and is oriented towards teaching the basic components that create a sentence, among which are pronouns, some verbs, interrogative forms, adjectives and adverbs. Another criterion employed to categorize characters is based on the vocabulary lists designed by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the HANBAN, which regulates the certification exam to certify the knowledge of the Chinese language, the HSK (Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì, 汉语水平考试). According to these lists, the basic level consists of 150 characters and corresponds to level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Each subsequent level is made up of more characters, assuming that the student, as he advances in the knowledge of the Chinese language, must master all those characters. Vocabulary progression levels range from 150 to 6,000 characters.

词语 Word/Phrase	拼音 Pinyin	词性 Part of Speech	词义 Meaning	课号 Lesson
<b>A</b>				
爱	ài	v.	to like, to love	12
<b>B</b>				
八	bā	num.	eight	5 (notes)
爸爸	bàba	n.	father	9
杯子	bēizi	n.	cup, glass	8
本	běn	m.	a measure word for books	10
不客气	bú kèqì		you're welcome, don't mention it	2
不	bù	adv.	no, not	2
<b>C</b>				
菜	cài	n.	dish, cuisine	6
茶	chá	n.	tea	8
吃	chī	v.	to eat	8
出租车	chūzūchē	n.	taxi, cab	15
<b>D</b>				
打电话	dǎ diànhuà		to make a phone call	13
大	dà	adj.	(of age) old	5
的	de	part.	used after an attribute	4

Fig. 5. Vocabulary list from the HSK (Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì, 汉语水平考试), Level 1. Excerpt taken from Liping (2013).

## 2.5 CFL in Mexico

The Ministry of Education in China is in charge of regulating and providing support to the Confucius Centers around the world. In those centers, thousands of students are prepared and taught not only Chinese language but culture and certification test preparation. In Mexico, there are five institutes: two in Mexico City, one in the state of Chihuahua, one in the state of Nuevo Leon, and one in the state of Yucatan. This means that Mexico has the most institutes in Latinamerica and only behind Spain in Spanish speaking countries (Arsovska, 2012). The first institute was created in 2004 in Seoul, Korea, and only two years later an institute was created in Mexico, the first in the region. This project has grown to such an extent that there are Confucius institutes in 120 countries and 440 institutes have been installed so far by 2014 (Acosta 2014).



*Fig. 6. Students from Instituto Cultural Chino Huaxia, A. C. This was the first Confucius Institute established in Mexico (Zhou, 2012).*

Some of the problems that CFL in Mexico face are desertion, teaching methods, and curriculum design. It has been acknowledged that repeating the same patterns of instruction from China to foreign students does not necessarily work in Mexican schools. Traditional teaching where repetition, memorization, and a teacher-centered focus does not have an impact on Mexican students who are not immersed in Chinese culture (Acosta, n.d.). Several solutions have been drawn from first-hand experiences by teachers and researchers from those centers. Acosta (n.d) mentions the use of a Culture-based approach, better teacher training, and specific teaching material for Mexican students. This research aims to study the possible relevance of a solution focused on the development of reading skills in Chinese. By recognizing the need of creating and testing approaches to teach Chinese in a specific context, a study using extensive reading is proposed in the following chapters.

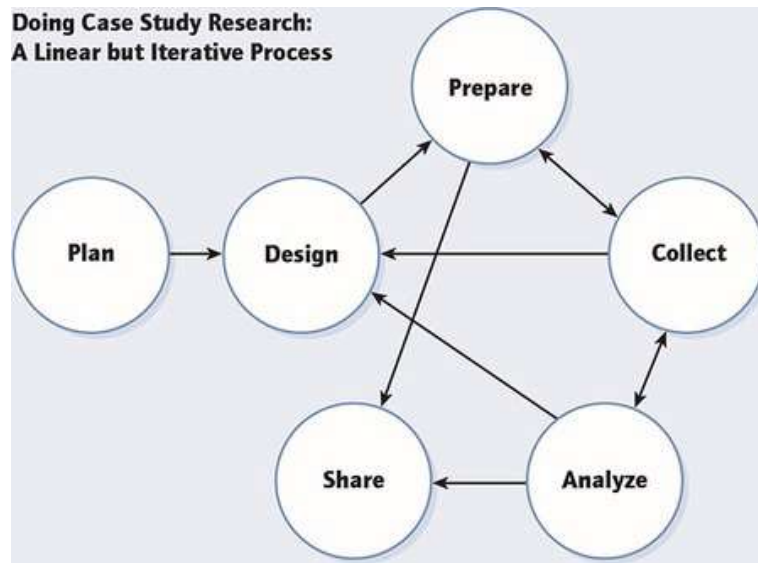
## CHAPTER III

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Methodology

For this study, a qualitative research approach is applied. Whereas quantitative research implies studying data that can be measured and that can be expressed in terms of quantity, qualitative deals with subjective evaluation of attitudes, opinions and behaviour (Kothari, 2004). In this study, a qualitative method case study was employed to gather data for a general interpretation and examine it in a specific context. This qualitative study design was carried out centered on its pertinence and effectiveness for this research. Specifically, a case study design should be contemplated when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” enquiries; (b) you cannot manipulate the conduct of those involved in the research; (c) it is aimed to cover contextual conditions because it is believed that they are relevant to the phenomenon under investigation; or (d) the limits are not clear between the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2018). According to Kothari (2004) a case study method is a form of qualitative analysis where careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done. Each and every aspect of the unit is researched in thorough detail to generalizations and inferences from case data.

In a comprehensive study, Yin (2018) sets a procedure methodology to develop and complete case study research. This starts with a planning of how to use this method, followed by the design of the research, the preparation of the data gathering, collecting the information (and returning to the design stage, as this is an iterative process), analyzing the data, sharing the results, and returning to the preparation stage (Fig. 7). This study tries to meet the iterations, as it is meant to have continuous feedback from the reading tasks assessment and the opinions of the participants.



*Figure 7. The process of a Case Study research (Yin 2018).*

Different terms have been used to categorize case studies. On one hand, Yin (2018) classifies case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. He also distinguishes between single, holistic case studies and multiple-case studies. On the other hand, Stake (1995) characterizes case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. For the purpose of this study, this research is identified as an explanatory (Yin 2018) and an instrumental case study type Stake (1995). An explanatory case study type seeks to explain causal links in real-life interventions too complex for experimental strategies, and these explanations might link program implementations with program effects. An instrumental case study type gives insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is studied in depth, scrutinized, and thoroughly detailed, pursuing an external interest (Stake 1995, cited by Baxter & Jack 2008).

Research area	Examples	Sample study
Lexical	e.g. vocabulary; grammar	1. A quantitative study on the relationship between percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. (Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe 2011).
Fluency	e.g. reading speed; lexical access; syntactic parsing	2. A review of research on fluency in reading (Grabe 2010).
Discoursal	e.g. text structure; rhetorical features; background knowledge	3. A quantitative study on effects of text structure on L2 text recall (Chu, Swaffar & Charney 2002).
Strategic	e.g. knowledge of and use of reading strategies	4. A verbal protocol study of using L1 in L2 reading (Upton & Lee-Thompson 2001).
Affective	e.g. motivation; attitudes	5. A survey study on the effects of extensive reading on FL reading attitudes (Yamashita 2013).
Intermodal	e.g. relationship between reading & writing, listening or speaking	6. A verbal protocol study on hypermedia reading strategies (Akyel & Ercetin 2009).
Sociocultural	e.g. home literacy environment; educational context	7. A case study on literacy practices of two Puerto Rican families in the US (Compton-Lilly 2007).

*Figure 8. Research areas in L2 reading research. Stevenson (2015) follows a categorization closely related to the one by Jiang & Grabe (2019) and the analysis proposed by Tracey & Morrow (2017).*

This research is aimed to explain the links between the implementation of an extensive reading program with CFL students to their reading comprehension and attitudes towards the extensive reading approach as well; it is also aimed to scrutinize the details about the participants. According to Stevenson (2015) research areas on reading are (1) Lexical, (2) Fluency, (3) Discoursal, (4) Strategic, (5) Affective, (6) Intermodal, and (7) Sociocultural (Fig. 8). In particular, this study is focused on fluency and affective areas, having fluency and comprehension analyzed in a pre and a post stage, whereas attitudes are explored through the use of an interview. It must be noted that this approach is supported by the assessment of reading as a skill and as a process described in Chapter 2.

