

<https://doi.org/10.69639/arandu.v12i2.1004>

## Improving Reading Skills in A2 Level Students

*Mejoramiento de la competencia lectora de los estudiantes de nivel A2*

**Sandra Elizabeth Farinango Carvajal**

[elizabeth.farinango@educacion.gob.ec](mailto:elizabeth.farinango@educacion.gob.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2039-0493>

Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador  
Durán -Ecuador

**Johnny Segundo Campoverde López**

[jsjohnnysegundol@ube.edu.ec](mailto:jsjohnnysegundol@ube.edu.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0108-4755>

Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador  
Durán -Ecuador

**Josue Reinaldo Bonilla Tenesaca**

[jrbonillat@ube.edu.ec](mailto:jrbonillat@ube.edu.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6748-2345>

Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador  
Durán -Ecuador

*Artículo recibido: 10 marzo 2025*

*- Aceptado para publicación: 20 abril 2025*

*Conflictos de intereses: Ninguno que declarar*

### ABSTRACT

Today, the use of English has become an essential tool to open many doors at a professional level. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, there are six proficiency levels that can facilitate teaching methods and assessment, regrouped in Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User. However, the model of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) implies additional challenges for teachers in their classrooms when dealing with students at the A2 level. Consequently, this article has the general objective of analyzing different strategies and tips used to improve reading skills in A2 level students according to the specialized literature and the data collected from instruments applied in the analyzed context. In order to achieve this goal, research methods such as literature systematization, deductive and inductive approaches in the study of international and national authors, as well as surveys are used. The main authors and articles used for this literature review have been selected from specialized journals and publications found in Scholar Google during the period 2021-2025. The sample involved 36 participants, 31 students and 5 teachers selected through a convenience sampling method. The results demonstrate that a combination of structured reading techniques and interactive learning experiences effectively enhances reading proficiency among A2 students.

**Keywords:** english language, reading skills, A2 students

## RESUMEN

Hoy en día, el uso del inglés se ha convertido en una herramienta esencial para abrir muchas puertas a nivel profesional. Según el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas, existen seis niveles de competencia que pueden facilitar los métodos de enseñanza y la evaluación, reagrupados en Basic User (usuario básico), Independent User (usuario independiente) y Proficient User (usuario competente). Sin embargo, el modelo de las cuatro destrezas (comprensión oral, comprensión escrita, expresión oral y expresión escrita) implica retos adicionales para los profesores en sus aulas cuando tratan con alumnos de nivel A2. En consecuencia, este artículo tiene como objetivo general analizar diferentes estrategias y consejos utilizados para mejorar la competencia lectora en estudiantes de nivel A2 de acuerdo con la literatura especializada y los datos recogidos de instrumentos aplicados en el contexto analizado. Para alcanzar este objetivo, se utilizan métodos de investigación como la sistematización de la literatura, enfoques deductivos e inductivos en el estudio de autores internacionales y nacionales, así como encuestas. Los principales autores y artículos utilizados para esta revisión bibliográfica han sido seleccionados de revistas especializadas y publicaciones encontradas en Scholar Google durante el periodo 2021-2025. La muestra incluyó 36 participantes, 31 estudiantes y 5 profesores seleccionados mediante un método de muestreo por conveniencia. Los resultados demuestran que una combinación de técnicas de lectura estructuradas y experiencias de aprendizaje interactivo mejora eficazmente la competencia lectora de los estudiantes de A2.

*Palabras clave:* inglés, competencias lectoras, estudiantes de A2

## INTRODUCTION

The use of English has become an essential tool to open many doors at a professional level. Nowadays, English, as the most globally used language, should be included in the curriculum of many schools in order to create all the conditions needed to accomplish a comprehensive education to face their future professional context.

In this sense, taking into account what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2025) establishes regarding proficiency, six proficiency levels can be identified to facilitate teaching methods and assessment. These levels can be arranged in three main groups: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User, which are subdivided depending on the needs of the local context.

Since most countries use this CEFR taxonomy, Ecuador is not an exception, and many teachers and researchers have been concerned about how to adapt their teaching strategies and approaches to meet the goals set by the European Framework and to improve the linguistic needs of learners. Concerning the Basic User level, which is divided into A1 and A2, this concern is of paramount importance, since these students should establish a strong linguistic and intercultural foundation to continue developing communicative skills in the following proficiency levels.

