



**UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**“EXPLORING TEACHER’S STRATEGIES TO
PROMOTE SELF-STUDY IN EFL YOUNG
LEARNERS”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL
AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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ADVISOR'S APPROVAL

In my role as Advisor of the research paper entitled **“EXPLORING TEACHER’S STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SELF-STUDY IN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS”** prepared by **VILLAMAR SUÁREZ NERY SMITH** an undergraduate student of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Major, at School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,



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García Villao Rosa Tatiana, MSc.
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Statement of Authorship

I, VILLAMAR SUÁREZ NERY SMITH, with ID number 0942991597 undergraduate student from Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, School of Education and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, in my role as author of the research project "Exploring Teacher's Strategies to Promote Self-Study in EFL Young Learners", certify that this work is of my authorship.



Villamar Suárez Nery Smith

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Declaration

The responsibility for the information and content in this degree and research work lies with the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, which also holds intellectual property rights.



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First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents for their unwavering support and effort in helping me achieve this goal. They have been the fundamental pillar that has encouraged me to move forward and to strive every day to improve in every aspect of my life. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to my Lord Jesus Christ for being the light that guides my path and the source of wisdom in my decisions. Both my parents and Jesus Christ have been the guiding forces who have shaped my character and inspired me throughout this journey. I am deeply grateful to them.

-Villamar Suárez Nery Smith

Dedication

I want to dedicate this project to my beloved parents, who have helped me in every moment and given me everything I needed to pursue this career. Their love, support and consideration were the keys to fulfilling my goals.

-With Love, Villamar Suárez Nery Smith

Abstract

This research focuses on identifying the strategies used by teachers to promote self-study among young learners. It is important to highlight that classroom learning alone is not sufficient; therefore, students must engage in autonomous study at home to enhance their learning. However, the lack of resources, inadequate study environments, and limited parental support make it challenging to maintain consistent self-study. After reviewing the available evidence, several strategies applied by teachers were identified, such as the use of technological resources, games, and digital platforms. This study followed a qualitative and phenomenological research design, and data were collected through interviews with five teachers from Unidad Educativa Zenon Macias Vera and Unidad Educativa Maria Luisa Luque de Sotomayor. The findings reveal that the most effective strategies for promoting self-study include the use of digital platforms and online resources such as online quizzes, Kahoot, BBC Learning, and online games, as well as motivational and participatory strategies, autonomous support, and relevant tasks involving games. These strategies have helped young learners enhance their autonomous learning and build confidence in their ability to learn independently. Consequently, the study identified that the use of these strategies has an important significant in student motivation. Teachers also find these strategies useful because they provide guided feedback and supervision, resulting in positive outcomes in students' academic performance and language acquisition. This research not only contributes valuable information to the field of education but also serves as a guide offering effective practices for educators and students seeking to improve self-study.

KEY WORDS: Teacher strategies, self-study, young learners, motivation, digital platforms, autonomous learning.

Resumen

Esta investigación se centra en identificar las estrategias utilizadas por los docentes para promover el autoestudio en jóvenes aprendices. Es importante destacar que el aprendizaje en el aula por sí solo no es suficiente; por lo tanto, los estudiantes deben realizar estudio autónomo en casa para fortalecer su aprendizaje. Sin embargo, la falta de recursos, los entornos de estudio inadecuados y el limitado apoyo de los padres dificultan mantener la constancia. Tras revisar la evidencia disponible, se identificaron varias estrategias aplicadas por los docentes, como el uso de recursos tecnológicos, juegos y plataformas digitales. Este estudio siguió un enfoque cualitativo y fenomenológico, y los datos se recopilieron mediante entrevistas con cinco docentes de la Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera y la Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor. Los hallazgos revelan que las estrategias más efectivas para fomentar el autoestudio incluyen el uso de plataformas y recursos digitales como cuestionarios en línea, Kahoot, BBC Learning y juegos interactivos, así como estrategias motivacionales y participativas, apoyo autónomo y tareas basadas en juegos. Estas estrategias han ayudado a los jóvenes aprendices a fortalecer su aprendizaje autónomo y su confianza para aprender de manera independiente. En consecuencia, el estudio identificó que estas estrategias tienen una importancia significativa en la motivación estudiantil. Los docentes también consideran útiles porque permiten ofrecer retroalimentación guiada y supervisión, generando resultados positivos en el rendimiento académico y la adquisición del idioma. Esta investigación aporta información valiosa al campo educativo y sirve como guía práctica para educadores y estudiantes que buscan mejorar el autoestudio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Estrategias docentes, autoestudio, motivación, jóvenes aprendices, plataformas digitales, aprendizaje autónomo.

