

*Graphic Novel: a tool to promote reading comprehension in EFL*

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## **Dedication and Acknowledgments**

Thanks to my mom, my dad, my husband, and my sons Simón and Paul.

To my advisor Ronald Rojas for always being so supportive and patient.

## **Table of Contents**

Resumen

Abstract

### **CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT**

1.1 Study Population

1.2 Curriculum framework

1.3 Research problem

1.4 Objectives

Research Question

General Objective

Specific objectives

### **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT**

2.1 Background on innovation

2.2 Reading comprehension

2.3 Reading comprehension processes

Syntactic Level

Semantic level

Pragmatic level

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

3.1 Educational research with a qualitative approach

3.2 Case study

3.3 Validation mechanisms

Observations and field notes

Perception survey

Artifacts

3.4 Schedule of actions

3.5 Ethical considerations

## **CHAPTER 4: PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL**

4.1 Graphic Novel

4.2 Whole Language Approach

4.3 General artifact characterization of the Resource/Strategy

Didactic Unit

4.4 Artifact of the proposal

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Validation of the proposal

5.2 Balance of lessons learned

5.3 General recommendations

## **6. REFERENCES**

## **7. APPENDIXES**

## **List of Tables**

### **Table 1**

Synthesis of the stages of the Transactional Zone by Smagorinsky (2005)

### **Table 2**

Learning objectives of the syntactic component

### **Table 3**

Learning Objectives of the Semantic Component

### **Table 4**

Learning Objectives for the Pragmatic Component

### **Table 5**

Schedule of actions.

### **Table 6**

Timetable of activities of the Didactic Unit by stages and lesson plans.

## **List of Appendixes**

### **Appendix 1**

Consent form

### **Appendix 2**

Observation and Intervention Field Diary Format.

### **Appendix 3**

Observation Field Diary #2.

### **Appendix 4**

Observation Field Diary #4.

### **Appendix 5**

Diagnostic Test.

### **Appendix 6**

Pre-implementation Perception Survey Format.

### **Appendix 7**

Post-implementation Perception Survey Format.

## **Abstract**

This report represents an educational experience that attempts to improve reading comprehension in EFL classroom through the reading of graphic novels with 802 students at Colegio Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. For this purpose, a qualitative research process was carried out, which consists of three stages: in the first stage, the problem was identified, and some data collection instruments were applied to get to know the population, their contexts, and interests in depth. The second stage involved the design and implementation of the pedagogical proposal as a didactic unit. Finally, the data collected were analyzed and the data triangulation processes were applied. In this way, it was found that the implementation was valuable for the improvement of reading comprehension in EFL through the graphic novel.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, graphic novel, whole language approach.



## **Resumen**

Este informe representa una experiencia de implementación pedagógica orientada a la mejora de la comprensión lectora en lengua inglesa a través de la lectura de novela gráfica con estudiantes de 802° en Colegio Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Para ello, se llevó a cabo un proceso de investigación cualitativa, el cual consta de tres etapas: en la primera se identificó el problema y se aplicaron algunos instrumentos de recopilación de datos para conocer a fondo la población, sus contextos e intereses. La segunda etapa comprendió el diseño y la implementación de la propuesta pedagógica en modo de unidad didáctica. Finalmente, se analizaron los datos recogidos y se aplicaron los procesos de triangulación con lo cual se determinó que la implementación fue valiosa para la mejora de la comprensión lectora en EFL a través de la novela gráfica.

**Palabras Claves:** comprensión lectora, novela gráfica, enfoque de lenguaje integral.

## **CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT**

This chapter describes the study population from the context of the Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Branch A, in Bogotá, Colombia. After that, we introduce the dimensions of human development that characterize the target population and how these dimensions influence the learning process of the students. Subsequently, some curricular references of educational policy are described, which justify the implementation of this proposal in English as a foreign language classroom. This chapter concludes with the statement of the research problem, general and specific objectives.

### **1.1 Study Population**

Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, branch A, is a coeducational public school located in the Rionegro neighborhood in Bogotá, Colombia. The school belongs to the Secretariat of Education of Bogotá. Most of the population in the institution is characterized by a lower-middle socioeconomic stratum. Also, most of the students live near the school and for those who do not, there is free school transportation provided by the District Mayor's Office.

The Institutional Educational Project of the school adheres to a constructivist pedagogical model which is oriented to form citizens through pedagogical processes that allow the valuation of individual differences and the recognition of diversity as an enriching element of life in society (Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (IED), 2018). Some of the teachers of the institution mention that the teaching work is based on an articulating and collaborative role; in that, new knowledge is taught, also, the context of the students is considered so that they can relate the contents of the activities to their own lives.

The English classes at the school are directly related to the District Bilingualism Plan. With this plan, the Secretary of Education and the Ministry of Education promote activities that encourage the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, and, provide technological materials and books in each classroom. In addition, the Colombia Bilingual program of the MEN in alliance with the British Council and Richmond provides this institution for grades 6, 7 and 8 with a series of English texts called *Way to go!*; which, as stated by the Ministry of Education (2017), "is a series consistent with current trends in English teaching in the global and local context that is aligned with the Common European Framework for Languages, the Suggested Secondary English Curriculum and the Basic Learning Rights" (p. 56).

Now, this study was applied during the first and second semester of 2023. The specific population was the eighth grade (802) belonging to the fourth cycle (eighth and ninth). The group is made up of 40 children: 23 boys and 17 girls, between twelve and fourteen years of age. The information was extracted from a process of observation where different field diaries were produced. There was a total of eight observation field diaries. The observation began in the second week of February and ended in the first week of May. In addition, during the observation process, discussions were held with the course teacher, regarding the level and behavior of the students. Finally, to learn more about the context of the students, a writing exercise, called "My life on paper", was conducted in the second week of March. In this, each student wrote their biography sharing images and experiences with their families, at school and their hobbies. Also, at the end of the exercise, each student wrote a commentary about the English class regarding their opinion of English and the classroom environment. Here, it is worth mentioning that all information collected from the

students is confidential. Prior to data collection, application of instruments and classes, the students' parents were informed about this study by means of a consent form (Appendix 1 – Consent Form), since the population is under 18 years of age, so their permission was essential.

In general terms, it was identified that the families of these children were composed of a common family nucleus. In addition, in their free time they develop physical activities, listen to music, or watch social networks; others like to read, draw and also write. As for English, many of them affirm that they like it and find it interesting, but they always get nervous when speaking it or say that it is very complicated to understand. It was observed during the interventions that the students preferred to work in groups and carry out workshops or activities where they could compete. In general, they worked with the guidebook *Way to go!* And the teacher always instilled in them the importance of this tool for the development of the activities.

On the other hand, since the beginning of the year, the teacher assigned a book to have a reading plan for the three trimesters of the course. The book assigned for 8<sup>o</sup> was *Tales of Horror* by Bram Stoker which was divided into 4 chapters of 20 pages each. This material was used by each student to present different activities such as glossaries, summaries, and an analysis component in which the main characters, secondary characters, their emotions and main ideas were identified.

The 802 group stands out for being a very united and fun group. However, sometimes there is disorder and a lot of noise. In order to take more account of English in the classroom, they have been taught expressions in this foreign language such as: *Teacher, I have a question, what is the meaning or translation of this word, Teacher I don't*

*understand and Can you repeat that?*, so that, the language can be used a little more in the development of the classes.

Now, from observation, this population group is characterized as a group of teenagers who are at a stage where their emotions, thoughts and physique are progressively changing. Regarding the cognitive dimension, adolescents usually tend to solve problems more easily than children because they now have a more sophisticated grasp of reality. At this stage, adolescents "are more likely to solve problems analytically, i.e., determining an answer more logically according to the nature of the problem" (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 354).

The above, can be identified in the 802 grade, since when they are given an explanation about some activity and tasks, they can understand what to do and are inclined by their preferences to develop the activities as they think it is easier or faster. However, students, who do not understand very well, could approach to ask questions and have clearer indication of what is explained. For example, in the first week of May, we did a reading exercise on values and virtues of the process of caring for the environment. This activity was easy for some students, and they were able to represent their ideas with drawings easily. However, some other students did not understand and, together with the main teacher, we had to do an individual follow-up, explaining the indications again.

Regarding the communicative dimension of this population, it was identified these adolescents mediate their conversations for individual purposes to be part of their groups of friends to feel accepted. In the classes, different groups of students with similar likes were always grouped together. Largely, these "adolescents befriend others who are similar to them and, as time goes on, the attitudes and values of the friends become more similar"

(Popp 2008 as cited by Kail & Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 310) to fit into each group. For 802 students, media and social networking have become central to their lives and the way they communicate with their friends. These new technologies do not guarantee direct peer-to-peer interaction and make them want to imitate what they see displayed on screens.

On the other hand, regarding the emotional dimension at this stage, it can be identified that this is characterized by experiences of reward, pleasure and excitement about their emotions and bodily changes. The foregoing is because adolescents at these ages focus on the search for their own identity and concentrate a lot on themselves, their physique, the way they dress and what others may think about them and their appearance (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2015). This is a process of exploration, in which they risk, doing different and strange things to fit in with a specific group to which they are attracted. In addition, on an emotional level, self-esteem in these adolescents is characterized by the emotional dependence they may have on something or someone since they are generally interested in surprising others and feeling accepted (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2015).

Lastly, we must consider these cognitive, communicative, and emotional changes in order to create a learning environment that responds to their needs and also articulates with their tastes, experiences and contexts. These environments should be made up of educational interactions in which each student can reflect on their individual existence in school and in the world, to create a safe space for discussion, reading and expression, so that, each one of them is able to transform their knowledge using what they have lived and what they want to transform with their individuality.

## 1.2 Curriculum framework

The reading curricular framework is presented in two aspects: first, the teaching of English as a foreign language in the English curriculum in Colombia and the school curriculum.

Nowadays, the teaching of English in Colombia is guided by The National English Program: COLOMBIA Very Well! which proposes development strategies for the improvement of English teaching and learning spaces in the Colombian educational sector (MEN, 2015). In addition, in the educational framework, it is ratified that since the Bilingualism Law 1651 of July 12, 2013, in basic, middle, and higher education institutions, they must "develop the communicative skills to read, understand, write, listen, speak and express themselves correctly in a foreign language." (MEN, 2013, p. 8).

The Colombian Ministry of National Education (2014), states that this National English Program focuses on three fundamental components to "achieve greater articulation between the educational, social and labor sectors, generating better spaces for teaching and learning the language for future generations and greater opportunities" (p. 3). The three components of the program focus on innovation, financing, and productivity. To this extent, for this proposal, only the innovation approach is considered, which is aimed at teacher training strategies and pedagogical material for elementary and secondary education to "motivate the professional development of English teachers for the creation of didactic pedagogical material that allows them to transform their classroom practices" (MEN, 2014, p. 7).

Therefore, it is considered appropriate to make use of this approach for the creation of an innovative proposal that becomes a didactic material to improve the quality of education with different tools that can be more effective, thus increasing the interest and participation of students in English classrooms. In addition, the teaching of English as a foreign language from a creative proposal can allow students in cycle four to have an "invaluable opportunity for social, cultural and cognitive development" (MEN, 2006, p. 9), from the discovery of different ways of learning that contribute to their individuality and knowledge of the world, supporting students in "social interaction and the negotiation of meanings [...] improving their ability to establish relationships with other people and to develop in new situations" (MEN, 2006, p. 10).