### 3.2 Context

This research is conducted in Puebla City, which is located in the central area of Mexico. Puebla is one of the most populated cities in Mexico and one of the oldest. In this city there is a great offer of universities, which means they receive students from other states in the vicinity. Therefore, the academic and cultural offer in Puebla is diverse and plural. This research is conducted in a private school that offers Chinese among other languages. Their Chinese courses are subdivided into four general levels of instruction, both online and face-to-face, the classes consist of two to four weekly hours of instruction. It uses two books: HSK1 Standard Course and Hanyu Jiaocheng and each level has two sublevels.

### 3.3 Participants

This study is focused on three participants, one female and two male students whose ages range from 16 to 22 years old. All of them are students of CFL in a private language school in Puebla city and they are studying the beginner-elementary levels of CFL. Additionally, they are studying English at an intermediate level (B1 and B1+). Two of them are studying at college and one is in high school (See Table 1). Their reasons to study Chinese are related to a desire of applying for a scholarship to study abroad, getting a better job, for pleasure, and to know more about a foreign culture.

#	Gender	Instruction level	Age	Level	Time studying Chinese
Participant 1	Female	College	22	<i>Beginner-elementary</i> Learners can exchange basic units of information as introductions, greetings, or small talk. Students can express their likes and dislikes and comprehend basic sentence structures. Communication depends on repetition and rephrasing.	Nineteen months
Participant 2	Male	High School	17		Thirteen months
Participant 3	Male	College	18		Thirteen months

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

### **3.4 Research Instrument**

#### **3.4.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test**

The first stage of this research involves knowing the participants comprehension level and fluency by applying a pre-test. This test has two phases: the first is aimed to measure fluency whereas the objective of the second is to get a diagnostic level of the participant's reading comprehension. In order to examine the participant's fluency, a word-per-minute reading speed was conducted using a graded reader at a beginning level (three times and the average is obtained at the end to assign a score). As for the reading comprehension diagnostic, another graded reader was used to measure it (Table 2). The two stages are designed to provide a separate examination before and after the study with the participants.

Measuring reading comprehension can pose a challenge due to the wide scope that some researchers include in what is being assessed. Nation and Waring (2020) enlist some examples of research in reading comprehension that include fluency and general comprehension. The majority of the previous research uses tests and questionnaires to assess reading comprehension, although other ways to measure it include cloze tests and oral reading. For instance, De'Ath (2001) designed a 35-questions test aimed to test reading comprehension in an extensive reading program, which included multiple-choice sentence completion items. Unlike other investigations where no substantial difference was found between extensive and intensive reading programs (Al-Homoud and Schmitt, 2009), Bell (2001) found a significant improvement on reading comprehension by using three texts: one accompanied by modified cloze, one by true/false items, and another one using multiple-choice questions.

For the purposes of this study, both the pre-test applied at the initial stage of the research and the following post-test at the final stage were adapted by assigning a grade to fluency rates and

a score in the comprehension exercises. Specifically, the pre-test includes an evaluation of comprehension and fluency. Fluency assessment is based on the research by Hasbrouck & Tindal (2006) and is meant to identify the participant's level of fluency (Appendix D). The reading comprehension part is based on the research from Bell (2001) and includes three parts, each one with five items and a different structure (Appendix A-B). Additionally, this reading comprehension assessment integrates questions to elicit more personal responses designed by Nafa (2022). All of them are designed to cover organizational patterns as designed by the RAND heuristic model (Snow 2002): Spatial Order, Order of Importance, Cause and Effect, Time Order; and a Personal Response. The texts that are used in all stages come from the graded readers' collection by publishers Sinolingua and Mandarin Companion. So far, these steps can also be identified as the Preparing and Collecting stages of the case study research (See Fig. 7).

### **3.4.2 Interviews**

Burns (2010) enumerates three types of interviews: Structured interviews; Guided, or semi-structured interviews; and Open-ended, conversational-type interviews. Each one has different ways of controlling how the data is gathered. A structured interview has more control, as it uses pre-designed questions. However, for the purpose of this study a guided interview is conducted, due to the need of getting a common base of answers as well as giving the participants the opportunity to add more information that might not be considered in the questions.

According to Yin (2019) case study research uses interviews that require to operate on two levels at the same time: by satisfying the needs of the line of inquiry while at the same time putting forth friendly, nonthreatening, but also significant questions in the open-ended interviews. Particularly for this research, items for the interview were based and adapted from the research on attitudes and perceptions of students in existing extensive reading programs by Fernández (2009),

and Kim (2019). Those previous studies focus on identifying student's opinions on general beliefs, enjoyment, usefulness, reading skills, and vocabulary enrichment.


The final interview design consisted of ten questions. Even though eight of them are designed as closed questions, they are meant to be open-ended as they can be followed by an open question word (Why?/How?) in case the participant does not provide a full answer (See Appendix C). On average, the interview lasts 10 to 12 minutes long. As mentioned before, the enquiries are created to draw answers related to opinion, attitudes, beliefs, sense of usefulness, sense of improvement, and identification of benefits. If a question is not clearly understood, it can be paraphrased by the interviewer to explain the meaning of the enquiry to the participant.

### **3.5 Description of the Overall Research Design**

The instruments designed for the study were applied as follows. First, the pre-test (aimed to identify the reading abilities of the learners) involved the use of two books: "My teacher is a Martian" and "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival" (Table 2). These books are graded readers, level-designed reading material for students at basic levels that have mastered the use of 150 words as the HSK list for level 1 states. Nevertheless, there are more words in these reading materials that are not part of the list, which is completely normal in extensive reading material. Although there are many publishing houses that design graded readers for English instruction, only a few produce material to read in Chinese. The most popular are Sinolingua, Mandarin Companion, Chinese Breeze, Disney Learning, and Shi Ji Graded Chinese Readers. In this research, the selection of the readers were based on the availability, the legibility, and the diversity of material. Sinolingua was chosen for its legible design and a good range of exercises, translations within the book, and the explanation of the level. On the other hand, Disney Learning books were preferred over other books because of the number of words used in the first and second level, which is ideal for starters. Books from

Mandarin Companion are relevant due to the structure using pinyin (transliteration of Chinese pronunciation). However, there are not many books available from this publishing house. All of those books are written in English-Chinese, so far, there are no graded readers in Spanish aimed to develop Chinese reading skills. As the majority of the extensive reading material, English has been the most used language to design extensive reading material.

The participants were selected from a beginner level class, as it is the aim of this research to focus on reading development in Chinese at early stages. All of them have been studying Chinese for more than one year, and one of them has been studying it for almost two years. Their approach to reading has been limited, as the first instruction in Chinese is heavily related to vocabulary acquisition, grammar knowledge, and basic communication abilities. The collection of information has been designed to follow closely as possible the model proposed by Yin (2019) for case studies, where collection and analysis can return to an iteration to the design step or to the share stage (Fig. 7).

Pre-test stage	Reading material	Type of assessment
<p><b>Fluency</b></p> <p>Book: “My teacher is a Martian”. Edited by Mandarin Companion, it is a graded reader at the breakthrough level (150 characters).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words per minute counting</li> <li>• Participants read three times a different excerpt. The average of words correctly read is calculated and a score is given.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Comprehension</b></p> <p>Book: "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival". Edited by Sinolingua, it is a graded reader at the starter level (150 words).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modified cloze</li> <li>• True/false items</li> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> </ul>
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Table 2. Reading material used in the pre-test stage to measure fluency and assess reading comprehension.

Once the results were obtained, a brief introduction about extensive reading approach was given to the participants. They were informed about the procedure and the best practices to do while starting this program. An online folder was shared to all the participants, so they could access the reading material (Table 3). Ten books from Sinolingua and Disney Learning were uploaded to the folder, although more material could be accessed for the next level to whoever wanted to try reading them. The students were encouraged to deliver weekly reports to track their advance in reading. However, this was only optional, as extensive reading clearly states among other recommendations, that the activities must be voluntary, at home, and favoring a sense of pleasure.




Graded readers		
		



Table 3. Graded readers given to students during the extensive reading program.