On the other hand, the traditional methodology including the four skills of the language (listening, reading, speaking and writing) poses additional challenges for teachers in their classrooms when dealing with Basic Users. Among the most common challenges teachers face are students' motivation, autonomy, and frustration, which can lead to a teacher-centered classroom. These factors can be exacerbated when students begin their linguistic journey to English, i.e. when they are Basic Users. As for students at the A2 level, the CEFR sets a general frame as follows:

Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs.

Can produce brief, everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type (e.g. personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information).

Has a limited repertoire of short, memorized phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.

(Council of Europe, 2025, p. 130)

The acquisition of a foreign language functions in a similar way to the acquisition of a native language, so that people usually listen first and then speak, or read first and then write. In this sense, developing receptive skills (listening and reading) from the first levels is a critical strategy for teachers. Reception implies the reception and the process of information input,

which is essential when learning a foreign language to get used with the appropriate linguistic schemas for inferring meaning and approaching the communicative intention. Also, these skills provide students with an appropriate linguistic model to reproduce later when speaking or writing.

However, reading can be a real challenge for both teachers and A2 students, as teachers often find it difficult to look for new and fresh strategies to make reading appealing to students. The CEFR has also emphasized the importance of developing reading comprehension, which includes both written and signed texts. The CEFR defines categories for reading that are “a mixture between reading purpose and reading particular genres with specific functions” (Council of Europe, 2025, p. 53). Additionally, A2 level students should develop general reading understanding as follows:

Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high-frequency every day or job-related language.

Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items. (Council of Europe, 2025, p. 54)

Considering the above, many researchers and teachers, such as Duke and Cartwright (2021); Mutiara (2021); Smith *et al.* (2021); Zuhri *et al.* (2021); Erya and Pustika (2021); Nabijanovna *et al.* (2021); Buñay *et al.* (2024); among others, have studied and proposed different strategies to address this issue and improve the reading skills of Basic Users, specifically A2 students.

Gastillo (2022), conducted a study to improve the English reading and writing skills of 48 A2 students from Loja, southern Ecuador. Her results demonstrated that employing Genially games in classroom activities was essential to determine main ideas, support details, and other elements of a text.

Ceyhan and Yıldız (2021) carried out a mixed experimental design in school of Turkey with 62 second-grade students to demonstrate that reading understanding, motivation, and fluency aspects significantly improved through the use of interactive reading aloud strategies.

Nabijanovna *et al.* (2021) state that reading is of paramount importance in most language classrooms, which is why the selection and development of EFL reading materials should be a carefully done task for teachers. The authors provide an overview of the development of reading materials and the selection of authentic materials for designing tasks in English.

Technology has also been used to improve language skills, and reading is no exception. For example, Korkmaz and Öz (2021) demonstrated that online games such as Kahoot could enhance reading comprehension. They conducted a study with a total of 38 students to whom they applied quizzes and questionnaires to find out that this technological tool can be an effective way to motivate EFL learners and thus improve their comprehension skills. Novanti

and Suprayogi (2021) also demonstrated that the use of Webtoon for EFL students is efficient in terms of vocabulary acquisition, which can also be useful for developing reading skills in Basic Users. Webtoon is an e-comic application that could also be motivating for teenagers.

Alsan and Deneme (2021) emphasized that the cooperative learning method is more effective on EFL learners' success in reading comprehension than the traditional teacher-centered method. The authors conducted an experimental study, using a pretest-posttest group of 169 students, and designed techniques of student team performance divisions to validate their findings.

Rahman (2022) also demonstrated the positive effects of using literature to improve students' reading comprehension. The author used multiple-choice reading tests to demonstrate that the use of literature circles was more effective than the direct reading activity method.

Satriani *et al.* (2022) demonstrated through an experimental classroom that the use of the direct reading thinking activity strategy helps students' reading understanding of narrative passages.

Buñay *et al.* (2024) conducted a quantitative study that suggested that energizing students' learning promotes their voluntary interest in reading. Therefore, the authors implemented a Common Lit platform to determine academic progress and reading proficiency, which proved to be effective in terms of implementing interactive activities, learning tools, and a variety of interesting information.

Therefore, the general objective of this article is to analyze different strategies used to enhance the reading skills of A2 level students according to the specialized literature and the data collected from instruments applied in the analyzed context.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In order to achieve the objective delineated in this paper, the present study employs a non-experimental design, emphasizing the observation and measurement of variables without direct intervention. The research follows a mixed-methodology approach, which uses qualitative and quantitative research methods, thereby facilitating a general perception of the influence of specific strategies on the reading skills of A2-level students (Taherdoo, 2022). Quantitative data can provide quantifiable outcomes, while qualitative data can offer insights into student experiences and perceptions.