Now, it is essential to touch on the subject of reading as a disciplinary comprehensive activity with which the environment is recognized by relating the text and its content with individual interpretations about society (Secretaria de Educación Distrital, 2010). In this way, it is understood that knowledge is not only focused on the comprehension of texts at a literal level, but that "it is much more orienting and formative to ask questions about the context of such enunciations; that is, to be able to characterize and interpret, as far as possible, the situation of enunciation" (Secretaria de Educación Distrital, 2010, p. 37). Thus, the objective of cycle four for reading in the educational context is that students can be formed as "critical subjects, who can take a position on history, on information, on life [...] as individuals able to account for the impact of contexts on the products of culture" (p. 38).

To strengthen such critical and reflective formation from reading for eighth grade students, the reading component of the curriculum suggested by the MEN is considered to



talk about what constitutes it and how to build a proposal that improves this reading ability and comprehension in English in English as a foreign language from the needs and demands that are required. Regarding cycle four, the MEN presented the Basic Standards of Competencies in Foreign Languages: English, which set up "the different levels of performance that must be achieved throughout the learning process and the required competencies" (MEN, 2006, p. 10). The reading competency for eighth grade aims to identify, recognize, and understand descriptive, narrative, and argumentative texts to represent their content graphically and comparing the information and meanings provided in the texts, identifying social and cultural elements that contribute or are related to the context of the students (MEN, 2006).

On the other hand, the institutional program of Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino bases its reading curriculum plan on a critical perspective that guides the actions, creations, and the way of thinking of students regarding what they read in the educational environment (Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (IED), 2018). Thus, this institution raises four pedagogical categories around the reading-writing analysis in all grades: Research, Exploration, Conversation and Comparison. These have been created to evaluate regarding reading and writing skills for students. However, in talks with the head teacher, she affirms that although these categories are set up to be evaluated in the evaluation rubric for each trimester, sometimes they are not important because there are processes that are not completed, due to lack of material, interest, and complexity of the books in the reading plan assigned by the institution, etc.

The school has implemented the evaluation of each trimester in relation to the humanities subjects: Spanish language and English. This assigns a single grade for the two

areas. The head teacher also affirms that this process has had a negative impact on the learning process of the students in English class since many of them affirm that they prefer to make more effort in the area of Spanish language in order not to make so much effort in English since they are bored with this class because they do not understand almost anything. Similarly, for the development of the English curriculum, the District Bilingualism Plan is considered which aims to promote planning, follow-up, and monitoring processes in the bilingual educational improvement of the institution (Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento Sarmiento (IED), 2018). However, the titular teacher affirms that there are not many guarantees and opportunities to implement what is suggested in the District Plan since there are not many tools and institutional conditions for its development.

Considering the foregoing, it is relevant to recognize the importance of reading in institutions and the creation of innovative spaces with didactic strategies that allow strengthening this skill in students.. For them, it is necessary to become directly familiar with the students at the educational level to know their demands and needs, and in this way relate reading with the critical and rational thinking of the students, stimulating imagination and creativity. In addition, to encourage a reading space that contributes to the personal and emotional development of students to give them the opportunity to "identify with characters and situations, understand different perspectives and reflect on their own experiences" (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 389).

### 1.3 Research problem

During the period of characterization of the students and their performance in the English class, three instruments were taken into account: observation, field notes and a diagnostic test designed taking into account the Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Language: English (MEN, 2006) for the fourth cycle. The observation began in the second week of February 2023 and ended in the first week of May. The diagnostic test was conducted on August 17, 2023. First, an observation was developed on the classroom dynamics in terms of student behavior and performance. Then, based on the observation, the reflection on what was observed in the field diary instrument was taken into account (Appendix 2 - Observation and Intervention Field Diary Format), in which a focused analysis of the aspects that describe the classroom environment is presented, as well as the reflections that arise from it.

In general, a set of problems was identified, especially in reading skills. During the observation period, it was possible to identify that students did not feel comfortable with the reading plan established for the course and it did not motivate them to read or to perform the exercises related to reading the book. These problems are also evidenced in the field diary kept by class for course 802 (Appendix 3 - Observation Field Diary #2). In this field diary, it was possible to identify that the students' reasons while reviewing the reading plan task were: *"I did not do the homework because I cannot read in English, it is very difficult"*, *"I like reading, but reading in English is very complicated, I do not know how to identify or read fast and I end up getting bored"*. Despite the above, it can be evidenced in the observation that there is interest in vocabulary activities or short expressions if activities

that are more striking or different from the basic reading comprehension activities are carried out.

Other problems were observed in relation to the reading comprehension exercises. One of them was the total disinterest and resignation of the students to the long text selected by the teachers. Because of the above mentioned, with the course director we had to talk to some students about this situation. Most of them thought that the subject was boring and that they did not understand any of the vocabulary or structures written there. At that time, students stated that "It is not easy to read Tales of Horror because we don't understand anything, and we are not interested in reading about it" and "English class is sometimes boring because we just look up words in the dictionary and that's it" (Appendix 4 - Observation Field Diary #4).

Therefore, a three-level text analysis was considered for reading comprehension. The syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels were taken into account for the analysis of graphic novels. Therefore, a diagnostic test was applied to analyze a page of a graphic novel (*Teen Titans*). It was applied during a two-hour session and 35 of the 41 students took the test. The day of the test was August 17, 2023. The test was divided into six items. The first two concerned the syntactic level of analysis, the next two the semantic and the last two the pragmatic. The students understood the explanation of each item and were also attentive throughout the class with questions about rhetorical figures, the author's intention, and grammatical categories (Appendix 5 – Diagnostic Test).

After the diagnostic test, it was possible to identify failures in the identification of words in the image of the selected graphic novel. In addition, some errors related to the mishandling of word meanings were found. On the other hand, despite being a somewhat

complex topic, most students were clear about the concept of figure of speech and tried to make an analysis of the words, phrases and contexts presented in the image. Finally, at the pragmatic level, it was identified that the use of inferences is not very common for them, since they thought they should describe the images based on what they saw and not on what they could infer or deduce from what was expressed there.

Goodman (1996) states that:

"Reading comprehension focuses on a parallel text, personally constructed by the reader; perception is governed by that text and syntax is assigned based on it. Both structure and meaning are constructed by the reader, and if something goes wrong, then the text in the reader's head must be reconstructed to make it sensible." (p.138)

In this sense, after the observation, data collected in the field diaries and the diagnostic test, it could be concluded that reading comprehension is essential for the comprehension and learning of English as a foreign language. This comprehension plays a fundamental role in the development of reading skills and contextual understanding in relation to what is stated in a text and its selection by course, by topic. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that "graphic novels stand out as a valid option to foster EFL students' reading comprehension skills due to their adaptability to different contexts and their attractive design" (Zamudio, 2022, p. 43).

However, despite recognizing its importance, this process is sometimes ignored, and very long material continues to be assigned to students without recognizing different tastes or reaching reading agreements so that this classroom activity does not become boring or tedious. In this way, it is intended to achieve with children's concrete actions regarding the

reading of graphic novels, thus raising it with the analysis at the three levels mentioned above so that there is theory in between regarding the topics to be addressed, but also different activities both digital and graphic and artistic creation on what they learned from reading. Thus, topics such as grammatical categories, the meaning of words (denotation - connotation) and without neglecting the learning of the contexts in these graphic texts require to be focused by the project.

Another problem was the lack of material to carry out the activities. From the observation it was also possible to identify that sometimes the fact of copying on the blackboard or simply dictating a text makes the student lose interest. The latter is also caused by the fact that the student does not have material in his hands to understand a text and how it is composed. Regarding the Reading Plan for 802, the assigned tasks and activities in class were only based on creating a glossary of the whole book and learning at least 20 of those words so that they would understand the vocabulary exposed therein. In addition, another exercise that was repeated was to write the different sentence structures in the chapters. For all the above, it is intended to create a space with adequate material for students in the implementation of this proposal. Bringing to the classroom a resource such as the graphic novel, which allows, with the design of different activities, the improvement of reading comprehension in English as a foreign language.

This proposal seeks that students learn to recognize the mistakes that can be made as a reader and make self-corrections of this process of construction and reconstruction. Thus, students are expected to understand what the author is trying to say regarding the grammatical structure of the text, its intention, and the meaning that the student can construct from what is being read.

## **1.4 Objectives**

### ***Research Question***

How would the implementation of Whole Language Teaching and graphic novels enhance EFL reading comprehension in 802 students of Colegio Domingo Faustino Sarmiento through?

### ***General Objective***

To design a didactic experience that promotes reading comprehension through Whole Language Teaching with the use of the Graphic Novel in the 802 group of the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento School.

### ***Specific objectives***

To describe EFL reading comprehension students' achievements inside a controlled implementation of the pedagogical proposal with students of 802 at the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school.

To identify possible benefits and opportunities of reading graphic novels in a Whole Language Teaching space with students of 802 at the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

This chapter presents the research background on innovation that served as the basis for the development of this proposal. In this way, eight research studies related to the proposal itself were analyzed. The second section discusses the object of study and, finally, its components and sub-processes.

### 2.1 Background on innovation

The state of the art of the present proposal was categorized after a systematized reading in a matrix of analysis categories. Eight texts related to reading comprehension in English as a foreign language (EFL) and the use of graphic novels to improve this competence were selected. The selected proposals have been published within 2015 to 2022.

There were three research studies on EFL reading comprehension (Castaño, 2016; Gamboa, 2016; Bernal & Bernal, 2020); and five on graphic novels to promote reading comprehension in EFL (Kay, 2015; Parker, 2017; Valeroso, 2017; Aldahash & Altalhab, 2020; Zamudio, 2022). Five of these were conducted internationally (one in the Philippines, two in the United States (Minnesota and California), one in Saudi Arabia and, one in Ecuador). The other three proposals were developed in Colombia (two from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and one from the Universidad Minuto de Dios). The foregoing shows the interest in research from new pedagogical proposals that focus on elements that aim at improving teaching processes.

Their research objectives were more methodological than theoretical because they are directly presented from a didactic design with pedagogical practice in order to provide



experimental knowledge and from this generate teaching processes that strengthen the learning processes of students. Therefore, the methodology used in this proposal is framed within qualitative research, since the processes, techniques and data collection were descriptive research and action research. The instruments also fall within the qualitative approach since the proposals arise from observation, interviews, documentary reviews, field diaries and workshops and tests to diagnose the level of the students. (Valeroso, 2017)

Due to the above, the object of study was the graphic novels and how this improves the reading comprehension processes of students. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are different strategies for teaching reading using graphic novels to promote reading. However, it is suggested that the reading level in EFL is not efficient because it does not provide interest to this competence since it still follows the convention of reading from left to right and from top to bottom with very long texts to scan the information in a linear way (Kay, 2015). On the other hand, something common within these proposals were the three levels of reading, but with more emphasis on the critical level of reading graphic novels. These investigations also address the reading processes as interactive processes that students can live highlighting the role of the visual and written. In addition, the role of the students' context and how they can relate it to the text is always considered (Aldahash & Altahab 2020).

Thus, teaching reading in EFL is an exercise that requires a lot of effort because it can become a complicated task. However, the graphic novel is presented as an innovative tool that can strengthen these processes. It is essential to highlight that, as limitations and results of the research, it was found that for students reading becomes a mechanical and compulsory task imposed by the school. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the

pedagogical practices that are carried out around this competence so that the forms of teaching have a change that has a positive impact on the learning processes of students and they can have good perceptions about what reading is. Thus, for Parker (2017) reading competence can be improved and increased with the reading of graphic novels because these are a very important pedagogical tool because they combine visual art within the book to have a better conceptual understanding of what is read thus acquiring more analytical and critical thinking skills. In this way, the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom is encouraged for the development of a better reading in this language.