The program lasted eight weeks, at the same time classes were held once a week for two hours each. After those two months of having this reading material, some students delivered reading reports and every class there were comments about their advance and the participants were encouraged to express their opinions about the texts. When the period of the program ended, the post-test stage was applied to the students (Table 4). Finally, as the last procedure, the interview was conducted online with the three participants. Two of them accepted to be recorded in video and the three of them authorized the transcription of their answers.



Post-test stage	Reading material	Type of assessment
<p><b>Fluency</b></p> <p>Book: "My teacher is a Martian". Edited by Mandarin Companion, it is a graded reader at the breakthrough level (150 characters).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words per minute counting</li> <li>• Participants read three times a different excerpt. The average of words correctly read is calculated and a score is given.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Comprehension</b></p> <p>Book: "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival". Edited by Sinolingua, it is a graded reader at the starter level (150 words).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modified cloze</li> <li>• True/false items</li> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> </ul>

Table 4. Reading material used in the pos-test stage to measure fluency and assessing reading comprehension after finishing the extensive reading program.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

In the first part of the research the diagnostic assessment of fluency was obtained by counting the right words that the participant could read in an excerpt of the graded reader. This procedure was repeated three times and then the average of correct words was obtained. Once the average was clear, a score was assigned to the participant. In the second part of the diagnostic, regarding comprehension, the results from the exercises were analyzed and described as a general and a separated count to differentiate the number of right answers in each type of exercise: modified cloze, multiple choice, and true or false. Even though the use of weekly reports was suggested at the beginning of the study, they are not considered in the overall analysis. Due to the optional nature of these reports, the majority of the participants decided not to complete them. Just one participant delivered reading reports in the first weeks of the study. Class discussions as well as opinions and impressions about the reading material were not included because of the impossibility to record them and for not being considered as a crucial part of the scope of this study.

At the end of the program, the post-test was carried out, following the same procedure as the pre-test: it was conducted online and the participant had the option to accept or reject to be recorded. The fluency assessment was also measured using a graded reader at a basic level, but with a different excerpt. The comprehension evaluation was obtained from a different graded reader, however, the exercises had the same structure: modified cloze, multiple choice, and true or false items. Finally, the interviews were conducted online, in Spanish, with the same possibility to be recorded or not. Nevertheless, transcripts were retrieved with the permission of the participants and an analysis on each question was carried out to find similarities. A frequency and a relevance study were applied to find the most used ideas and concepts in their responses.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Given the nature of the research, a qualitative research approach is the most suitable to the conditions of the study. Having a close view of case study research has also enriched the approach of the investigation. It is clear that researching a skill as reading must bear in mind more aspects during the research process. A case study, whether explanatory, exploratory or descriptive, should aim to enhance our comprehension of a phenomenon, process, person or group, not to “experiment and generalize to other populations in the tradition of larger-scale survey research” Pearson (2015).

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

#### 4.1 Findings

As a result of the phased application of this research, the diagnostic study consists of identifying the reading level, and then applying the use of extensive reading with a graded reading program. The results of this phase are the following. First, information was obtained from the participants according to the Hasbrouck & Tindal (2006) fluency measurement:

#	1st reading	2nd reading	3rd reading	Average	Grade
Participant 1	22	12	22	19	2
Participant 2	8	7	6	7	2
Participant 3	18	26	55	33	2

*Table 5. Pre-test Reading fluency assessment for "My teacher is a Martian".*

The participants obtained a grade 2, under percentile 50, which means they are below the average of correct words per minute on that grade (See Reading Grade-level Comparison Chart, Appendix D). Therefore, all of them needed to reinforce their reading abilities and improve their fluency rates. Having a low score below grade 2 means some problems such as: failing in word identification, having a wrong pronunciation, a slow response in delivering aloud reading, and comprehension mistakes.

#	Multiple choice	True or false	Modified cloze	Total 16
Participant 1	6/6	3/5	3/5	12
Participant 2	1/6	0/5	0/5	1

Participant 3	3/6	2/5	1/5	6	
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*Table 6. Reading comprehension assessment for "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival".*

The results shown in the diagnostic assessment lead to identifying strong and weak participants regarding reading skills. From a total of 16 points only one got 12 (which is the participant with more time of instruction). The rest of the participants achieved half of the points and one only got the correct answer. It is, after all, expected to see results as these in a first approach. These scores serve as a first identification of abilities and possible opportunities to enhance reading instruction.

**Post- test results:**

#	1st reading	2nd reading	3rd reading	Average	Grade
Participant 1	27	18	20	22	2
Participant 2	6	8	9	8	2
Participant 3	28	28	45	33	2

*Table 7. Post-test Reading fluency assessment for "My teacher is a Martian"*

The assessment of fluency after the conclusion of the extensive reading program showed no significant variance if compared to the first diagnosis. Only one participant shows a minor improvement, but on average remains at the same level as before.

#	Multiple choice	True or false	Modified cloze	Total 16
Participant 1	6/6	4/5	4/5	14
Participant 2	2/6	1/5	1/5	4
Participant 3	3/6	2/5	2/5	7

*Table 8. Reading comprehension assessment for "Bao Zheng and the Case of the Ox's Tongue".*

As for the comprehension post-assessment, no significant changes were identified in the participant's performance. This might be due to many reasons: the shortness of the program and the lack of previous exercises or continued practice in or out the classroom.

#### **4.1.1 Interviews**

In order to gather the participants' attitudes and perceptions about the program, the interviews were conducted after the conclusion of the instruction period. These are excerpts of the participants' responses, separated by questions. Whenever possible, responses were edited to make them more coherent: some repetitions were omitted and punctuation marks were added. Full transcripts of the interviews can be consulted in Appendix E.

##### **Question 1. What is your opinion about Extensive Reading?**

*"... I think it has very good content. (...) It doesn't give you the ideas directly, (...) you not only develop your comprehension skills like any another reading, but as apart from that it gives you a value that is to try to understand what is being understood, not to try to understand certain phrases or expressions."*

*"... I was able to assume the meaning of the words. Although I did feel that there was little variety in the case of Disney (books). In the case of the others that you sent us, there was a lot of vocabulary in those, but it was more difficult for me to be able to search for them. The truth is that I think it served me more to reaffirm the knowledge that I already had before than to meet new ones because as I was trying to understand the reading more than to remember the characters."*

In question one, the aim was to obtain a general opinion about the approach. While extensive reading was explained before, this question was intended to look at the participant's opinions after the program. The responses pointed out the significance of the content and the meaning, thus, focusing on the stories. Another opinion included the structure of the readings and a comparison between the two publishing houses. Moreover, the relevance was identified in the reaffirmation of previous knowledge and the availability of the material.

### **Question 2. Did you find it useful? Why?/How?**

*“To a certain extent it is useful because you already put into practice, more in practice your interpretation of the (grammar) structures, so also in the vocabulary part I feel that it is very good, analyzing because you are analysing, you are reading and analysing.”*

*“It was quite useful, especially for that, to reaffirm the, um, characters that I already had well. Because I already had an idea of them. And, in some cases, to see how it was combined with another.”*

Question number two aims to identify the perception of usefulness of extensive reading by the participants. Overall, the responses show a sense of importance given to the approach. Not only did they mention vocabulary acquisition as an advantage but also grammar structures and syntax.

### **Question 3. Did you enjoy reading graded readers? Why?/How?**

*“Yes, I like it very much. At first it is complicated, because it is there, they are characters. It's not Spanish, but when you start to understand the first part or the first paragraph, it kind of catches your attention, that one already understood it, the fact of having it already is like it already got your attention and then it goes like that It is giving a lot of curiosity about how it is going to end or what it is going to end in.”*

*“... but it gave me great satisfaction to be able to understand him because I didn't think I was capable, it kind of gave me confidence.”*

In this question, participants were asked to share their emotional perception around reading in Chinese with graded readers. In general, the sense of a rewarding experience, the feeling of progression made them enjoy reading. Engagement due to understanding, and satisfaction due to progression seems to be the key to be encouraged to continue reading.