### **Research Design**

The independent variable of the study is the strategies found in the specialized literature that can enhance the reading skills of A2-level students. The dependent variable is the reading skills of A2 students at the María Angélica Idrobo High School. Both variables are studied through instruments that gather qualitative and quantitative data.

## **Data Collection Instruments**

### **Quantitative Analyses**

Surveys are conducted among A2 level students and teachers to gather data on students' reading habits, attitudes toward reading, and perceived improvements in reading skills concerning the implementation of certain strategies. This instrument includes Likert-scale items to assess reading habits, enjoyment, and self-efficacy related to reading.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Systematization, as well as deductive and inductive approaches are used in the study of international and national specialized literature on the topic. The primary authors and articles utilized for this literature review have been selected from specialized journals and publications found in Scholar Google during the period 2021-2025.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population for this study consists of A2 level students, enrolled in language courses at the María Angélica Idrobo Educational Unit. Teachers who instruct A2 level students reading are also included in the study. The sample involved 36 participants, 31 students and 5 teachers selected through a convenience sampling method, a practical method that ensures availability and accessibility.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Before applying the instruments designed, it was consulted with participants to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality. Data on instruments were gathered anonymously and privately.

## **RESULTS Y DISCUSION**

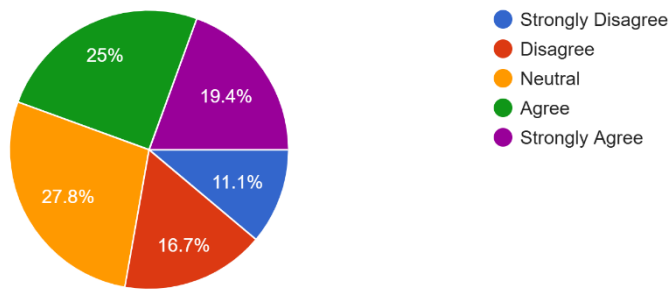
The findings from the literature review and the surveys conducted among A2-level students and teachers at María Angélica Idrobo Educational Unit provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various reading strategies. The results highlight key trends in students' engagement, preferences, and progress in reading comprehension.

### **Students Survey Results**

The students survey responses to the 10 questions proposed provide relevant information into students' attitudes toward reading in English, engagement in classroom activities, and the effectiveness of different learning strategies. For example, as Figure 1 shows, although a majority of students feel comfortable, a significant portion of them still experience difficulties, indicating the need for additional reading support strategies.

**Figure 1**

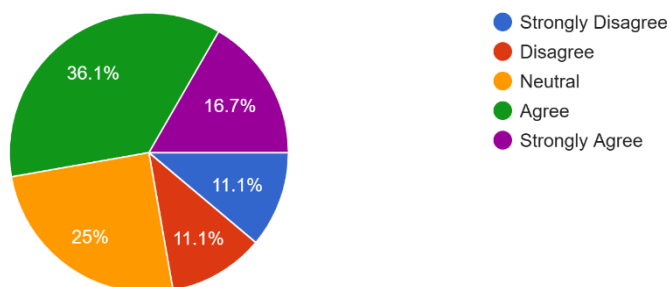
*I feel comfortable reading in English*



Besides, Figure 2 demonstrates that even though the reading activities are generally engaging, with 22.2% either disagreeing or neutral, improvements in variety and interactivity may be beneficial.

**Figure 2**

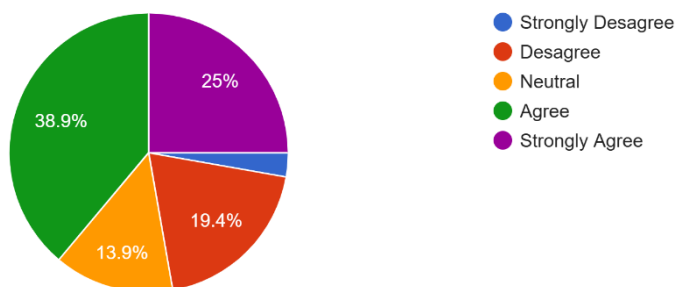
*The reading activities we do in class are interesting*



Data from Figure 3 shows that short stories are effective, but a considerable portion (25%) disagrees, meaning adjustments in story selection and integration may be needed.