In the research, it was concluded that teaching practices in the teaching of reading in EFL did not leave a traditional and imposed axis, which can generate lack of interest and annoyance in acquiring this competence in students. Thus, it is possible to reflect on how the graphic novel can be a transforming tool of these practices which generates interest and relevance in the learning process of adolescents. On the other hand, as a transforming component, the research proposes different methodologies to achieve more interest in reading comprehension from the reading of graphic novels, adding to these processes topics that are related to the context of each student, having a social, emotional, and cognitive intentionality (Parker, 2017)

Thanks to the analytical and critical reading of these texts, there is a great interest in reading comprehension in EFL and how reading graphic novels can improve this comprehension. However, even though different strategies or methodologies have been presented, they are not fully recognized and are not implemented in the classroom, since even though there is much interest in improving reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, sometimes some proposals are not considered, and the same traditional

reading proposals continue to be used without any change. Therefore, the role of the graphic novel as a transforming axis of reading comprehension is recognized, and although it is not considered improving these processes, the research shows a need for change in terms of processes to improve in this aspect.

## **2.2 Reading comprehension**

Reading comprehension is linked to the construction of meaning after the reading process. In this regard, Smagorinsky (2001) states that "reading comprehension is a constructive process carried out by the reader in conjunction with the written discourse and the socio-cultural context in which it occurs" (p. 93). This indicates that a decoding process can indeed be carried out on written discourse, where the meanings and components can be understood through a theoretical or structural analysis; however, reading comprehension does not occur only in that environment, but also in the relationship between the reader and his or her own context.

In addition, for a text to be critically understood, Smagorinsky (2001) states that the reader must make sense of the configuration of signs that constitute a text, so that, as he or she tries to interpret it, a new one is composed and constructed. To explain reading comprehension, Smagorinsky (2001) exposes a theory called the "Transactional Zone" which reveals how reading comprehension can be directly focused on a personal, cultural and ideological framework of two stages that make the reader think and reflect on what he/she is reading so that in this way a new knowledge and interpretation can be created on the internal already valued (Smagorinsky, 2001, p. 95).

**Table 1.** *Synthesis of the stages of the Transactional Zone by Smagorinsky (2005)*

<b>Stage 1: Experiential space</b>	Mediation and strict relationship between the reader and the text for the recognition of meanings.
<b>Stage 2: More stable space</b>	This puts more focus on the reader and the space of possibilities of meanings and senses by virtue of contexts.  Idiosyncratic/personal possibilities of interpretation.  Contextual or cultural possibilities.

In this way, it can be said that the construction of meaning goes beyond just the decoding of text because, although in order to understand the text, its composition, content and description must be taken into account, these meanings must also be extracted in a critical way so that the reader's experiences or context are not left aside, but rather the reader uses this prior knowledge to formulate a new one, generating opinions, comments or feelings about the reading of a text.

### **2.3 Reading comprehension processes**

The components of the object of study are: syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. These will be reflected in the application process of this proposal in the didactic unit presented below. Also, these will give way to a reflection on reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. In addition, it should be noted that for each component, the performances of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the

Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Languages: English of the Ministry of Education assigned at each B1 level for 8th grade reading are considered.

### **Syntactic Level**

As we know, syntactics is the dimension of semiotics that studies the relationship of the sign with other signs. Therefore, the syntactic level is proposed as a component to be considered as the first level of learning that influences reading comprehension processes in EFL. Cobley (2005) defines syntactics as the study of the formal and logical-grammatical structure by which language is constituted for comprehension. This level can be classified as the most rigorous and strict dimension of language, since from syntactic analysis an authoritative and pre-established scheme is made about language in order to understand language. From these formal constructions, the importance of including syntactic analysis in reading practices for the comprehension of what is being read arises, since, if this analysis were excluded, it would result in a little coherent and broken comprehension in formal terms. In addition to the above, the author defines this syntactic process as "an aesthetic process that rigorously establishes and accommodates the elements of language with concrete purposes for comprehension from a series of rules that harmonize communication" (Cobley, 2005, p. 112); thus, the syntactic level can be understood as the first approach to language and its comprehension from the understanding of the order, structure, and role of language.

On the other hand, syntactic analysis in reading comprehension in education has been fragmented since students are required to understand this process in a very rigorous way and it is not understood about the performance and level that is being treated. Based on the above, Snow (2002) states that "reading comprehension at the syntactic level has been

affected by two surface codes: vocabulary and syntax" (p. 95), since the type of vocabulary and the complexity of the syntax in the texts are not differentiated, which causes the loss of interest and motivation for reading due to the rigor and length of the readings or texts that are added to the curricula (Snow, 2002). On many occasions the level or course of the students is not considered in order to correspond the adequate reading plan or class readings with the purpose of analyzing their formal composition in a more practical and assertive way. Thus, Snow (2002) states that to make a syntactic analysis of a text for its comprehension, "the density and grammatical ambiguity of the logical expressions assigned to a text must be taken into account" (p. 105). Thus, it is important to create reading strategies and syntactic analysis from activities that help to evidence the formal composition of a text so that students can build knowledge about grammatical rules and in this way, they can characterize the words, forms and structures of a sentence reflecting and evaluating the language, and the knowledge they acquire after this type of analysis.

From the above, it can be stated that reading comprehension can be improved if there is successful initial instruction. Thus, it is fundamental that syntactic analysis is a prerequisite for text comprehension in terms of recognizing and conceptualizing the content of a text at the grammatical level. Thus, we will speak of vocabulary comprehension in grammatical categories and grammatical order. Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension at the syntactic level as "the process of simultaneous extraction and construction" (p. 37). The first process is responsible for the extraction of words and their categorization as the first encounter with the language of the text, and the second process is fundamental for the construction of the strict order of the words in the text (Snow, 2005). In addition, the author takes the surface code to state that syntactic analysis starts from "the

identification and exact segmentation of the type of words embedded in the text and (...) the structural and systematic understanding of the sentences therein." (p. 48). That is to say, the interest arises in working at the syntactic level from these two factors in the present proposal to improve reading comprehension in EFL from the grammatical categorization of the vocabulary exposed in the reading and on the grammatical order of the sentences that compose it.

That is the reason why, the syntactic level is considered for reading comprehension in English as a foreign language because this process allows the student to recognize the composition of a text from the breakdown and understand how the words are organized in a sentence. By understanding grammatical structure, students can identify the relationships between words, understand who does what in a sentence, and how ideas are connected. This skill enables them to grasp the full meaning of a text more effectively. As a first indicator, students are expected to be able to recognize the type of words exposed in the text so that they can classify them into grammatical categories by recognizing their function in a sentence. Secondly, students are expected to be able to focus on the structure and logic of the content of the text by analyzing the grammatical order of the sentences in the text, breaking them down and organizing them in a grammatically correct way. Table 2 shows the indicators that allow to demonstrate the learning expected by the student in this topic, through the interaction and evaluation of the didactic unit.

**Table 2.** *Learning objectives of the syntactic component*

<i>Syntactic Level</i>
To understand the grammatical function of the main vocabulary in graphic novels.
Identify the organization and grammatical structure of the sentences in the text.

## **Semantic level**

Semantics deals with the study of the relationship between signs and their meaning and is directly linked to the meaning, sense and interpretation of words, expressions, or symbols (Cobley, 2005). The author starts from the premise that semantics can be addressed in educational contexts for reading comprehension since it tries to see meaning from a broad perspective, going beyond simple dictionary definitions of words (denotation) and trying to identify the full range of mental experiences associated with words and sentences when they are used in specific contexts (connotation). In this way, semantics understands the texts in an open way, understanding the meaning of the words, expressions or sentences exposed therein, but not only in a strict way, but from a broader scope where students can understand them from a more individual and experiential meaning. Likewise, Cobley (2005) states that it is very important for a student to be able to have clarity regarding the meaning of a word in different contexts, acquiring a certain cultural and expressive background that allows him/her to communicate much better in contexts where he/she needs to understand the meaning of the words he/she reads. Therefore, performing a semantic analysis in the reading process allows the reader to have freedom of interpretation regarding what he/she is reading since he/she can focus directly on the original and accepted expression of the word or create or understand other meanings of the same word or sign in an alternate or secondary way. Thus, the student reader will be able to create a process of appropriation and discovery to improve the knowledge about reading.

Now, the semantic level can be analyzed in the reading processes to improve reading comprehension in EFL classrooms since this analysis seems to have very good



results on students since as Kilpatrick et al. (2019) state "the construction of rich and interconnected semantic networks broadens students' experience of meanings, improving vocabulary knowledge that contributes to their reading comprehension process" (p. 28). Being a construction of meanings, this analysis contributes to the understanding of the context that reads about the use of words, phrases or structures that are used in the texts so that it takes into account what is intended to be said about the text explicitly and how a word has or can change meaning having different possibilities to shape the student's reasoning about what is written so that the student also understands it implicitly. In this way, the notion of semantics enables and improves the learning processes in reading comprehension in EFL since it is essential to keep in mind the cultural, political, and social phenomenon that is printed in each text; so that, learning its composition allows the student to relate their experiences, make different and interact with the text in a more critical way (Kilpatrick et al. 2019).

In the case of the present proposal, there will be two important aspects that will cover the semantic analysis of the graphic novels. The first one is the significance of the key words within the scenes to understand their content and the second one is the identification of the rhetorical figures within the scenes as well. Thus, it is important to understand that keywords at the semantic level are considered as "vital words of understanding to build mental models of the text content" (Kilpatrick et al, 2019, p. 90). In this case, the author proposes that understanding the meaning of the vocabulary that stands out in the reading of a text can strengthen the connection that the reader has with what he or she is reading. In this way, the reader-student of graphic novels should find frequency and relationship of what he is reading with the meaning of the vocabulary exposed to give full

attention to the key words that allow him to internalize and preserve the knowledge of that scene. This will lead to "earlier and more effective acquisition of key word meanings and the construction of rich, interconnected semantic networks" (Kilpatrick et al, 2019, p. 90). Now, regarding the next aspect to evaluate and reflect on at this level, we find ourselves with the rhetorical figures of speech. In this sense, in the syntactic analysis, this second aspect can, as stated by Kilpatrick (2019), "stimulate the meaning of the visual and textual" (p. 102) because these rhetorical figures can appear both in the text and in the images. In that way, these could foster multidimensional understanding of the text by combining the visual and literary elements being conveyed (Kilpatrick, 2019).

Regarding the above, it can be stated that analyzing at the semantic level is fundamental to improve students' reading comprehension because it focuses on the meaning of words and how they combine to form coherent sentences. This allows students to identify the connotations, nuances, and relationships between words in a text to have a better meaning about the message stated. This helps them to grasp the author's intentions and the meaning of unknown words from the context. By developing semantic skills, students can analyze and synthesize information more accurately, which in turn improves their ability to interpret texts more deeply and gain a richer and more complete understanding of what they are reading. Then, students are expected to first identify and select the most important words in the text in relation to the scene or event that is occurring so that students can have a first encounter with key words that allow them to understand and relate ideas. On the other hand, it is expected that students can identify the rhetorical figures of speech in the text to relate their meaning to the events of the written text, thus understanding the unconventional forms of words endowed with expressiveness, vivacity,

or beauty. Table 3 shows the indicators that allow to demonstrate the learning expected by the student in this topic, through the interaction and evaluation of the didactic unit.