### **Question 4. Did it help you improve your reading skills? Why?/How?**

*“It did help me a lot in trying to activate the interpretation of the characters. In other words, knowing them, (...) that they were synchronizing them in my reading more quickly... it helped me a lot in that part of practicing, that is, going back again because perhaps the intonation and repeating it again until it sounded nice and understandable .”*

*“Yes, I think, especially because of confidence. (...) like knowing that I am no longer blank and that if I stop a bit to analyze the characters, I can understand the reading.”*

*"...because from not reading anything, there was this opportunity to review these readings, I think that it does have the capacity to help people read more."*

Question 4 has the objective to understand whether the participants perceived a change in their reading skills or not. Fluency was mentioned as an important feature of continued reading practice. Again, a sense of confidence helped to motivate one participant to keep reading.

**Question 5. Did it help you learn vocabulary? Why?/How?**

*"A lot, too much, because there were words that are used in different contexts, in different situations, (...) In other words, it seemed like something interesting. (...) I feel that having sentences or rather the words of the vocabulary in real sentences, like yes, yes, it helps you more, aha, this interpreting, memorizing them faster."*

*"...new characters were recognized, I managed to recognize them. But very elaborate characters or that had very advanced meanings, I don't know. (...) But there were other characters that were combined with others that I already knew, and those implied another idea. And in those cases, well yes, I did learn more vocabulary, but rather when it came to joining the characters"*

*"Yes, I think so, because there were good words that we had already seen in other topics, but apart from those words, there were new words that, for example, I did not know."*

Question 5 is aimed to focus on one feature: vocabulary. The participants mentioned the importance of context and the use of a specific word within that context. Interpretation and memorization were regarded as important when reading. Character recognition was also mentioned by using characters that are joined to create a new idea or meaning.

**Question 6. Did it help you develop a habit for autonomous reading? Why?/How? In what way?**

*"Yes, (...) I feel that this was my motivation to read, or rather to risk reading a bigger book, that is, another text with more vocabulary."*

*"To be honest no. Since I didn't feel they were obligatory, I didn't give them as much importance either, which made me relax a lot (...). But in my case I have never been much of a reader. So, as in itself, doing readings is very difficult for me. Then don't get into a habit."*

*"I don't know, I think not really because I didn't make a habit of it. Sometimes, well, it did make me curious to review the readings, but I think that as such a habit, well, I don't think so."*

Question 6 is about perceptions related to the beginning of a possible reading habit. Answers were different, for one participant it was clear that a habit was formed as a routine, mostly because of motivation. However, the other participants stated that it did not change to become a habit. One reason might be the lack of a habit of reading in their native language.

**Question 7. What other benefits do you think reading graded readers give to you? Why?/How?**

*"It helps you, it has its added value that it gives to your life. They give you a contribution to your life, secondly, in a matter of Mandarin Chinese, it would be the vocabulary. I feel that even though they are stories, not so, shall we say, real, they are fictitious, however, their vocabulary I feel is rooted in your daily life. So there are words that I feel that you would usually use, so in vocabulary it will help you a lot, it will also help you a lot with this."*

*"I think that they are useful above all to remember or see well how all the characters that we had been occupying are occupied. Because seeing them just spread out like that can't give you an idea of how they deal with each other, but I think having all the basic characters together can give you a better idea of how they deal with each one of them."*

*"... I think that certain aspects of Chinese culture can also be taken care of, there can be stories that talk about their myths or their legends, I think it is good that they include vocabulary."*

Question number seven is designed to acknowledge any other perceived benefits the participants might have identified during the program. A perception of a relevance beyond classroom or instruction is noted. Also, the importance of noticing the use of vocabulary already taught in classes. Cultural topics were regarded as important, too.

**Question 8. If reading graded readers became optional, do you think you would read books?**

**Why?**

*"... it is not like you usually have a book and read it completely, but they are quite digestible texts, that is, they are not so heavy. And that is like it also captures a lot of people's attention that it is not a long, long text, but that it has interesting content."*

*"Perhaps not at first, if the teacher came and told me, take this reading, you can read them whenever you feel like it. I think that at first I wouldn't dare to touch them, because I would see them as very out of my level."*

*"I don't know, because if they were optional maybe I wouldn't have the same need to read them. I think that if they are like, for example, homework or some activities that have to do with the class, maybe yes, but in reality I think it would be difficult to continue reading if it is optional."*

Question eight refers back to one principle of extensive reading: readings must be optional and the student chooses when and how much to read. In this question, responses were different, while a participant declared to be interested because this material is easy to read and it provides contextual information, other participants stated that it is not likely to continue with this activity on a regular basis, in part due to a possible change of level.

**Question 9. Do you think reading graded readers is related to Chinese learning? Why?/How?**

*"...it is also being implemented in topics that I feel are of interest, they are creative and, above all, the structure, the design, what I had mentioned before, the design is very good, the images help you a lot to define what the context is."*

*"I think that for any other language, especially because it happens to me a lot with English too, this, that when I try to read a book with words, well, not complicated, but rather at an average level, many times I have to have the translator to the side to search, I did not understand this word, I have to go to the translator and that takes up a lot of time."*

*"... yes because since they are divided by levels, then when learning a new language it may be better to read a book that is at your level."*

Question 9 is aimed to identify on what extent the participants relate the use of graded readers to learning Chinese (in opposition to other languages). Content, structure, and design are mentioned as positive features of these books. Another participant suggested that they can be suitable to learn other languages, and the fact that these are level-designed material helps to avoid consulting a dictionary with so much more frequency.

**Question 10. What assessment type do you think is most adequate for graded readers? Why?/How?**

*"For you to develop your speaking skills, knowing how to express a point of view could be an open-*

*ended question, to see your vocabulary could be an optional question. (...) and what I saw a lot in this book, where he handled a sentence and said, complete it because, obviously, it was part of a dialogue, of a reading.”*

*“And the speed exercise, I think that I did feel like a real test because like wanting to say all the words I can, it made me realize how much I remembered the words and their pronunciation and also, how much, this one could remember its meaning, so I think that test was the one I felt was most effective.”*

*“...I had to go back to the text to revise and that made me sometimes have to go to the dictionary. I think the exercise that was to measure the words was a bit difficult (...) but I think that at least when reading and when doing the exercises it is very important to know if you are making progress or not.”*

Finally, question 10 asks about participants' opinion about the assessment of the reading activity. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, the items used to diagnose reading comprehension were multiple choice, modified cloze, and true/false exercises. One participant mentioned that modified cloze exercises were harder because comprehension was crucial to answer them. Sometimes, it was necessary to return to the right page and re read to get the main idea. Additionally, another student mentioned the fluency diagnosis as a “real test”, which required comprehension as well as correct pronunciation.

## **4.2 Answers to Research Questions**

The first research question inquired about the characteristics of CFL learning, specifically regarding the development of the reading skill by Mexican students. In regard of this, some specific features arose in the collected information:

- a) Character recognition
- b) Syllable identification (expressed in syntax and pronunciation)
- c) Vocabulary in an appropriate level (use of standardized lists of words)

In the first part, character recognition played an important role in the first steps of reading. As Chinese writing is completely different from the Spanish alphabet, students need to learn the

meaning of each word within their level. Previous knowledge was necessary: the use of radicals and their identification as an element of a single character. Furthermore, it was crucial to have all the material designed according to the HSK 1 vocabulary list, that way it could easily complement the content in the reading with grammar, syntax, use of synonyms, etc.

The second question wondered if the extensive reading approach was effective to enhance the reading skill in Mexican CFL students, and in what sense. Even though the results on the fluency rates did not show significant variance in their performance, it does not necessarily mean that extensive reading was inefficient. The participant's perception about the use of graded readers acknowledged the ease and approachable way to learn reading by using specific-graded material. Topics around reading were present in the interviews, for instance, the feeling of fulfilment and a sense of achievement might be pivotal to understand learners' motives to read.

### **4.3 Discussion**

It is undeniable that much more information and further research is needed to achieve a global and more concise picture of using extensive reading when learning a foreign language. Nevertheless, the use of extensive reading was well accepted and proved to be a friendly way to introduce and build the learning of the reading skill in CFL. Vocabulary acquisition, character recognition, radical identification, and basic grammar structures can be of use in an extensive reading program, running in a parallel way.