**Figure 3**

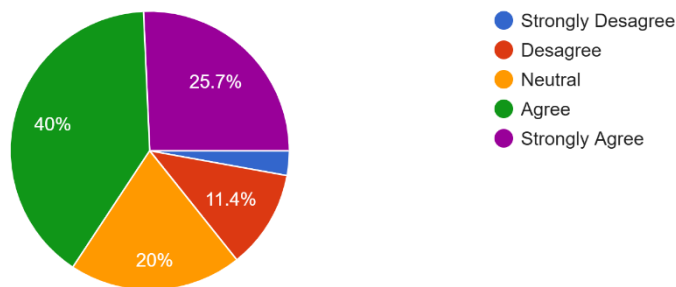
*Using short stories improves my reading skills*



As can be observed in Figure 4, group work is beneficial, but alternative learning styles should be considered for students who prefer individual reading strategies.

**Figure 4**

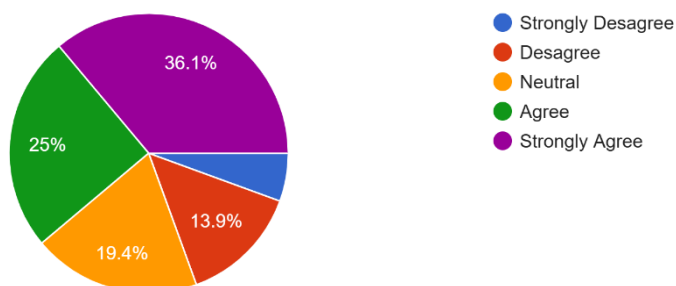
*I prefer to work in groups when we do read activities*



Moreover, Figure 5 demonstrates that active reading techniques have positive effects, but a large portion (36.1% disagrees), suggesting the need for better training in these methods.

**Figure 5**

*Reading strategies (such as highlighting or taking notes) help me understand texts better*



In Figure 6, it can be identified that gamified learning is valuable, but it needs further exploration to engage students who remain neutral or disagree.

**Figure 6**

*Games and interactive activities make reading more fun*

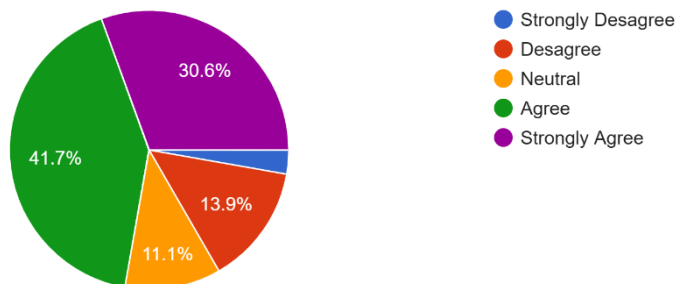
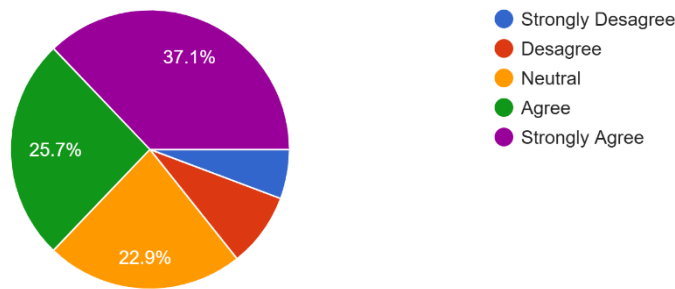


Figure 7 demonstrates that feedback is clearly beneficial, but methods to make it more actionable and engaging should be explored.



**Figure 7**

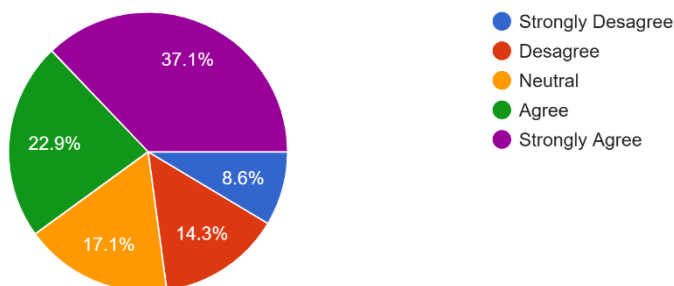
*Receiving feedback on my reading helps me improve my skills*



As can be seen from Figure 8, this approach benefits many students, but others may need alternative comprehension exercises.