**Table 3.** *Learning Objectives of the Semantic Component*

<i>Semantic level</i>
To identify the key words of each scene in the graphic novel.
To recognize the variety of figures of speech and their function and meaning in graphic novels.

### **Pragmatic level**

The discipline that deals with the relationship between the signs of language and the contexts or circumstances in which people use such signs is called pragmatics. The latter is also defined by Cobley (2005) as "the dimension that studies the origin of signs, their uses, and the effects they produce in the context in which they appear, depending on the relationship of the words, the use we make of them and the context in which we use the language" (p. 122). In this sense, the pragmatic level implies knowing and identifying communicative intentions. Cobley (2005) states that pragmatics is fundamental in reading comprehension for students, since by understanding and interpreting communicative intentions we can decipher what the author of a text does not mean, how he/she intends to persuade us or involve us in a given situation, and it also allows us to create relationships about meanings so that we can understand and express opinions, discuss topics about what we read and also entertain us about content, topics, etc.

In addition, pragmatics in education has been studied as "the study of recognizing, inferring and assuming about the construction of connections between ideas that are

exposed in a text" (Cutting, 2002, p. 79). This idea focuses directly on students' interactions with what they read, Cutting (2002) states that a pragmatic analysis of a text is reflected in the understanding of inferences of meaning at the contextual level and also on the understanding of idiomatic expressions, so, the student will be able to recognize the language of a text explicitly to capture both connotations, ironies or implicit messages recognizing the context of the text so that it is understood that there are literal meanings that go beyond. On the other hand, pragmatics is also recognized for being used to "recognize the individuality of something written in order to problematize its content in a communicative act such as a dialogue between peers" (Cutting, 2002, p. 92). It is due to the latter that the pragmatic analysis of the graphic texts of the present proposal is a mechanism that improves reading comprehension in a useful way because in addition to allowing students to reflect on the identity or recognition of a text, it also allows students to relate to each other in an educational communicative act on which the language of the work is imposed in a conversation or chat in which they discuss the theme, content, etc. of the text offered to be read so that the interpretation or meanings not only remain in the individuality of the students but also involve more concepts around.

Regarding pragmatic analysis in the improvement of reading comprehension in EFL, the author's intention about the content presented and the students' inferences about the material presented in the graphic novels will be taken into account. The author's intention in the text is key to understanding the context, the theme, and even the literary genre presented in the texts. In addition to the above, Cutting (2002) states that in order to have a good reading comprehension at the pragmatic level, one must first understand the intention of the text in order to know beforehand a little more about what the author offers

in his text. "The communicator's intention is based on manifesting and recognizing the ostension of his reality" (Cutting, 2002, p. 125), since the author of a text will always have the need to show or put something in front of the reader's eyes about his experiences, stories, etc. From the pragmatic analysis of graphic novels, an important factor to evaluate is to fully understand the author's intention about the work. Now, inferences can benefit reading comprehension since, as Cutting (2002) states, the creation of inferences benefits readers in terms of "deep comprehension, improvement of previous knowledge and stimulation of the imagination" (p. 138). From the pragmatic level, students can infer about the processing of new information that results in a relevant relational effect on the students' context or their background in terms of reading.

Now, it is important to include pragmatic analyses in specific and different activities regarding the reading of the graphic novels of the present proposal. It is crucial to improve students' reading comprehension because it focuses on how language is used in specific contexts to achieve communicative goals. By understanding pragmatics, students can identify authorial intentions, subtexts, and implications in a text. This enables them to grasp not only the literal meaning of words, but also the subtleties and ways in which ideas are conveyed in different situations. By developing pragmatic skills, students can interpret tone, irony, humor, and other linguistic features that enrich the comprehension of a text. This contributes to a more complete and sophisticated understanding of what they are reading, thus enhancing their ability to analyze and draw conclusions from reading materials. In the first indicator, students are expected to be able to have more knowledge about the author's clear intention about the text by understanding the language and the content exposed therein so that they can have more clarity about the theme, context or

emotion that emanates from the text from the perception of the author himself. And as a second indicator, it is expected that the students can make a process of inferences regarding the reading so that the students' perception of what is written is not left aside. Table 4 shows the indicators that allow us to demonstrate the learning expected by the students in relation to this topic, through the interaction and evaluation of the didactic unit.

**Table 4.** *Learning Objectives for the Pragmatic Component*

<i>Pragmatic level</i>
To identify the author's intention when reading graphic novels.
To infer cultural content and meaning relationships to extend the graphic novel comprehension.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

This chapter presents the research traits. It also discusses the validation mechanisms including the actions and instruments used for data collection and analysis. On the other hand, it presents the schedule of actions by specific objectives and stages of research and finally, it concludes with some ethical considerations about the study.

### **3.1 Educational research with a qualitative approach**

The qualitative approach is the methodological approach used as a reference in this proposal. In educational research, this approach seeks to understand and analyze educational phenomena from a subjective perspective, focusing on the deep understanding of the experiences, perceptions, meanings and social contexts of the participants involved in the educational process (Parameswaran 2008 as cited in Patton, 2002). Thus, one of the purposes of the present proposal is undoubtedly to be present in the educational environment in a close way with the students so that in this way an interpretation of the phenomena and experiences of the learning processes can be built.

Patton (2002) states that "the qualitative approach cultivates the most useful of human capacities: the capacity to learn" (p. 183) because this approach focuses on understanding subjective and intersubjective realities that are expressed in the immersion process of the research itself, since this reality is constructed by the social actors based on their particular histories (Patton, 2002). This is why the researcher will be able to evidence different interpretations and realities about each subject living with the reality of an educational space where different learning processes per student are interposed. Therefore, in this study, the researcher immersed himself in these different realities and contexts per

student to interpret and analyze the needs or difficulties that could be reflected in the process of the pedagogical proposal.

In sum, it can be affirmed that the qualitative approach is pertinent in this educational research since it emphasizes understanding the context and the meaning that individuals give to their educational experiences from their learning processes. In addition, with the direct teaching actions with the context, there is an impact on the teaching and changes of this practice in the educational sector. This means that "qualitative researchers tend to have a holistic and complex perspective of the social world; they are concerned about having a systematic reflection throughout the research process; they are sensitive to their own biography and social identity and the way this influences the educational environment and therefore a good for their peers" (Patton, 2002, p. 272). Therefore, interest arises in the eighth grade of the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school to understand and inquire about their reading comprehension processes in EFL, investigating directly and closely the context of this course in this area.

### **3.2 Case study**

One of the applications in the field of qualitative approaches is the case study. The latter is characterized as a methodology of group analysis, whose qualitative aspect allows us to draw conclusions from real phenomena in a formative-experimental line that presents the development of the human personality in a short period of time characterized by paying special attention to issues that are only recognized through cases (Stake, 1999).

This method has been defined by Stake (1999) as, "a pedagogical tool that aims to enable students to acquire or improve competencies by accessing a practical and



contextualized understanding of real-life problems" (p. 97). Basically, it is expected to illustrate a given situation and provide a framework for discussion comprising a natural context where a detailed and rich understanding about a specific case is obtained, exploring the experiences, perceptions and meanings of the students involved in the studied phenomenon. In the present case, special attention is paid to the context from observation which allowed identifying a phenomenon of unskilled reading and reading comprehension by 802 students and started with a proposal to know more closely the experiences and opinions of students about these processes in EFL.

On the other hand, the case study involves, according to Stake (1999) five stages: identification of the problem to be investigated, research protocol, data collection, data analysis, and finally the interpretation of results. The aforementioned process was carried out during the last two semesters. In the first semester from the second week of February and ended in the first week of May, it was possible to contextualize the problem and describe the selected group (802) in an observable manner, thus formulating the topic to be investigated from the collection of classified data. In the second semester, from August to September, the implementation of the graphic novel reading was included to finally analyze the data and interpret the results of the implementation of the didactic unit.

Now, the role of the researcher in the case study is active and social because he/she interprets and analyzes the facts taking into account the social and contextual influence in which he/she finds him/herself (Moreno et. Al, 2011). Adding to this, Stake (1999) states that the researcher in the case study "focuses on a particular situation, providing an excellent way of analyzing real-life problems and helping to understand the phenomenon under study, always being part of its objectives to obtain new perspectives and

interpretations." (p. 122). So, in the present proposal, the researcher intends to maintain an active and dynamic role in order to identify the research problem and the description of the case in detail so that the phenomenon can be studied and then interpreted or compared with what was applied.

### **3.3 Validation mechanisms**

#### **Observations and field notes**

Observation is a fundamental process in this proposal because it was used as a systematic and empirical method for data collection through direct perception of the context of the group 802. According to Patton (2002) the essential purposes of observation in qualitative research are:

To explore and describe environments, communities, subcultures and aspects of social life, analyzing their meanings and the actors who generate them; to understand processes, links between people and their situations, experiences or circumstances, the events that occur over time and the patterns that develop (...) and to generate hypotheses for future studies. (p. 347).

In the present research, observations were carried out throughout the process. First, in the diagnostic process, an observation process was carried out, which was fundamental to identify characteristics of the population and the classroom context. Then, in the implementation of the didactic resource, data were also collected from observation taking into account the objectives established for the proposal, and finally; in the process of data analysis in the creation of conclusions.

Now, it is fundamental to talk about field notes. Taking notes in the research field after an observation process is important because it is possible to have a detailed and systematic record of the development of the classes and thus be able to generate reflections and impressions on the teaching and learning processes of the students. In this regard, Hernández et al. (2010) state that in order to take notes on a case under investigation, the use of field diaries or logs is key for the description of the environment of the place, the people, their relationships and the different events during the observation time. In addition, they mention that the record of these notes can be chronological to trace the evolution of events and behaviors of students over time so that this information is functional in understanding the population and its needs.

In the case of this pedagogical proposal, the field diary was one of the instruments that allowed the researcher to record the development of the classes during the first period of 2023. Chronologically, seven field diaries were taken into account on only indirect observation without intervention and six field diaries with direct observation of intervention in which the researcher helped the teacher with classes on the established topics. (The record of the Field Diaries mentioned above can be found in the shared folder in Appendix 2 - Observation and Intervention Field Diary Format).

### ***Perception survey***

Perception surveys are a technique for collecting data on the experiences and opinions of participants in a research process. It can also be defined as "a technique that uses a set of standardized research procedures through which a series of data is collected and analyzed from a sample of cases representative of a larger population or universe, from which it is intended to explore, describe, predict and/or explain a series of characteristics"

García (as cited in Casas et al., 2003 p. 527). This way, the perception survey was key to determine the impact of proposal because it was possible to collect and analyze the ideas, opinions, and experiences that the group 802 has had regarding the use or approach to graphic novels and their reading processes (Appendix 6 - Pre-implementation Perception Survey Form).

This instrument had a second moment of implementation on the last day of application of the proposal with the students. It was with another perception survey format with different questions that were associated with the objectives also established for the proposal (Appendix 7 – Post - implementation Perception Survey Format). In Appendix 7 you will find in a shared folder all post - implementation perception surveys.