### **4.4 Conclusion**

The use of extensive reading is a good way to approach learners who have not experienced reading in CFL. The friendly characteristics of this approach makes them a feasible way to introduce reading habits and ways to practice reading. However, it seems relevant to have an appropriate instruction

that complements that program with more vocabulary, grammar, and word-recognition exercises.

It is of most importance to acknowledge the fact that a level-designed material can assist in the understanding of the reading topics even though some drawbacks might be present.

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Research contributions

The objective of this research was to identify the results of the application of an extensive reading program. One of the greatest discoveries consisted in recognizing the ability of the program to bring participants closer to the practice of reading skills, in a foreign language learning environment that is radically different from the native language. In a general sense, the opinions of the participants consist of a good general impression about the use of extensive reading.

Previous investigations about the effectiveness of extensive reading are multiple. However, the present study sought to take a different approach by considering the use of extensive reading in a Mandarin Chinese learning program. It should be noted that there is not much research in this regard, which provides significant importance to this study. On the other hand, this research provides an opportunity to begin studying the effectiveness of this approach, always considering a solid and diverse theoretical perspective of reading, learning and practice.

Again, this study provides a possible line of application of material that uses extensive reading with Chinese students whose mother tongue is Spanish. Since a gradual and contextualized exposure of the reader is recommended, possible future efforts to teach and practice this skill can use extensive reading. It also helps to identify the necessary steps to use this approach in a learning program.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

Among the limitations of this research is the scope of the study since it is not possible to generalize about the effectiveness of a specific material. Graded reading materials were used to measure fluency and comprehension at an early and later stage, in addition to those read by participants during the program, so individual assessment is not possible. In other words, the effectiveness of an individual book is not possible to measure. Furthermore, this study cannot quantitatively confirm progress in participants' reading fluency measures. Although a fluency diagnosis was made, the variations cannot indicate a significant advance during the short period of application of the extensive reading program. Similar studies that report significant progress are conducted over longer periods of instruction and practice. Finally, this study cannot affirm that extensive reading should be the only practice in the development of reading skills. During the course of the research, it became clear that other reading practices can complement the strengthening of reading-related skills.

## **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

Subsequent studies can be designed with larger groups, for a longer observation time. In addition, an intensive reading technique can complement the acquisition of reading skills. In the future, such research may use adaptations of the reading material in a digital format that also includes fluency measurement and reading comprehension questions. Adaptations of the material can be enriched by the design of its own reading material. It can also be interesting to see if there is a difference if Spanish is used as the language of instruction in the grade readers.

## **5.4 Reflection**

During this research it became clear that a study about reading must have clear objectives, due to the big amount of approaches that can be drawn from multiple perspectives. Having the opportunity to apply this approach to CFL students helped me to realise how important motivation, attitudes, and a feel of achievement are. In my opinion, doing these kinds of studies help to understand our professional activities and they also provide ways to enhance student's skills. Personally, I consider reading as an underestimated skill. Reading levels at school are really low in Latinamerica, and Mexico is one of the countries with the worst rates of reading practices. I believe in the importance of reading, and I am eager to continue finding ways to make reading a more valuable skill for students. Moreover, Chinese is a language which I found extremely interesting. Its characteristics make its writing or speaking something far opposite to our own language. I know that learning Chinese is a challenge and whoever starts this endeavour will need continuous support. Extensive reading may help to ease this process.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This research has explored the idea that an approach to reading must be aware of contextual information. This case study points out to the need of looking at students' skills in reading as an opportunity to give a significant, engaging, and fulfilling way to develop their knowledge of a foreign language. The literature presented in Chapter 1 insists on considering reading as a more complex phenomenon, than just interpreting written signs. Studying and examining it in context provided a better understanding of students' attitudes regarding reading. Despite having no substantial changes on fluency or comprehension due to the duration of the extensive reading program, some resourceful insights were obtained. This exploration might continue to seek better practices in CFL

instruction. Hopefully, a more varied way to design classes in CFL will be as important as in other languages.

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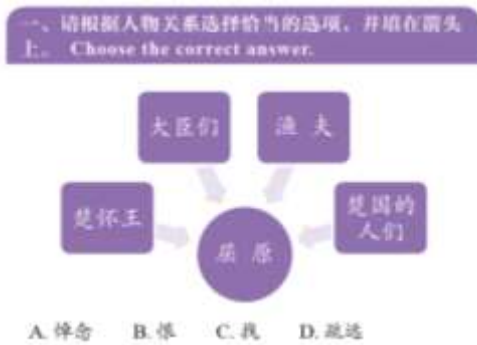
## Appendix A: Pre-test

Text: "The Legend of the Dragon Boat Festival"

<p><b>中文故事</b></p> <p>① 农历 (lìnrì) = lunar calendar e.g. 阴历是一个阴历的月份。 ② 农历 (lìnrì) = the lunar calendar e.g. 阴历是中国的节日。 ③ 传统 (chuántǒng) = tradition e.g. 这是我们的传统。 ④ 节日 (jiérì) = festival e.g. 阴历是中国的节日。 ⑤ 粽子 (zongzi) = Zongzi; zongzi wrapped dumpling made of glutinous rice with different fillings and wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves. e.g. 粽子很好吃。 ⑥ 赛龙舟 (sàilóngchóu) = dragon boat race e.g. 端午节人们赛龙舟。 ⑦ 纪念 (jìniàn) = commemorate e.g. 这个节日是为了纪念古代的一位英雄。 ⑧ 诗人 (shīren) = poet e.g. 李白是中国古代的一位诗人。</p> <p><b>端午节的传说</b><sup>①</sup></p> <p>每年农历<sup>②</sup>的五月五日是中国传统<sup>③</sup>的节日<sup>④</sup>——端午节。在这一天，人们会吃粽子<sup>⑤</sup>，赛龙舟<sup>⑥</sup>，来纪念<sup>⑦</sup>爱国诗人<sup>⑧</sup>屈原。</p> 	<p>屈原是春秋时期楚国的大臣<sup>①</sup>。他很能干，楚国的国君<sup>②</sup>楚怀王很信任<sup>③</sup>他，很多事都叫他去办。</p> <p>① 大臣 (dàchén) = minister e.g. 国王叫他来办。 ② 国君 (guójūn) = king e.g. 这个国家由国君来治理。 ③ 信任 (xìnrèn) = trust e.g. 你信任我吗?</p> 
 <p>一些大臣看到了，很生气。很多人就对楚怀王说屈原的坏话，楚怀王听得多了，慢慢地不信任屈原了。</p>	<p>一次，一个大臣对楚怀王说：“国君叫屈原管理<sup>①</sup>的事多了，人们只知道有屈原，都不知道有国君了。”</p> <p>① 管理 (guǎnlǐ) = manage e.g. 他管工厂。 管理他很多工人。</p> 

Items:

**MULTIPLE CHOICE**



2. 端午节是哪个国家的传统节日？（）

- A. 中国 B. 美国
- C. 英国 D. 日本

3. 下列关于屈原的说法错误的是（）。

- A. 他是楚国人 B. 他很能干
- C. 他恨楚怀王 D. 他很爱国<sup>30</sup>

4. 屈原被流放了几次？（）

- A. 一次 B. 两次
- C. 三次 D. 没有被流放

5. 屈原跳进汨罗江前，见到了谁？（）

- A. 楚怀王 B. 秦王
- C. 子兰 D. 渔夫

6. 下列说法不正确是（）。

- A. 端午节是为了纪念屈原
- B. 屈原是诗人
- C. 屈原跳进了汨罗江
- D. 2015年5月5日是端午节

**TRUE OR FALSE**

1. 端午节这天，人们喜欢吃粽子赛龙舟。（）

2. 屈原是楚国的国君。（）

3. 屈原写诗是为了表达对国家的爱。（）

4. 屈原被流放是因为他很糊涂。（）

5. 屈原死了以后，楚国的人们很难过。（）

## MODIFIED CLOZE

1. 屈原很 \_\_\_\_\_ ， 写了诗来表达自己的对国家的爱。
2. 楚怀王的儿子子兰说：“ \_\_\_\_\_ 不去秦国，秦王一定会生气，那时候我们的国家 \_\_\_\_\_ 完了。”
3. 秦国很快就要打到楚国了， \_\_\_\_\_ 楚国的新国君和大臣们都不着急。
4. 人们听说屈原先生跳进了汨罗江，都跑到江边来，帮着渔夫 \_\_\_\_\_ 。
5. 有人不想让鱼虾把屈原的尸体吃了，就把 \_\_\_\_\_ 丢进水里给 \_\_\_\_\_ 吃。