**Figure 8**

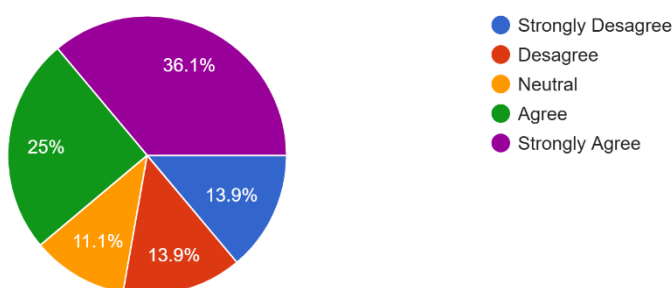
*Reading aloud helps me understand texts better*



Data from Figure 9 indicates that expanding reading material variety (e.g., articles, digital texts, real-world content) could enhance engagement.

**Figure 9**

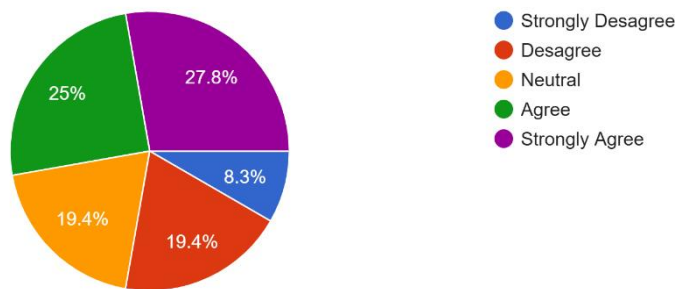
*The variety of reading materials (articles, books, stories) in class motivates me to read more*



Besides, in Figure 10, while many students feel progress, targeted intervention is needed for those who still struggle.

**Figure 10**

*I feel my reading skills have improved this year*



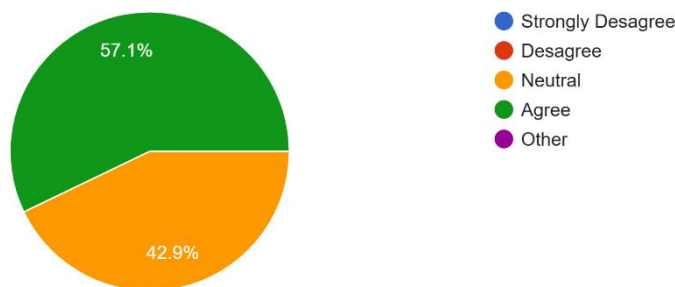
These results show that blended learning strategies, interactive activities, and diversified reading materials positively impact student engagement and comprehension. However, further personalization of teaching methods, considering students who prefer individual work, struggle with reading strategies, or require additional motivation, can optimize learning outcomes.

### Teachers Survey Results

On the other hand, teacher perceptions regarding reading activities, strategies, and student engagement, give an additional insight into the studied issue. For example, in Figure 11, although no respondents strongly disagreed, nearly half remain neutral, suggesting that reading activities may need further customization or increased engagement to fully captivate all students.

**Figure 11**

*My students enjoy the reading activities I implement in class*



In addition, as it can be observed from Figure 12, short stories are generally beneficial, but 28.6% remain neutral, meaning some students may require alternative or supplementary reading approaches to improve comprehension.

**Figure 12**

*Using short stories is an effective strategy for improving my students' reading skills*

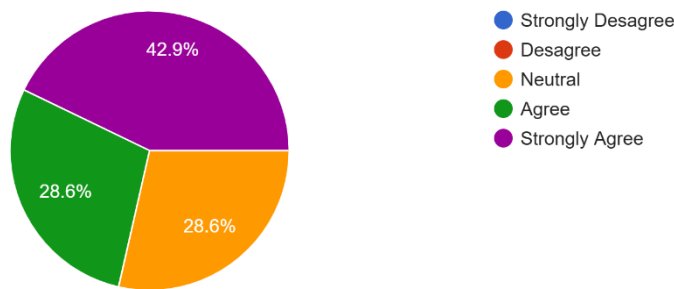
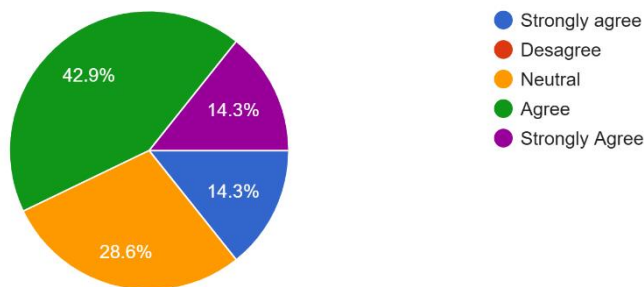