### *Artifacts*

These are known as tangible items or products that are obtained directly from interaction with the study population. These can be class work, exams, activities, or student portfolios that can be key to the background review of their performance in the classroom and with English. Norman and Lincoln (2011) state that "artifacts have the purpose of analyzing an inventory of physical material that groups characteristics and qualities before the student-object relationship" (p. 28). This relationship can be analyzed on the interaction that the student can have with a specific topic and how he can develop and implement his knowledge on a specific material that indicates and demonstrates what he has learned. The artifacts collected in this research were of great variety. However, two of the most important were a writing and reading exercise on each student's biography and the reading portfolio of the course reading plan. With the first one, the context of each student could be

individually evidenced at a personal level and in the second one, the implementation of the reading of a book in this foreign language is evidenced.

### 3.4 Schedule of actions

*Table 5. Schedule of actions.*

<i>Specific Objective</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
To describe EFL reading comprehension students' achievements inside a controlled implementation of the pedagogical proposal with students of 802 at the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Background reading.</li> <li>- Establishment of the components of reading comprehension for the analysis of graphic novels.</li> <li>- Pedagogical foundation lesson.</li> <li>Design of the stages of the didactic unit.</li> </ul>	February to  May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Research problem and different conceptions about graphic novel and reading comprehension in education.</li> <li>- Conceptualization of the object of study and its components.</li> <li>- Design of activities in didactic unit with printable material.</li> </ul>
To identify possible benefits and opportunities of reading graphic novels in a Whole Language Teaching space with students of 802 at the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of the first 3 Lesson Plans of the first stage of the didactic unit.</li> <li>- Modification of time and activities on Lesson Plan implemented for data collection and post analysis.</li> <li>- Data analysis on triangulation of the collected data.</li> <li>- Planning the implementation of the second stage of the didactic unit in November.</li> </ul>	August to  November  2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artifacts collected throughout each implementation of the first three Lesson Plans of the first stage of the didactic unit.</li> <li>- Post-implementation perception surveys.</li> <li>- Final product of the first stage: Fanzine.</li> </ul>

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

As the research methodology belongs to qualitative research, it was fundamental to obey different specific ethical guidelines for the development and implementation of the present proposal. These considerations include a previous endorsement regarding the use of the information that was taken from the school, informing the parents with the due informed consent about the practice that was going to be developed. In addition, the teachers and school management's endorsement were always considered to carry out the activities under the established parameters.

On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that the present proposal is taken as a case study and not with action research due to the short time that was had for the implementation of the proposal, since in spite of the fact that from the beginning the topic of reading comprehension of graphic novels was present, it had not been contemplated to do an empirical research but only a theoretical one from a documentary review. It also considers the reading competence that the institution promotes both in mother tongue and in foreign language since this is always motivated with reading plans and different events in the institution such as speed reading, reading workshops and contests for reading poems or stories.

Finally, as an important fact, we can mention the intensity of class loss with this course and in the school in general. This is since on many occasions there were pedagogical days or school visits that interrupted the sessions and the application of activities or observations. However, in those spaces, attention was always paid to the course in charge.

## CHAPTER 4: PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Graphic Novel

The graphic novel is a book format that combines elements of written narrative with graphic images, illustrations, vignettes and sequences that have allowed it to position itself as a narrative genre that is striking and different from the traditional. As a first definition, we can have that of Moore (as cited in Kavanagh, 2000), British writer and screenwriter who defines the graphic novel as "a film on paper" (p. 82). Regarding Moore's concept, Kannenberg (2009) points out that:

"The term 'graphic novel' indicates a serious intention: to create a work of lasting value (...) It should be noted, however, that 'lasting value' does not necessarily mean 'grimly serious' but refers to a work that stands the test of time." (p. 42)

Therefore, the graphic novel is a publishing format that combines literary and visual elements in a sequential narrative. Although there is no single definition accepted by all authors, several creators and experts have offered their interpretations. For example, writer and editor Eisner (2008), considered a pioneer of modern comics, described the graphic novel as "a term used to distinguish the conventional comic from the longer, fuller forms of expression in the medium" (p. 223).

These definitions underline the complexity and richness of the graphic novel as an artistic and narrative medium that prevails today for its textual and graphic richness. The above has been stated throughout history affirming that this genre is

usually extensive and sometimes complex due to its plot, characters and depth and maturity in the themes exposed. However, there have been graphic novels that have made a change visible and left a mark in time so that today they persist. The graphic novel has gained popularity in recent years and has become a respected and recognized medium in literature. Some of the most famous works of this genre include "Watchmen" (1986) by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, "Maus" (1991) by Art Spiegelman, "Sandman" (2013) by Neil Gaiman and "V for Vendetta" (2000) by Alan Moore and David Lloyd.

In addition to being a popular reference nowadays for its content and as a sphere of entertainment, the graphic novel has also been consolidated in the educational field. This is because the use of graphic novels has been considered because of the advantages of fast reading and because of the visual and linguistic code that improves the reading comprehension of learners in the case of English as a foreign language. On the value of graphic novels in education, Manzanares (2022) states that:

In addition to the attractiveness of the format, an added value for its treatment in the classroom with students, the graphic novel has other advantages such as the naturalness of the language samples inserted in it. This genre allows students to become familiar with the more colloquial variety of the language, thus being able to integrate into their lexicon forms that can be extrapolated to the reality of the native speaker. (p. 63)

Therefore, it can be affirmed that graphic novels can work effectively in a classroom in teaching processes, which reflect naturalness before what is exposed in this type of texts



so that reading is encouraged from the combination of images and text so that this allows reading to be more attractive and accessible to students who are not avid readers. Graphic novels can also be an effective introduction for students who have difficulties with reading, since the images can help them understand the plot, the characters, and even the spaces and places present in the narratives.

It is also important to highlight some of the components, genres and techniques commonly used in the development of graphic novels to understand the process involved with respect to the object of study. Thus, it is possible to understand the versatility that is used for the creation of these.

Regarding the components of the graphic novel, we can consider the vignettes, the image, the text, the characters and the plot and narrative. The latter coexist and interact with each other to create a unique reading experience by combining images and text to allow the reader to have a visually appealing and rich in detail narrative conveying a story in a more visual way (Riitijoki, 2021). In this case, the typography, the text bubbles, the design of the characters from the costumes and their personalities, as well as the composition of tone and texture in relation to the shot stand out from the text.

The graphic novel encompasses a wide variety of genres, as does literature in general. Although there is no fixed classification and the boundaries between genres can be blurred due to the great variety and relationship between themes. Some of the most common genres that can be found in graphic novels are the heroic genre, which according to Soria (2017), "is perhaps one of the most popular in the field of graphic novels. It features characters with special abilities and fights against crime or supervillains." (p. 109). Another genre is fantasy and fiction where imaginary worlds are presented with magical or

scientific elements that create exciting adventures (Soria, 2017). Also, history and biography make up some graphic novels such as "Maus" and "Persepolis" which address themes of historical events and biographies of famous people who left a mark on reality. To this we can add other genres such as realism, drama and humor.

Finally, it is essential to talk about the production techniques of these texts. These techniques may vary depending on the style and approach of the graphic novel creator. Some artists may opt for a fully digital production, while others may prefer traditional techniques. Some of the most common techniques used are scripting, sketching and story boarding, final art, lettering, page design and layout and production. Regarding page design, Soria (2017) states that for the design of a page in a graphic novel, axonometric (A geometric view that shows a location from the entry point, leaving the rest of the place to the imagination of the reader and the character), isometric (a geometric composition that presents a place with three vanishing points. ), the grid (standard one page by 6 or 9 vignettes), the focal point (the focal point will be placed at some point where no visual confusion occurs) and LOS (Line of Sight) (to force the reader to follow a direction using a subconscious design such as eyes and the position of the characters' bodies).

For all these reasons, the graphic novel is a complete text full of richness in terms of meaning to be used as a tool to strengthen reading comprehension in EFL for students. Thus, reading these can become a different and innovative process for students to be more aware of their process in this foreign language, understanding the meaning of understanding what is read, without leaving aside an enjoyment for this activity that for many is an imposed obligation.

## 4.2 Whole Language Approach

The Whole Language Approach "is a pedagogical approach that focuses on language learning in a holistic and integrated way" (Larsen & Anderson, 2011 p. 125). In contrast to more traditional methods, this approach considers that language is not learned through breaking it down into separate parts, such as phonetics or grammar, but is best acquired by interacting with whole, meaningful texts. Larsen & Anderson (2011) believe that in this method students should be immersed in authentic reading and writing experiences from the beginning, which allows them to develop language skills in a real and purposeful context.

One of the key features of the Whole Language Approach is its focus on communication and understanding rather than memorization and regurgitation of isolated grammar rules. Students are involved in meaningful reading activities that allow them to understand the composition of the text in different ways, understanding its structure, content, meaning, etc. so that this knowledge can then be taken to real life situations (Larsen & Anderson, 2011). In addition, social interaction and collaborative work are valued, since it is believed that these elements enrich the language acquisition process.

In this approach, the teacher's role focuses on creating "a climate conducive to collaborative learning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 110) in which the teacher has the responsibility to talk with students to understand the needs and likes of the students so in this way the creation of a lesson plan favors the teaching and learning process in the classroom can be negotiated. Also, teachers act as facilitators and guides, providing opportunities for students to immerse themselves in a variety of textual genres and engage in rich discussions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In this way, students are expected to

develop inference, critical analysis, and reflective thinking skills as they interact with various types of texts.

On the other hand, the student stands out for being "a collaborator, who helps with his classmates, with the teacher and with the authors of the texts" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 110) for the creation of his own space of learning with new reading experiences. In addition, the student is also an evaluator of his or her own learning, and the teacher, to improve this capacity, creates spaces for conversation and discussion which allow the student to have an opinion about what has been studied. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In Whole Language Teaching, students can select the materials they want to use for each activity. There are no limits for them since in this way each student can create their own learning with the help and guidance of the collaborating teacher.

Regarding the activities suggested for this method, Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest: "individual and small group reading and writing, group dialogue, activity portfolios, books and graphic creations made by the students, and story writing" (p. 111). Finally, the main instructional characteristics of this method are highlighted by the promotion of cooperative learning among students, the use of authentic literature instead of specially prepared artificial texts and exercises designed to practice individual and group reading skills, the reading of real texts of great interest, reading to understand and with a real purpose and writing as a process through which students explore and discover meanings (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

### 4.3 General artifact characterization of the Resource/Strategy

#### *Didactic Unit*

Established the perspective with which this proposal is intended to be carried out, it is essential to present the didactic unit created as pedagogical material that guides the learning process. Thus, considering the main objective of this pedagogical proposal, a didactic resource (didactic unit) has been designed to get children of this level closer to reading comprehension in English as a foreign language from reading and syntactic, semantic analysis, and pragmatist of graphic novels. In the case of this didactic unit, this resource is divided into two learning stages: the first stage called "Graphic Exploration" and the second stage "Speaking Images". Regarding timing, this is planned for a 12-week implementation schedule.

**Stage 1 – Graphic exploration:** This stage took place in the second half of 2023. This had three main learning objectives that are: understanding the grammatical function of the main vocabulary in graphic novels, identifying the key words of each scene of the graphic novel by understanding the text and identifying the author's intention when reading graphic novels. Regarding the first objective, students have an approach to the grammatical functionality of vocabulary in graphic novels, thus recognizing its role in the content of the text. Then, the second objective leans towards the semantic level where students can understand the main vocabulary of graphic texts to signify their content from the understanding of these words and their meaning. Finally, in the last objective, the students will be able to experience the intention of the author of the work.