1 What specific person, place, thing or event is described?

2 What are the important details?

3 Did anything in the text remind you of anything in your own life?

4 If you could talk to the author, what would you ask about or comment on?

5 What parts of the plot were the most significant to you and why?

## Appendix B: Post-test

**中文故事**

**包拯巧断牛舌案**

① 巧 (qiǎo) adj. shrewdly, cleverly  
e.g. 他用巧的方法成功地解决了这道数学题。

② 牛舌 (niú yǔ) n. ox tongue  
e.g. 牛舌是一种点心，叫“牛舌饼”。

③ 断案 (duàn àn) v. settle a lawsuit  
e.g. 包拯断案如神。

④ 宋朝 (Sòngcháo) Song Dynasty (960-1279)  
e.g. 宋朝有很多优秀的文学家。

⑤ 善 (shàn) v. official  
e.g. 他善断疑难了。

⑥ 公正 (gōngzhèng) adj. fair, just  
e.g. 这位法官是个公正无私的人。

包拯是宋朝的大官，他是一个很公正的人，人们都很喜欢他。



包拯做官的时候，有一天一大早，衙门<sup>①</sup>口就来了一个报案<sup>②</sup>的人。

① 衙门 (yámen) n. yamen (generally used office in feudal China)  
e.g. 衙门是古代官署办公的地方。

② 报案 (bào àn) v. report a crime  
e.g. 他的钱袋偷了，快拿去报案。





这个人哭着说，他叫李二，家里的耕牛<sup>①</sup>不知道被谁割<sup>②</sup>掉了舌头<sup>③</sup>。耕牛没有了舌头，很快就要死了。

① 耕牛 (gēng niú) n. farm cattle, ox  
e.g. 耕家有一头耕牛。

② 割 (gē) v. cut  
e.g. 他的手被小刀割了个口子。

③ 割 (gē) v. cut after transitive verb to indicate removal  
e.g. 他的舌头被割了。

④ 舌头 (shé tou) n. tongue  
e.g. 天热时，小狗一直吐着舌头。

包拯问他家里还少了什么。李二说，只是耕牛被割了舌头，家里没有少什么。



Items:

**MULTIPLE CHOICE**

1. 李二来报案是因为 ( )。

- A. 有人杀了他家的耕牛
- B. 有人割掉了他家耕牛的舌头
- C. 有人打了他的孩子
- D. 他家少了很多牛肉

2. 包拯叫李二杀牛、卖牛肉是为了 ( )。

- A. 找到牛舌头 B. 换回一些钱
- C. 让牛不再痛苦 D. 找到不喜欢李二的人

3. 王四割掉李二家耕牛的舌头，是为了 ( )。

- A. 杀死李二家的耕牛 B. 想买李二家的牛肉
- C. 想看李二犯法被抓 D. 想打李二的孩子

4. 以下说法不正确的一项是 ( )。

- A. 李二打了王四的孩子
- B. 张三不知道是谁割了耕牛的舌头
- C. 割掉耕牛舌头的人是王四
- D. 包拯早就知道牛舌是被王四割掉的

5. 以下关于包拯的说法不正确的是 ( )。

- A. 他很公正
- B. 他断了很多难断的案
- C. 他叫李二做犯法的事
- D. 人们很喜欢他

**TRUE OR FALSE**

1. 人们很喜欢包拯，因为他是大官。 ( )

2. 坏人来李二家只是割了牛舌头，什么也没有拿走。 ( )

3. 李二不想犯法，没有杀耕牛、卖牛肉。 ( )

4. 张三知道王四割了耕牛的舌头，就来报案。 ( )

5. 老百姓都叫包拯“包青天”。 ( )

## MODIFIED CLOZE

1. 这个人哭着说，他叫李二，家里的耕牛\_\_\_\_\_。
2. 衙门里的人也觉得\_\_\_\_\_，不知道包拯想要干什么。
3. 一个叫张三的人进来报案，说有人私自杀了耕牛，\_\_\_\_\_。
4. 包拯笑了笑说：“来人，把张三给我\_\_\_\_\_！”
5. 张三说：“错了，错了！我不是那个杀耕牛、卖牛肉的人，\_\_\_\_\_！”

1 What specific person, place, thing or event is described?

2 What are the important details?

3 Did anything in the text remind you of anything in your own life?

4 If you could talk to the author, what would you ask about or comment on?

5 What parts of the plot were the most significant to you and why?

## Appendix C

### Interview

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your opinion about Extensive Reading?
2. Did you find it useful? Why?/How?
3. Did you enjoy reading graded readers? Why?/How?
4. Did it help you improve your reading skills? Why?/How?
5. Did it help you learn vocabulary? Why?/How?
6. Did it help you develop a habit for autonomous reading? Why?/How? In what way?
7. What other benefits do you think reading graded readers give to you? Why?/How?
8. If reading graded readers became optional, do you think you would read books? Why?
9. Do you think reading graded readers is related to Chinese learning? Why?/How?
10. What assessment type do you think is most adequate for graded readers? Why?/How?

## Appendix D

### Oral Reading Fluency Data (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006)

Reading Grade-Level Comparison Chart										
Grade Level	Oral reading Fluency				Lexile Level			DRA Level		
	Percentile	WCPM Beginning	WCPM Med.	WCPM End	Below Grade Level	Grade Level	Above Grade Level	Beginning	Med.	End
Kinder.								A & 1	2 & 3	4
1st	90		81	111	99 & below	100-299	300 & above	6,8	10,12,14	16
	75		47	82						
	50		23	53						
	25		12	28						
	10		6	15						
2nd	90	106	125	142	299 & below	300-499	500 & above	18	20,24	28
	75	79	100	117						
	50	51	72	89						
	25	25	42	61						
	10	11	18	31						
3rd	90	128	146	162	499 & below	500-599	600 & above	28-30	34	38
	75	99	120	137						
	50	71	92	107						
	25	44	62	78						
	10	21	36	48						
4th	90	145	166	180	599 & below	600-699	700 & above		40-44	
	75	119	139	152						
	50	94	112	123						
	25	68	87	98						
	10	45	61	72						
5th	90	166	182	194	699 & below	700-799	800 & above		50	
	75	139	156	168						
	50	110	127	139						
	25	85	99	109						
	10	61	74	83						
6th	90	177	195	204	799 & below	800-849	850 & above		60	
	75	153	167	177						
	50	127	140	150						
	25	98	111	122						
	10	68	82	93						
7th	90	180	195	202	849 & below	850-899	900 & above		70	
	75	156	165	177						
	50	128	136	150						
	25	102	109	123						
	10	79	88	98						
8th	90	185	199	199	899 & below	900-99	1000 & above		80	
	75	161	177	177						
	50	133	151	151						
	25	106	124	124						
	10	77	97	97						

## Appendix E

### Transcripts

#### Question 1. What is your opinion about Extensive Reading?

##### **Participant 1.**

*Bueno, pues a mi punto de vista creo que tiene muy buen contenido. Primero que nada el contenido es muy bueno, no te da las ideas directamente, pero si te lo hace de una manera, digamos en sentido figurado, es lo que me gustan de las lecturas, que no solamente vas desarrollando tu habilidad de comprensión como cualquier otra lectura, sino como que aparte de eso te da un valor que es el de tratar de comprender lo que se da a entender, no sea tratar de que comprender ciertas frases o expresiones o ciertas historias que lo hacen como de manera ficticia, pero que quieren dar un mensaje real, o sea, es como, como decirlo, tratar de interpretar dos idiomas diferentes la primera está el idioma chino, que es el que vas a traducir al español y de paso estás traduciendo la filosofía de ese texto, o sea, es decir que me agrada eso, que tengan como que esa no sé cómo se le dice, como si como esa filosofía de transmitirlo, no de manera directa y clara, sino tratar de usar ejemplos ficticios, historias ficticias, como lo eran los del, cómo se llama, del ave, digo, del rey, de que es importante valorar el tiempo con tu familia y siempre tener un espacio porque pues a veces por no enfocarte en cuestiones profesionales como del trabajo, te olvidas de lo verdaderamente importante que es la familia, entonces ahí daba ejemplo la historia del rey, que por ser así los olvido en parte a su hija, entonces su hija desapareció ¿no?, o sea, y es lo que puede pasar realmente que en un momento que tú llegas a desconcentrarte de tu familia pueden pasar muchas cosas. Entonces siento que eso me gusta mucho. De esos textos, aparte del vocabulario que te maneja, no solamente te lo dan, sino también te va dando el significado, la escritura. Y sobre todo, como que son palabras que a lo mejor convencionalmente sí las usas, de hecho. La mayoría de las que yo encontré en las lecturas son de las que usas, o sea, te complementa más tu vocabulario y no es tan complicado de entender, o sea, el mismo contexto te ayuda a entender esas palabras.*