Figure 13 demonstrates that collaborative reading appears to enhance comprehension, but 14.3% are neutral, suggesting that individual-based strategies should also be considered for students who may not thrive in group settings.

**Figure 13**

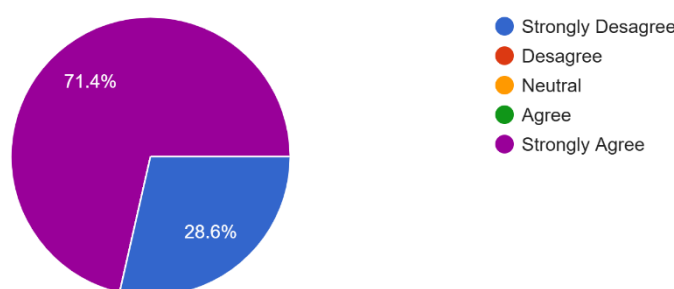
*Encouraging group work during reading increases my students' comprehension*



Data collected from Figure 14 indicates that integrating gamification and interactive exercises to maintain engagement and reinforce reading comprehension is positive.

**Figure 14**

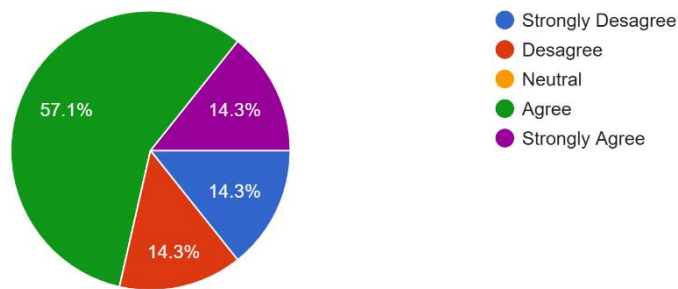
*Fun activities (games, interactive activities) facilitate my students' reading learning*



In Figure 15, it can be appreciated that regular feedback is crucial in helping students refine reading skills, and implementing structured feedback sessions could significantly benefit learning outcomes.

**Figure 15**

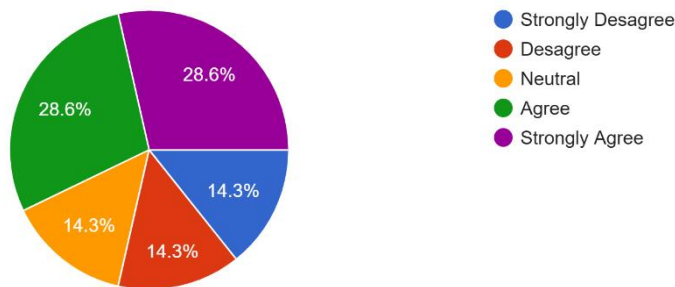
*Providing frequent feedback on reading activities is essential for my students' progress*



Furthermore, Figure 16 demonstrates that while variety is generally seen as motivational, some students might still prefer familiar or structured materials to guide their reading.

**Figure 16**

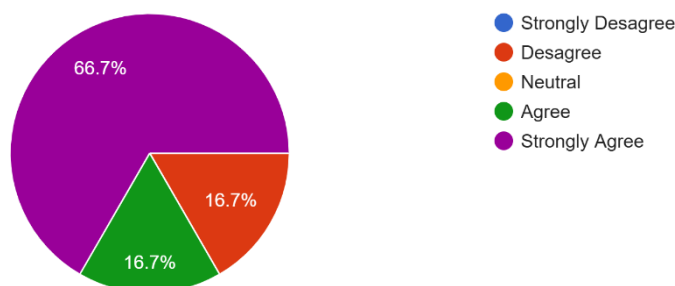
*Students show greater interest in reading when provided with a variety of materials*



In addition, in Figure 17, teachers indicated that oral reading practices should continue as a prominent instructional method, reinforcing pronunciation and fluency.