Also, it is important to make it clear that this first cycle has a greater depth regarding teaching and the implementation of activities that allow understanding the levels of analysis that are considered in the proposal for the understanding of the students of these levels in the graphic novels. Thus, to account for the above, students will be provided with different activities based on reading different chapters of graphic novels which had their respective activities to analyze. As a result, or product of this cycle, a final artistic and exhibition project of a Fanzine was structured in which the students were able to graphically represent what was understood during the stage by selecting one of the chapters of the graphic novels read during the time established for weeks and activities. This final product became the first artifact collected to be analyzed because it shows the entire learning process carried out by the students during this stage, which was the only one implemented.

**Stage 2 – Talking pictures:** As mentioned before, this stage was not directly implemented with 802. However, an agreement has been reached with the head teacher that it can be implemented in the month of November. For this second stage, a greater degree of complexity was considered. The objectives considered here were: to identify the organization and grammatical structure of sentences in the text, to recognize the variety of rhetorical figures and their function and meaning in graphic novels, and to infer relationships of content and cultural meaning to broaden. understanding of the graphic novel. As a first objective, students are expected to be able to understand the sentence structure of the text by analyzing and performing organizational activities. On the other hand, a higher level was raised in terms of understanding words as rhetorical figures and

how they impact the discourse of the text, and, at the end, students were expected to be able to infer about the cultural relationships and contents reflected in graphic novels.

At this stage, as a final artifact, the creation of a *Minibook* on the comprehension of the second graphic novel taken for this didactic unit (Teen Titans) is brought up. Also, different spaces were created as in the first unit on the presentation of the final evaluation of the unit and the presentation of terms, characteristics, and knowledge of what was learned from the comprehension of the second graphic novel read. Thus, the following table shows how the stages were distributed and organized, indicating the proposed objectives to be achieved.

It is important to clarify here that this unit did not take place before the presentation of the proposal to the jurors since in August and September there were many pedagogical outings, meetings, important training days and competitions at the school, which prevented the implementation of the two units in time.

**Table 6.** Timetable.

<b>STAGE 1: Graphic exploration</b>		
<b><i>Lesson Plan:</i></b> 1 – 6	<b><i>Week:</i></b> 1 - 6	<b><i>Time:</i></b> 3h per week
<b><u>Stage Aims:</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand the grammatical function of the main vocabulary in graphic novels.</li> <li>- To identify the key words of each scene in the graphic novel understanding the text.</li> <li>- To identify the author's intention when reading graphic novels.</li> </ul>		
<b>STAGE 2: Talking pictures</b>		
<b><i>Lesson Plan:</i></b> 7 - 12	<b><i>Week:</i></b> 7 - 12	<b><i>Time:</i></b> 3h per week
<b><u>Stage Aims:</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the organization and grammatical structure of the sentences in the text.</li> <li>- To recognize the variety of figures of speech and their function and meaning in graphic novels.</li> <li>-To infer cultural content and meaning relationships to extend the graphic novel comprehension.</li> </ul>		

## **4.5 Artifact of the proposal**

### **Didactic Unit**

### **Printable Material**

In the previous two shared folders you can find the content of both the Didactic Unit with each Lesson Plan per week and in the second all the recommended material for each Lesson Plan of the unit is attached. It is recommended to open both files at the same time so that, you can understand the content of each Lesson Plan and at the same time verify the activities in printable material to see it.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### Data Analysis - Annexes

This section provides a general idea about the achievements and limitations of the process of data collection and analysis that were taken throughout the implementation of this proposal. As a first stage, we encountered the analytical observation in the classroom with 802 students through the collection of data in three field diaries. The first field diary arises from two classes on the first Lesson Plan of unit 1 on September 13th, 2023 and September 14th, 2023, the second field diary is on the second Lesson Plan of the first unit dated October 4th, 2023 and the third and last field diary with the implementation of the third Lesson Plan of the first unit on October 5th, 2023. On this last day of implementation, there were two important moments that are considered for the analysis of the application of the proposal. The first one was a perception analysis through the application of a perception survey on the application process of the first three Lesson Plans of Unit 1 that were implemented, and the second one was taking the final project proposed in Lesson Plan #6 to finish the unit, including it in the closing of Lesson Plan #3. Now, it is important to emphasize and make clear that the implementation of the first unit was planned to be developed throughout the month of September, but due to administrative conditions of the institution I had to make changes in the implementation process.

Next, we were processed the information collected. In this way, the process of observation and data collection in field diaries was considered as an exploration and description of environments on the analysis of the actors of the study and their understanding of a specific process where not only the implementation situation but also the experiences of each person, the circumstances and different learning contexts were

linked (Patton, 2002). In addition, it was possible to create a space where the actors of this process could have their own voice of perception about what they experienced with the implementation of the proposal and then take the data from a perception survey both at the beginning of the implementation and at the end to determine and explain the different characteristics, comments or perceptions of the students about the broad universe of what was experienced in the exploration of the proposal. As mentioned before, the Fanzine was developed as a final project on the implemented classes. This was an element as a final artifact that is key for the analysis of the students' performance in the classroom and with English to have, as stated by Norman and Lincoln (2011) "an inventory of physical material that groups characteristics and qualities" about the relationship between the students and the object of study from the reading of graphic novels.

Therefore, in the first week of October, 32 perception surveys, 32 Fanzine and 3 field diaries were collected, with which each of the stages of content analysis were completed. It is important to state that in the folder shared at the beginning of this chapter, you will find all this information. However, for the data analysis, only some Fanzine and perception surveys have been selected. We have selected the most representative cases regarding the process of some students and some fanzines that had shortcomings. In the analysis of results, the number of students will be indicated with respect to the PDF page of each shared folder to understand the order and location of each material collected. Therefore, the following is the balance of learning and results for each of the indicators of the three categories chosen for this proposal. An analysis will be made indicator by indicator, showing a triangulation and evidence between the excerpts of the instruments, my considerations about the students' performance and a contrast of the theoretical

information that sustains the present project. The division of each stage of implementation can be found in 4.3.

## **5.1 Validation of the proposal**

### **Stage 1**

#### **Indicator 1: *Syntactic Level***

- To understand the grammatical function of the main vocabulary in graphic novels.

Regarding the results of this indicator, we can find mainly with the different activities proposed in Lesson Plan #1 on the analysis by categories of the first chapter of the graphic novel *New Kid*. The evidence is found in the first field diary where the students have broken down the whole chapter by categories and then performed a Pop Corn didactic exercise in which they divide each category. In addition, these exercises and the first Individual Workshop of Lesson Plan #1 show how students could categorize words with respect to their function and in addition to that, this type of activity makes students understand the grammatical function of vocabulary as they read. Likewise, it is identified in the perception survey that student number 1 and number 2 highlight that the process of grammatical categorization allows them to have more clarity and understanding of the graphic novel:

Student 1 - Question 1: “Para mí fue mucho más fácil comprender la lectura de la novela gráfica con el análisis de la función de las palabras por categorías porque esto permitió que yo pudiera entender el vocabulario de una manera más profunda. Con eso me refiero a que fue más fácil saber el orden de las palabras, su función y también su significado”.

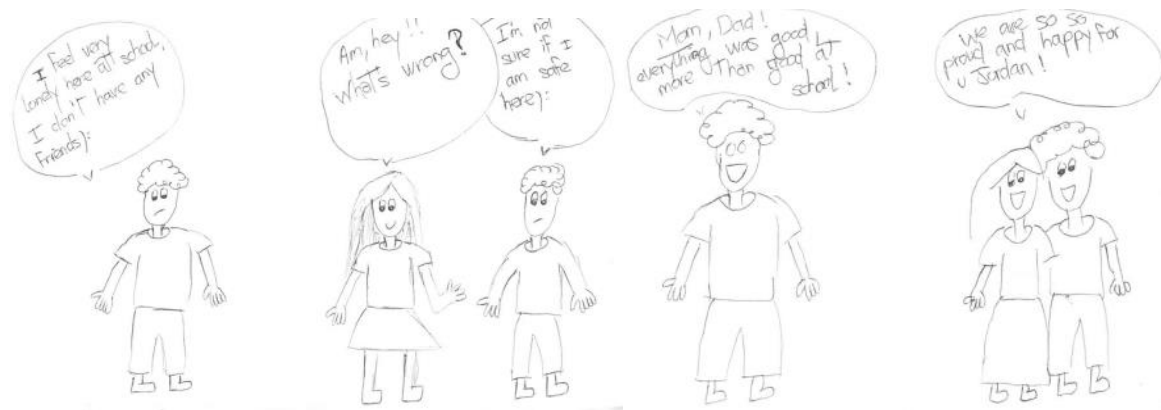
Student 2 – Question 2: “La identificación de las categorías gramaticales si influyo mucho en mi lectura y comprensión de los diferentes capítulos que leímos porque yo entendí bien el papel de cada palabra en los contextos y además entendí algunas categorías que antes no tenía presenté ni siquiera en español” (Perception Survey, Student1, Student 2, 05.10.2023) ([Data Analysis - Annexes](#))

The last evidence shows how the students were able to have a good syntactic analysis process regarding the development of each of the proposed activities. In addition,

it is important to highlight at this point that what these two students affirm can be evidenced in the production of the final project of Fanzine creation. In Student 1 - Fanzine 1, it could be checked how the student considered what she had read in the first three chapters of the selected graphic novel to create a fourth chapter invented as a continuation without having read the fourth chapter. Student 1 and 2 in this activity created their own stories and included different words they understood for the construction of the Fanzines. In addition, the two students correctly accounted for the order of the sentences and the use of different grammatical tenses to order their own chapter and recreate something that could be understood both in the order of the words they used and their function for the comprehension of the chapter.



*(Student 1 - October 5th, 2023)*



*(Student 2 - October 5th, 2023)*

Now, the process of comprehension of the graphic novel was influenced on this category and indicator by the analysis that the students had on the grammatical categories. Let us remember that Snow (2002) states that reading comprehension at the syntactic level can be built and improved if there is simultaneously a process of extraction and construction on the analysis of grammatical categories to understand their function in the context of reading. It can be said that the above applies to the present proposal because in the implementation we can see how the students had a good level on the different activities proposed and, on the creation, and construction of an artifact as a Fanzine which allowed them to use what they had analyzed and learned for the creation of this.

On the other hand, it is also essential to review the process of some students who did not have the same agility as their peers, and this meant that the process was not completed on time. However, they ended up being interested in it. In Field Diary 1, it has been highlighted that the individual work of the syntactic category for the reading comprehension of graphic novels has allowed the students to have a better reading comprehension.

One of the reflections that are presented in the implementation of this first Lesson Plan in the agility that students can have to understand the function of the words in the context of reading the graphic novel since I understand that for some it is easier to break down or categorize without inconvenience and with the help of images, but there are some other students who lag behind and this could hinder the understanding and comprehension of these students on the level and syntactic analysis of the graphic novel (Field Note 1, 14.09.2023).

With the syntactic level, it is possible to reflect on the good use that the students made of the graphic novel and their analysis of the categorization and analysis of the function of the words exposed therein. Mainly, the commitment of the students in each class is valued and the change that the students had in the diagnostic test on the analysis of vocabulary is noticeable. However, although a change was evidenced, as mentioned above, we still need to continue working on a reflective process on reading strategies to include and understand the different learning processes of each student. Understanding the density and grammatical ambiguity which is assigned in a text per course so the reading context has the same level as the students (Snow, 2002) and in this way a more manageable syntactic analysis can be performed.