##### **Participant 2.**

*Pues me pareció muy curioso, sobre todo porque muchas de las palabras en el caso de los cuentos sí las entendía, pero más bien por como los dibujitos como que lo relacionaba mucho a cómo se veían y a la imagen. Entonces pude asumir el significado de las palabras. Aunque sí sentí que había poca variedad en el caso de los de Disney. En el caso de los otros que nos envió, en esos sí había mucho vocabulario, pero se me dificultaba más el poderlos buscar. La verdad creo que más bien me sirvió como para reafirmar los conocimientos que ya tenía previamente antes que para este de conocer nuevos porque como estaba para intentar entender más la lectura que a recordar los caracteres. Entonces a mí me pasó mucho eso de no aprendérmelos sino a intentar entender la lectura y darle seguimiento.*

##### **Participant 3.**

*Bueno creo que es una buena forma de introducir a alguien hacia la lectura, creo que hay material que puede ayudar para que los que estamos aprendiendo un idioma podamos entrar a la lectura porque a veces no hay suficiente material, creo que es una buena manera de practicar la lectura a veces no es tan importante porque bueno en mi caso no tengo el hábito de leer así que puede resultar un poco difícil al principio.*

## Question 2. Did you find it useful? Why?/How?

### **Participant 1.**

*En todos los sentidos. Sí, en vocabulario sí. O sea, definitivamente sí me gustó mucho también. No te manejan estructuras muy complicadas. Yo creo que si lo que tienes que manejar son las estructuras básicas, lo comprendes entonces. Hasta cierto punto es útil porque ya pones en práctica, más en práctica tu interpretación sobre las estructuras, entonces también en la parte de vocabulario siento que es muy bueno, el analizar porque vas analizando, vas leyendo y analizando no solamente el comprenderlo en la traducción al español, sino también vas tratando como de usar tu lógica como lo que pasaba en las preguntas de la chica, que algunas eran de racional, de ajá, de lógica. O sea, tienes que razonar la situación del escenario y es lo que hacía este libro, entonces te maneja mucho eso. Se trata como que de romper ese paradigma que muchos tenemos desde solamente a interpretar cosas básicas como un hola, buenos días, ¿cómo estás? Sino que ya va más allá. Entonces en vocabulario sí y en gramática también.*

### **Participant 2.**

*Sí, creo que sí. Fue bastante útil, sobre todo para eso, para reafirmar los, este, caracteres que ya tenía bien. Porque ya tenía una idea de ellos. Y, en algunos casos, para ver cómo se combinaba con otro.*

### **Participant 3.**

*Creo que sí porque pude revisar unas palabras, algunas ideas que estaban en las lecturas. Creo que es de utilidad porque bueno tienes ahí las palabras del vocabulario y creo que te ayuda a avanzar en el idioma.*

## Question 3. Did you enjoy reading graded readers? Why?/How?

### **Participant 1.**

*Sí, me gusta mucho. Al principio sí es complicado, porque está ahí, son caracteres. No es español, pero cuando empiezas a entender la primera parte o el primer párrafo como que eso te llama mucho la atención, ese ya lo entendió, el hecho de tenerlo ya es como que ya captó tu atención y luego lo va así como que te va dando mucha curiosidad de cómo vaya a terminar o en qué va a terminar. En las vacaciones hubo algunos que me termine en un día, porque dije, está interesante la historia, o sea me gusta mucho esa historia, entonces sí. Es entretenido.*

### **Participant 2.**

*No me llamo, como que no sentí ninguna chispa por querer conocer más. Pero si me causaba mucha satisfacción el poder entenderle porque pues no me creía capaz, como que me dio confianza. Y al mismo tiempo este como que me subía la moral el saber que ya podía leer, aunque sea un poco.*

### **Participant 3.**

*Sí, creo que fue algo diferente porque pues no había tenido la oportunidad de realizar otras lecturas de otro tipo de material así que me gustó que tuvieran temas más relacionados como de la cultura así que creo que estuvo bien y al menos me hubiese gustado leer o revisar otro material.*

#### Question 4. Did it help you improve your reading skills? Why?/How?

**Participant 1.**

*Yo siento que sí por lo mismo del vocabulario, que algunos son, digamos que diferentes. Sí me ayudó mucho en tratar de activar la interpretación de los caracteres. O sea conocerlos, como decirlo, que los fueran sincronizando en mi lectura más rápida, o sea, más apegado como si fuera el español, la fluidez del español, lo mismo en el chino mandarín. Entonces siento que me ayudó mucho en esa parte de practicar, o sea, de regresarme otra vez porque tal vez la entonación y volverlo a repetir hasta que sonara bonito y comprensible. Y ahí pues siento que si me ayudó mucho en eso, más que nada la agilidad.*

**Participant 2.**

*Sí, creo que, sobre todo por la confianza. Este, como el saber que ya no estoy en blanco y que si me detengo un poco a analizar los caracteres, puedo entender la lectura. Este, creo que sobre todo a eso, me ayudó bastante.*

**Participant 3.**

*Creo que sí, en ciertos aspectos, porque pues de pasar a no leer nada pues había esta oportunidad de revisar estas lecturas creo que pues sí tiene como que la capacidad de ayudar a que se lea más, no sé si realmente mejoró mi lectura pero al menos tuve este acercamiento.*

#### Question 5. Did it help you learn vocabulary? Why?/How?

**Participant 1.**

*Mucho, demasiado, porque había palabras que se manejan en diferentes contextos, en diferentes situaciones, por ejemplo, había alguna la que recordara, de caerse. No solamente esa pero había muchas maneras bien diferentes, como una especie de sinónimos que daban el mismo significado, la misma connotación de caerse pero que era diferente. O sea, nos dio como algo interesante. Y me gusta. Entonces, si te da como que ejemplos como que un cómo decirlo, un análisis comparativo y siento que el tener oraciones o más bien las palabras del vocabulario en oraciones reales, como que eso sí, sí te ayuda más, ajá este interpretar, memorizarlas más rápido.*

**Participant 2.**

*Pero, como le comentaba, sí se reconocían nuevos caracteres, sí los llegue a reconocer. Pero caracteres muy elaborados o que tuvieran significados como muy avanzados, no sé, como los de esos que en los libros morados había palabras como Dragon. Algo así como maquetas de dragón, algo así. Y esos, pues no, no me los aprendí. Pero había otros caracteres que se combinaban con otros que ya conocía, y esos daban a entender otra idea. Y en esos casos, este, pues sí como que sí aprendí más vocabulario, pero más bien a la hora de unir los caracteres.*

**Participant 3.**

*Sí, creo que sí, porque había palabras que bueno que ya habíamos visto en otros temas pero aparte de esas palabras sí había nuevas palabras que por ejemplo yo no conocía, al menos no había visto a pesar de que ya habíamos revisado una lista de vocabulario pero en general creo que sí o más palabras y de hecho hubo algunas que no entendí por completo pero pues me ayudó para al menos revisarlas.*

**Question 6. Did it help you develop a habit for autonomous reading? Why?/How? In what way?**

**Participant 1.**

*Sí, sí, porque al principio me sentía como que con los tests, estos grandes, pero ahora ya es como más fácil, o sea, siento que ese fue mi motivación a leer, o más bien de arriesgarme a leer un libro más grande, o sea, un texto más con más vocabulario. Yo siento que este me me daría más como que eso, o sea, me ha dado más bien ese interés de querer aproximarme a algo más que a estos pequeños, pero de mucha utilidad, de mucha motivación.*