**Figure 17**

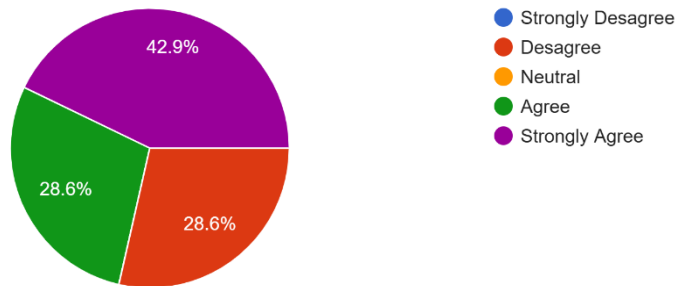
*Reading aloud in class is an effective practice for developing reading skills*



Data from Figure 18 illustrates that while progress is recognized, the neutral responses suggest a need for further monitoring of student reading development.

**Figure 18**

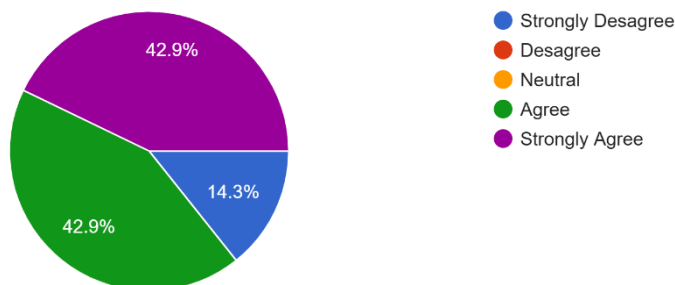
*My students have shown improvement in their reading skills throughout the course*



Moreover, Figure 19 shows that active reading techniques like annotating and highlighting should be strengthened and taught explicitly for maximum benefit.

**Figure 19**

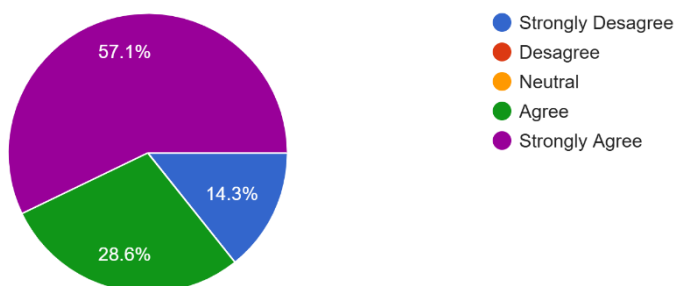
*The use of reading strategies (underlining, note-taking) is helpful for my students*



In Figure 20, it can be appreciated how teachers overwhelmingly agree on the importance of reading instruction, emphasizing its role in overall student success.

**Figure 20**

*I believe that reading education is fundamental to my students' learning process*



The teachers survey data indicates positive trends in reading engagement, comprehension strategies, and student improvement. Gamification, collaborative learning, personalized feedback, and active reading techniques emerge as effective tools, but further individualization of teaching methods can optimize outcomes for students who may still struggle.

These survey results reaffirm findings from specialized literature, which emphasize the need for multifaceted approaches to support A2 learners in their reading development. The data suggests that traditional methods alone may not fully engage students, whereas blended

strategies, such as integrating digital resources, storytelling, and interactive exercises, create a more stimulating learning environment.

One of the key challenges identified is student motivation, particularly when reading longer or complex texts. Teachers who incorporated diverse reading materials, including short stories, magazines, and digital content, reported an increase in student interest and willingness to participate actively. Additionally, reading aloud emerged as a practical method to improve fluency and pronunciation, strengthening comprehension skills.

Overall, the results demonstrate that a combination of structured reading techniques and interactive learning experiences effectively enhances reading proficiency among A2 students. Future research could further explore how personalized learning platforms and adaptive reading exercises can optimize student performance and confidence in English literacy.

### CONCLUSION

The literature review allowed to identify different strategies to approach reading in Basic Level Users, among which it can be mentioned the use of literature, short stories, cooperative learning, task-based approach, and the use of digital tools. The majority of these strategies are aimed at enhancing students' motivation and creating a relaxed and meaningful learning environment for developing reading skills. In addition, with the help of quantitative research methods, a survey applied to 36 participants, 31 students and 5 teachers, showed important insights regarding the issue in the context analyzed. The results of these surveys show the main attitudes towards reading skills, the strategies used and the relevance students' give them.

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