**Indicator 2:** *Semantic Level*

- To identify the key words of each scene in the graphic novel understanding the text.

To describe mainly the results of this indicator, it is essential to clarify again that due to time constraints, some of the activities were not implemented. In this case, I focused more on Teacher Intervention on the semantic category and on the Main Activity and the Final Individual Workshop of Lesson Plan #2. In this case, in this class the students were able to explore the meaning of the vocabulary of the graphic novel and how this language and vocabulary in relation to the images allowed them to have more understanding of the

graphic novel. One of the activities was the identification of the main words on each page in relation to the image that was on the page to see if with this, the students could decipher or understand more of the context of the scene. In addition, each student, in an individual activity, had to look up the meaning of this word and then represent each word graphically with respect to what it means or was understood with what was being read. Similarly, this was best identified in the students' comments and responses in the perception survey:

Student 3 – Question 3: “El vocabulario si influye mucho en la lectura de la novela gráfica New Kid porque así se me hizo fácil entender dónde estaba Jordan y que estaba haciendo y sintiendo porque él estaba triste y lo demostraba con sus caras y gestos y además con lo que le decía a su papá. Entender las palabras si funciona para saber el tipo de historia que se lee. Me gustaría que fuera de zombies”

Student 4 – Question 4: “Si. Contesto si porque pienso que la palabras pueden aportar mucho a una historia dependiendo de lo que se quiera decir. A mi me funciona saber el significado de las palabras para poder escribir mejor. Las imágenes y palabras son buenas para entender y ser mejor leyendo” (Perception Survey, Student 3, Student 4, 05.10.2023) ([Data Analysis - Annexes](#))

Here I have highlighted the role and responses of these students for their performance in the final Fanzine creation project (Fanzine 1 and 2). They both created different stories about an upcoming continuation of the chapters read. Student 3, as mentioned in the perception survey, has created a story about zombies at school and has used different vocabulary to understand the context of what this student wanted to express, in this way she also recreated some scenes outside the school to bring to her fanzine another type of vocabulary to understand the situation in which each scene was presented. On the other hand, student 4 in his Fanzine concentrates more on talking about his journey to school and how different situations make him think about school survival when he is a lonely person. Student 4 in his Fanzine reflects vocabulary which reflects his thoughts and pain for the loss of his mother, and he uses a slightly melancholic language including words that affirm him.



(Student 3 - October 5th, 2017)



(Student 4 - October 5th, 2017)

Regarding the semantic level in the implementation of this second Lesson Plan, Cobley (2005) states that "it is vital that a student can be clear about the meaning and type of vocabulary used in each narrative context" (p. 82). Thus, I can affirm that the semantic analysis of the graphic novel can improve reading comprehension in English on the understanding that each student can have about the meaning of the words contained in this type of text. Therefore, the student will be able to have more freedom of interpretation to express what the text says by understanding the meaning of those words, but also creating other meanings about the context of each scene. To this Kipatrick (2019) posits that the acquisition of meaning from key words allows students to make connections with texts



already read or the creation of new ones. Thus, I mention again, the cases of the two students mentioned before since they reconstructed a chapter of the graphic novel read considering their likes for other different books and not only that, but also about experiences they had personally using vocabulary that would allow them to recreate another story. In my Field Diary 2, the process on this category and the differentiation of this type of students with some others is evidenced:

I can evidence that regarding this semantic category and its analysis, many of the students only stay with the meaning that the dictionary or the net throws and they do not care or are not very interested in how they can move or make some changes of that meaning about what the story says. Some other students, play with the meaning and assign it by pictures to the chapter, letting their imagination allow them to open other doors to have more knowledge about just one word (Field Note 1, 14.09.2023).

This indicates that the importance of vocabulary and its meaning are important to have a better semantic analysis and a good reading comprehension of what is being read. It should be noted at this point that the reading time and analysis of the vocabulary in the classroom were not enough for the students to have knowledge of all the words that were there. However, a space for reflection was created to question the role of words and their importance and how the graphic novel and the images and graphics allowed for a better understanding. The Common Share moment opened a space in which students talked about different scenarios that could be in the same place, in this case the school. In this way they talked about ideas and words that could change everything to have a different story.

**Indicator 3:** *Pragmatic Level*

- To identify the author's intention when reading graphic novels.

The main activities developed in the third Lesson Plan to identify indicator 3 about the author's intention were about the third chapter of *New Kid*, the graphic novel selected for this first stage. The students had to read the chapter considering the other two levels of comprehension already studied and applied so that now each one of them could have a deeper understanding of what they could understand or infer about what the author of this graphic novel was trying to describe. Each student had to write on different papers the intended thought or opinion and then read it. This was very beneficial because the students took the time to write and although some described more than everything that happened in the chapter, some others did take the time to describe the scenes further, talking about the bullying, the fear, and the feelings that the main character had about being new to the school. Thus, in the perception survey, the students highlighted the importance of understanding the author's intention in order to know what the author means by what is written:

Student 5 – Question 5: “Para mi todo porque la relación de las imágenes con las palabras me dejó saber la intención del autor porque me daba cuenta de que, en algunas escenas, el personaje hablaba sobre sus miedos y pues lo dejaba ver en la imagen entonces el autor quiere que sepamos que el está mal por ser nuevo y en su primer día de cole”

Student 6 – Question 6: “Claro que sí, me gusta y entiendo más si hay imágenes y la intención del autor puedo entenderla muy bien. En esta novela en cada página había imágenes y eso es chévere porque en los tres capítulos, el autor nos deja ver y entender que quiere decir, como su idea sobre la historia” (Perception Survey, Student 3, Student 4, 05.10.2023). ([Data Analysis - Annexes](#))

The evidence of the above can be seen reflected in the students' Fanzine 5 and 6 since unlike the other Fanzine mentioned before, they concentrated more on the plot of the graphic novel in the first chapters to make a final chapter about what the character would live after entering the school. At the pragmatic level, the students were able to recognize and identify the author's communicative intentions to create their own story without leaving

aside the ideas and context that was already present in what they had read. In this way, Cutting (2002) states that the author's intention can persuade us to create communicative relationships to create an opinion, comment or question about what is being read. Thus, these students were able to identify the author's intention and continue along almost the same line so as not to lose the thread of the story and finish their Fanzine "manifesting and acknowledging the very reality that has been created with the communicator's intention" (Cutting, 2002, p. 128).



*(Student 5 - October 5th, 2017)*

*(Student 6 - October 5th, 2017)*

As I mentioned earlier, although some students like the ones cited above were able to understand the author's intent explicitly. I found it interesting that there were students who had a level of understanding about the communicative act that the author implicitly wanted to express:

Some students talk about social issues in the pragmatic analysis from the author's intention about the graphic novel. They do not only focus on what is explicitly said in the novel but go beyond that. This surprised me because in their reading and writing of understanding they could verify that not only the character was afraid, but that the school could be cruel at times and they also believed that it was not a safe place due to the bullying that could be experienced, the rejection and even the humiliation (Field Note 1, 05.10.2023).

On a pragmatic level, I must acknowledge that most of the students had an understanding about the relationship and interaction between text and images for the recognition of the author's intention. However, some students did not correctly perform this comprehension since they only concentrated on summarizing what was written and did not give themselves the opportunity to have a deeper understanding or to use previous knowledge or experience to be able to talk about the intention and about what the author or the scenes read could mean. In this Lesson Plan, we were able to have an oncoming, and discussion about the specific contexts of language and communication to understand that pragmatics not only works to understand the meaning of what is written but that what is written has a purpose to interpret the conclusions, ideas, and opinions of the real world that the author lives in. And not only the above, but from pragmatics, a communicative space is created on what each student wants to say what he/she understood.

## **Stage 2**

### **Indicator 1, 2 and 3**

- Identify the organization and grammatical structure of the sentences in the text.
- To recognize the variety of figures of speech and their function and meaning in graphic novels.
- To infer cultural content and meaning relationships to extend the graphic novel comprehension.

These three indicators are mentioned to clarify two aspects. The first of them regarding the implementation time, which, as already mentioned before, due to the time and both pedagogical and administrative activities of the institution, the implementation to verify these three indicators was not possible. However, the teaching unit is presented complete both in terms of its organization and the materials suggested for each activity

**(Didactic Unit).**

On the other hand, it can be mentioned that the implementation process of the second unit has been discussed with the professor for its implementation in November. However, it is discussed that there may be different activities that may not facilitate the continuous process of activities.

## **5.2 Balance of lessons learned**

In relation to the specific objectives proposed in this study, the process of reading comprehension in EFL with the reading of graphic novels was characterized by having different perspectives, ideas, and opinions of the participating students since throughout the classes implemented, the students showed interest in the proposed activities. Furthermore, despite not finishing the implementation due to time constraints, students stated in the perception surveys that they had more knowledge about the categorization of words, the meaning of words, their importance in the context of the graphic novel, and the knowledge of the intention of the author and the ideas expressed in the graphic text.

It is also essential to mention that throughout the observation and implementation, with the evidence I was able to show, each student's process is different. In addition, the planned application time is generally not enough to control and verify each student process, since there are some factors that do not allow everything to be carried out on time. However, the important thing is to consider each process and provide the respective feedback, so each student understands their process and how they should improve.

Looking at the second objective, I can talk about the method used in the classroom for teaching the proposal and about the resource selected for implementation. First, the whole language classroom was fundamental in the sense of being able to talk with the

students about the activities and their creation regarding what they were interested in. Additionally, throughout the implementation, being closer to them allowed me to have a collaborative relationship with each student for the explanation and direction of each activity and the final project. Furthermore, the use of the graphic novel as a graphic reading resource to improve reading comprehension was vital for each process because all the students showed interest from the beginning in each of the chapters of the novel that was read, and they were asking about some other graphic novels for their free time reading.

This work enriched my process as a teacher in training because I learned different things in the classroom that can give me a lot of experience for the future. Also, I can say that this process gave me the opportunity to reflect on what can be done in a classroom when teaching English as a foreign language without leaving aside the role we assume when educating others. I value all the modifications and twists that this project had because it made me reflect on my entire process as a teacher.

### **5.3 General recommendations**

It is essential now to bring up some reflections that remain with me as a teacher in training. Firstly, my process with this group of students was received very strongly by me since most of the students were very participatory, collaborative, and respectful of each of the activities. However, I understand that each group of trainees may have different particularities that can influence the implementation process both positively and negatively. Therefore, I believe that it is vital to consider the group you are working with to know well the needs, requirements and different things that have a good impact on the development of the class.

On the other hand, in my case, and as the selected 8th course, I created the didactic unit with respect to what was established in the Ministry of Education regarding the level and requirements for this course. However, the material, the activity idea and the order of the Lesson Plan can be taken for other courses to create other activities with greater or lesser difficulty depending on the needs and level of the selected or assigned course.

Now I suggest to my colleagues and teachers that activities be created that allow students to explore and explore their creativity not only in the language or the skills of speaking or writing but that it is brought up for the creation of space in English as foreign language, classes with other methodologies such as drawing, art, etc.

It is necessary to clarify that if someone else decides to take the initiative or take up any topic related to this proposal, it should keep in mind the importance of improving and emphasizing the pragmatic level of reading comprehension so that students are able to express themselves more in communicative situations since some students do not have this level of analysis in mind or do not understand it in detail. With this group, a process of improvement was seen in that skill and that was good to promote reading not only to learn about a specific topic or complete a school assignment, but also to see a change in the critical aspect that each student about what he reads.