**Participant 2.**

*La verdad, no. Como no los sentía obligatorios tampoco les daba, este, como tanta importancia, este, lo cual pues me relajaba mucho y hacía que muchas veces se me pasara el tiempo. Pero en mi caso nunca he sido muy lector. Entonces como que de por sí el hacer lecturas se me dificulta mucho. Entonces no llegue a formar un hábito. Más bien era de vez en cuando por curiosidad. No, no creo que haya sido hábito.*

**Participant 3.**

*No lo sé, creo que no realmente porque no se me hizo un hábito. A veces pues sí me dio curiosidad de revisar las lecturas pero creo que como tal un hábito pues no creo, pero puede ser que se convierta en hábito si es que uno toma la costumbre de leer y de revisar nuevo material*

**Question 7. What other benefits do you think reading graded readers give to you? Why?/How?**

**Participant 1.**

*Te ayuda, tiene su valor agregado que te da a tu vida. Te dan una aportación a tu vida, en segunda, en cuestión del chino mandarín, sería el vocabulario. Siento que a pesar de que son historias, no tan digamos, reales, son ficticias, sin embargo, su vocabulario siento que está arraigado a tu vida cotidiana. Entonces hay palabras que siento que usualmente las usarías, entonces en vocabulario te ayudará mucho, también te ayudará mucho a esto. Y trata de centrarte, o sea, sincronizar tu mente al momento de la lectura tal vez en los caracteres, sí en los caracteres o sea buscar más tarde y de conocer más si hay más casos de los que pueden existir, te abre más el panorama, la cosmovisión de que existen más caracteres. Entonces la variedad de los caracteres que presentan eso, o sea, te ayudarán mucho también a interpretar caracteres y parte del vocabulario e inclusive de la escritura, porque al verlo dices, pues voy a tratar de analizar sus radicales y todo y ya, o sea, ya es un, digamos, un carácter extra a tu vocabulario. Y la gramática también.*

**Participant 2.**

*Yo creo que sí son útiles sobre todo para recordar o ver bien cómo se ocupan todos los caracteres que habíamos estado ocupando. Porque el verlos simplemente dispersos como que no puede darte una idea de cómo se ocupan, pero creo que el que estén todos los caracteres básicos unidos te puede dar una idea mejor de cómo se ocupan cada uno de ellos.*

**Participant 3.**

*Bueno, creo que uno puede acercarse a las lecturas creo que también se puede hacer cargo de*

*ciertos aspectos de la cultura china, puede haber historias que hablan acerca de de sus mitos o de sus leyendas me parece que está bien que incluyen vocabulario a un nivel porque con eso ya uno sabe que se dirige a ciertas personas.*

**Question 8. If reading graded readers became optional, do you think you would read books? Why?**

**Participant 1.**

*Sí, porque son digamos como en primer lugar, son textos que no van, o sea, no es como comúnmente que tenga un libro y leerlo completo, sino son textos bastante digeribles, o sea, no son tan pesados. Y eso es como que también capta mucho la atención de las personas, el que no sea un texto largo, largo, pero que tenga un contenido interesante, y siento que es eso lo que maneja, es un contenido interesante pero a la vez tampoco es como básico y tiene de todo un poco. Entonces siento que sería muy bueno, que es implementar algo así en todos los idiomas porque que te den un ejemplo es como que ay, no, y aparte de eso, la estructura o sea de que se manejan con las imágenes, entonces también desarrollar esa habilidad del de ser más contextual, entonces siento que es eso.*

**Participant 2.**

*Tal vez al principio no, si llegara el profesor y me dijera, toma esta lectura, las puedes leer cuando creas. Creo que el principio no me atrevería a tocarlas, porque las vería como muy fuera de mi nivel. Este, tal vez, una vez que vea que pues las lecturas, pues se comprenden bastante bien. Tal vez en ese momento, ya me pueda plantear el objetivo de entenderlas todas a la perfección y pues este, Ajá y como tomarlas de motivación. Y en ese caso, sí las leería, pero yo creo que al principio no, no las leería, sobre todo por lo impactante que puede ser ver todas las letras juntas ahí.*

**Participant 3.**

*No lo sé, porque si fueran opcionales tal vez no tendría la misma necesidad de leerlos. Creo que si son como, por ejemplo, tareas o algunas actividades que tengan que ver con la clase tal vez sí pero en realidad creo que sería difícil seguir leyendo si es que es opcional.*

**Question 9. Do you think reading graded readers is related to Chinese learning? Why?/How?**

**Participant 1.**

*Sí, sí, por las primeras historias que maneja, creo que la mayoría estamos todos con ese contenido. Entonces también lo está implementando en tópicos que siento que son de interés, son creativos y, sobre todo, la estructura, el diseño, lo que había comentado antes el diseño es muy bueno, las imágenes te ayudan demasiado a definir cuál es el contexto. Y puedes traducir las oraciones o por lo menos saber de lo que se está hablando. Entonces siento que si la verdad, si su estructura está muy bien hecha, su diseño es muy bueno.*

*ue para cualquier otro idioma, sobre todo porque me pasa mucho también con el inglés, este, que*

*cuando intento leer un libro con palabras, pues, no complicadas, sino más bien a un nivel como promedio muchas veces tengo que tener el traductor al lado para ir buscando, a esta palabra no le entendí, tengo que ir al traductor y eso me quita mucho tiempo. Entonces, este como que el estar buscando tantas veces en el traductor se me quitan las ganas de querer seguir leyendo. Entonces, yo creo que este tipo de lecturas graduadas puede estar bastante bien para cualquier otro idioma porque son pocas las palabras que tienes que buscar.*

**Participant 3.**

*Pues parece que sí porque como están divididos por niveles entonces al aprender un nuevo idioma puede ser que sea mejor leer un libro que está a tu nivel creo que pueden ayudarnos porque pues no tienen tantas palabras que uno no conoce.*

**Question 10. What assessment type do you think is most adequate for graded readers? Why?/How?**

**Participant 1.**

*Para que tú puedas desarrollar tu habilidad de expresión oral, saber cómo expresar un punto de vista podría hacer una pregunta abierta, para ver tu vocabulario podría ser, no sé, una pregunta opcional. Y no sé, o complementar, un ejercicio de complementación y lo que vi mucho en este libro, donde te manejaba una oración y decía, completala porque, pues obviamente era parte de un diálogo, de una de lectura. Entonces era como de “Ah rayos, no puso atención”, me regreso otra vez a buscarla y ese simple digamos ese detalle, esa actividad de regresarte, entonces ya está automáticamente tu cerebro diciendo, es que eso es importante y me están pidiendo, entonces lo tengo que tomar importancia. Y siento que eso te ayuda mucho al vocabulario, a memorizarlo.*

**Participant 2.**

*Este, yo hice la que usted nos aplicó de velocidad y otras actividades que había en los de Disney que fueron relacionar imágenes con las palabras. Este, la de relacionar imágenes con las palabras sí las sentí útiles, sobre todo para palabras, este, que juntas formaban nuevas o que eran palabras nuevas. Pero muchas veces se repetían entonces como que nada más era un ejercicio. Y el ejercicio de velocidad, yo creo que ese sí lo sentí como una verdadera prueba porque como el querer decir todas las palabras, este, que pueda, me hacía darme cuenta de qué tanto recordaba las palabras y su pronunciación y además, qué tanto, este podía recordar su significado, entonces yo creo que esa prueba fue la que sentí más efectiva.*

**Participant 3.**

*No sé si sea por ejemplo con los ejercicios de opción múltiple, completar las oraciones creo que es todavía un poco complicado tener como que una evaluación por qué mi caso si fue más difícil al contestar los ejercicios porque pues más bien la lectura no sirvió y al ir a la parte de los ejercicios pues fue un poco más necesitaba otro tipo de información entonces tenía que volver al texto para revisar y eso pues me hacía tener que recurrir algunas veces al diccionario creo que el ejercicio que fue para medir las palabras pues un poco difícil porque como no había repasado todos los caracteres del nivel entonces pues sí como que es un poco complicado pero creo que al menos al leer y al hacer los ejercicios es muy importante para saber si se está avanzando o no.*