My proposal not only seeks to improve reading comprehension in an area aimed at understanding the meaning of a text, but also to create a space of understanding in which “the imagination, the voice of each reader becomes visible about what they read (...) forming a reading consciousness of the reality that surrounds it” (Smagorinsky, 2001, p. 102).

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## 7. APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1 Consent form

 UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL <small>CONSTITUCIÓN DE 1958</small>	<b>FORMATO</b> <b>AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES Y DE MENORES DE EDAD</b> <small>Resolución 767 de 18 de junio 2018</small>
FOR009GSI	Fecha de Aprobación: 18-06-2018 Versión: 01 Página 2 de 2

#### AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES DE MENORES DE EDAD

Ciudad y fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_, identificado con C.C.  C.E.  No. \_\_\_\_\_ expedida en \_\_\_\_\_, representante legal del menor \_\_\_\_\_, identificado con T.I.  NUIP  No. \_\_\_\_\_ declaro que he sido informado por **LA UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL** (en adelante la **UPN**), identificada con NIT. 899.999.124-4, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá y sede principal en la calle 72 No. 11 – 86 de Bogotá, que, de conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 y el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad*, disponible en la página web [www.pedagogica.edu.co](http://www.pedagogica.edu.co), actuará como Responsable del tratamiento de mis datos personales<sup>1</sup>, necesarios para el cumplimiento de la misión de la **UPN**, obtenidos a través de canales y dependencias institucionales y que podrá recolectar, almacenar, usar, actualizar, transmitir, transferir y poner en circulación o suprimirlos, mediante el uso de las medidas necesarias para otorgar seguridad a los registros, evitando su adulteración, pérdida, consulta, uso o acceso no autorizado o fraudulento incluso por terceros.

Que tratándose de datos sensibles<sup>2</sup> y de menores de edad no está obligado a autorizar su tratamiento, salvo las excepciones consagradas en la ley o que medie su consentimiento expreso. Que es de carácter facultativo responder a las preguntas que traten de datos sensibles o menores de edad.

Como representante legal del menor, debo velar por los derechos consagrados en la Constitución y la Ley sobre sus datos, especialmente el derecho a conocer, actualizar, rectificar y suprimir información personal, así como el derecho a revocar el consentimiento otorgado para el tratamiento de datos personales del menor, en los casos en que sea procedente. Las inquietudes o solicitudes relacionadas con el tratamiento dichos datos, pueden ser tramitadas a través del e-mail: [quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co](mailto:quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co)

La Universidad garantiza la confidencialidad, libertad, seguridad, veracidad, transparencia, acceso y circulación restringida de los datos y se reserva el derecho de modificar su Política de Tratamiento de datos personales en cualquier momento. Cualquier cambio será informado y publicado oportunamente en la página web.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada e inequívoca a la **UPN** para tratar los datos personales del menor que represento, de acuerdo con el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* y para los fines relacionados con su Misión.

Leído lo anterior, manifiesto que la información para el Tratamiento de los datos personales del menor de edad que represento, ha sido suministrada de forma voluntaria y es veraz, completa, exacta, actualizada, comprobable y comprensible.

#### FIRMA

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

Identificación: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> La UPN garantiza la confidencialidad, libertad, seguridad, veracidad, transparencia, acceso y circulación restringida de mis datos y se reserva el derecho de modificar su Política de Tratamiento de datos personales en cualquier momento. Cualquier cambio será informado y publicado oportunamente en la página web.

<sup>2</sup> Son **datos sensibles** aquellos que afectan la intimidad del Titular o cuyo uso indebido puede generar su discriminación, tales como aquellos que revelen el origen racial o étnico, la orientación política, las convicciones religiosas o filosóficas, la pertenencia a sindicatos, organizaciones sociales, de derechos humanos o que promuevan intereses de cualquier partido político o que garanticen los derechos y garantías de partidos políticos de oposición, así como los datos relativos a la salud, a la vida sexual, y los datos biométricos (Art. 5° Ley 1581 de 2012, art. 3° Decreto 1377 de 2013).

## Appendix 2

### Observation and Intervention Field Diary Format.

#### Observation Field Diary Format.

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS DIARIO DE CAMPO – PRÁCTICA PEDAGÓGICA E INVESTIGATIVA					
Diario N°	Institución:	Población:	Cantidad niños:	Fecha:	Hora:
Profesor en formación:			Profesor titular:		
Objetivo de aprendizaje de la clase:					
Observación (Consignar 10 datos mínimo)	Categoría asignada	Análisis (Causa-consecuencia-relación)		Aporte al proceso de práctica	

#### Intervention Field Diary Format.

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS DIARIO DE CAMPO – PRÁCTICA PEDAGÓGICA E INVESTIGATIVA		
Field Diary	Date	Time
<b>Teacher in training</b>		
<u>Institution</u>		<u>Population</u>
1. <u>Classroom learning objectives:</u>		
2. <u>Core classroom activities:</u>		
3. <u>Number of children and adults present – Name of absent children:</u>		
4. <u>Evaluation of the class (teaching role, group management, academic and social performance of the children, relevance of the activities, achievement of the proposed objectives).</u>		
5. <u>Evidence - tangible - of the children's performance.</u>		

### **Appendix 3**

Observation Field Diary #2.

[Observation and Intervention Field Diaries](#)

### **Appendix 4**

Observation Field Diary #4.

[Observation and Intervention Field Diaries](#)

Appendix 5  
Diagnostic Test.

Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento I.E.D  
English Reading Diagnosis Test



**Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento I.E.D**  
**English Reading Diagnosis Test**

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

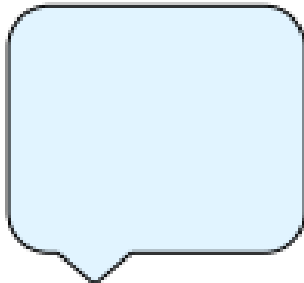
- Read and analyze the previous page of a graphic novel called (Teen Titan) and perform the following comprehension exercises.

- Review each of the words in the image and order them in the following table according to the function of the word.

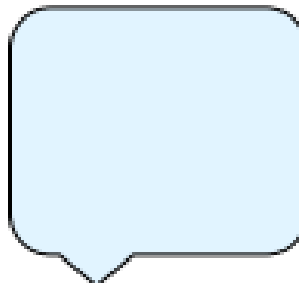
Nouns	Pronouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Prepositions	Conjunctions	Articles	Auxiliar

- Organize the following words in the text balloons.

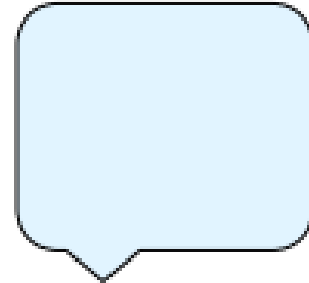
*boy / want / the / she / to / does not / talk / to*



*eating / the / people / restaurant / in / are*



*here / happy / I / working / am*

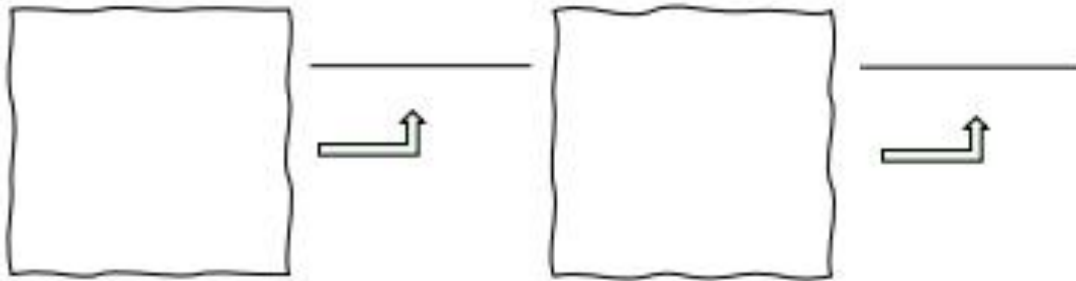


- Make a list of words of which you know the meaning and represent the word with a picture or a drawing inside the box.

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4. Mention 4 examples of figures of speech you can see in the image and point them out directly in the image.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

**Figures of speech:** these are language resources that use words in an original or unusual way to enhance their meaning. Their purpose is to highlight an idea, persuade, embellish a text.

Examples:

**Metaphor:** angelic face

**Irony:** What great news to know that I failed the exam!

**Personification:** The sea was raging.

5. Write what do you think is the author's intention about this image?

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6. What can you infer from the following parts of the image scene?




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## Appendix 6

### Pre-implementation Perception Survey Format.

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional  
Facultad de Humanidades  
Departamento de Lenguas  
Licenciatura en Español e Inglés

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

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Encuesta de percepción

1. ¿Te gusta leer historias con imágenes, comics, novelas graficas o historietas? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Si tu respuesta anterior fue sí. ¿Cuál es tu favorita y qué te gusta de ella?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿Cómo crees que las imágenes, dibujos, graficas, etc. te ayudan a entender la historia o el contexto de lo que estas leyendo?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. ¿Crees que historias con imágenes, comics, novelas graficas o historietas son mejores para leer que los libros tradicionales? ¿Por qué?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Qué tipo de emociones sientes cuando lees?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿Cuál es la parte más divertida de leer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. ¿Te gusta leer en inglés?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. ¿Te sientes más seguro/a al leer en inglés cuando hay imágenes que te ayudan a entender?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. ¿Sobre qué tema te gustaría leer en inglés?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. ¿Crees que los libros con imágenes en inglés pueden ayudarte a aprender más sobre la cultura y el idioma?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 7

## Post-implementation Perception Survey Format.

### [2. Post-implementation Perception Surveys](#)



UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA  
NACIONAL  
Educación de excelencia

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

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

*Departamento de Lenguas  
Licenciatura en Español e Inglés  
Karen Viviana Núñez Pedraza*

**Graphic Novel: a tool to promote reading comprehension in EFL.**

**Encuesta de percepción: Stage 1: Graphic Exploration**

#### **Objetivos de la unidad:**

- Comprender la función gramatical del vocabulario principal de las novelas gráficas.
- Identificar las palabras clave de cada escena de la novela gráfica comprendiendo el texto.
- Identificar la intención del autor al leer novelas gráficas.

1. ¿Cómo evalúas tu capacidad para comprender la función de las palabras leyendo novelas gráficas?

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2. ¿Cómo la identificación de las categorías gramaticales influenció la lectura de la novela gráfica?

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3. ¿Cómo crees que el vocabulario utilizado en la novela gráfica influyó en tu comprensión de la historia?

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4. ¿Piensas que el lenguaje y vocabulario de la novela gráfica en relación con las imágenes te permite tener más comprensión? Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. ¿Por qué?

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5. ¿Qué elementos visuales y escritos de la novela gráfica te ayudaron a identificar la intención del autor en cada escena de la novela gráfica?

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6. ¿Consideras que la interacción entre el texto y las imágenes de la novela gráfica leída te permitieron identificar las ideas principales que el autor quería exponer en cada escena?

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Escribe qué aprendiste de la novela gráfica en función de la comprensión lectora.

7. ¿Qué se dificultó al leer novela gráfica?

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8. ¿Qué se te facilitó al leer novela gráfica?

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