INDEX

Contenido

ADVISOR 'S APPROVAL	2
Statement of Authorship	3
Declaration.....	4
Board of Examiners	5
Acknowledgment	6
Dedication.....	7
Abstract.....	8
Resumen.....	9
INDEX.....	10
Introduction.....	15
Chapter I	17
The Problem.....	17
Research Topic	17
Title	17
Problem Statement	17
Problem Question	19
General Question.....	19
Specific Questions:.....	19
Objectives.....	20
General Objective.....	20

Specific Objectives:.....	20
Justification.....	21
Chapter II.....	23
Theoretical Framework.....	23
Teachers Strategies.....	23
Classroom Management.....	25
Scaffolding.....	25
Didactic Strategies.....	26
Role-Play.....	26
Games and Gamification.....	27
Self-Study.....	27
Motivation.....	28
Intrinsic Motivation.....	28
Extrinsic Motivation.....	29
Pedagogical Basis.....	29
Theoretical Bases.....	31
Self-Directed Learning Theory.....	31
Autonomous Learning Theory.....	32
Self-Efficacy Theory.....	32
Legal Basis.....	33

Chapter III.....	34
Methodological Framework.....	34
Methods.....	34
Qualitative Methodology.....	34
Type of Research	35
Phenomenological Studies	35
Data Collection Techniques	35
One-on-One Interview	35
Instruments.....	36
Questionnaire	36
Type of Questions.....	37
Open-Ended Questions.....	37
Data Analysis	37
Ethical considerations	38
Population and Sample	40
Chapter IV.....	41
Analysis and Findings.....	41
Brief Explanation of the Findings	41
Interpretation of Bibliographic Review.....	41
Critical Discussion	48

Chapter V.....	51
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	51
Conclusions.....	51
Recommendations.....	53
References.....	55
Annexes.....	60
Annex A: Certified Anti-Plagiarism System.....	60
Annex B: Questionnaire.....	62
Annex C: Transcript Focus Group.....	63
Interviews with Teachers.....	63
Professor 1.....	63
Professor 2.....	66
Professor 3.....	69
Professor 4.....	73
Professor 5.....	75

Introduction

English is one of the most spoken languages that the world uses to communicate, which means that learning English is quite necessary and indispensable for people around the world. In this regard, the learning of the English language may vary according to different social parameters. Nevertheless, the processes of language learning and vocabulary acquisition are widely recognized as fundamental components in the study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Furthermore, the acquisition of new vocabulary fosters the development of the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which collectively enable effective communication and the exchange of ideas. Therefore, the most efficient path toward mastering a language relies on the implementation of appropriate learning strategies and the learner's individual self-study, allowing for the practical application of the knowledge already acquired.

It is a priority to use learning strategies in language acquisition. According to McLeod (2025) Piaget's learning theory states that strategies are fundamental to learning because they facilitate the acquisition of greater information and self-knowledge. Therefore, EFL and the use of learning strategies that are viable for teaching contribute to the learning process. A detailed, organized plan with all the parameters integrated into linguistics makes it efficient in the pursuit of developing English Language Proficiency skills.

Self-study goes hand with the learning strategies; therefore, it is of great importance in the acquisition of a new language, as it fosters the need for a relationship between the individual and the collective knowledge. This perspective aligns with the view presented in Teachers' Professional Development and the Power of Dialogue in Building a Learning Community of Engaged Scholarship. Hernandez-Serrano (2021) emphasizes the role of interaction and shared experiences in strengthening a collaborative learning community.

In the context of this study and with countless research projects, it can be highlighted that there are several challenges accompanied by a lack of effectiveness in learning strategies in conjunction with self-study in young learners. It is known that teachers are aware of the importance of implementing learning that strengthens language acquisition, since several restrictions have been identified in English Literature, such as a lack of new learning strategies, a lack of students motivation, a scarcity of teaching and digital resources, a lack of teacher training, and a lack of teaching methodologies that can create a motivated and independent learning environment for each student. These considerations suggest that there may be a discrepancy between teachers' recognition of the value of self-study and the strategies applied in pedagogical practice, which could hinder the achievement of higher levels of English language learning in this context.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

- Teacher's Strategy and Self-Study.

Title

- Exploring Teacher's Strategies to Promote Self-Study in EFL Young Learners.

Problem Statement

The learning of the English language, together with the development of language skills, has shown significant weaknesses across all areas. This situation clearly reflects the quality of education students receive both at school and at home. Furthermore, it is evident that schools have different levels of English as a subject, which do not reach or achieve language proficiency due to the absence of a well-structured curriculum or an effective model (Benavides, 2021).

It is relevant to acknowledge that not all students learn in the same way, which means that this can affect their academic performance and, even more, their motivation. Each learning strategy has its own strengths, which can lead to a positive impact on students' information retention. Darus (2021) emphasizes that strategies often focus on the social or sensory aspects related to those elements that help achieve better results in the desired learning process. This theory has been widely emphasized and has been striking due to the doctrines that, by using different strategies, they can be adapted to all learning styles, achieving better results in the teaching and learning aspects of the language acquisition process.

Although when searching for new strategies or wanting to find the exemplary or effective method that ensures the correct learning of the student with enthusiasm and motivation, and that helps the student achieve their own will to learn, with which they can obtain learning and knowledge outside of the obligation to learn. For instance, if students have a strong desire to learn a new language but the learning strategies proposed by teachers are highly ineffective, their intrinsic motivation to learn will decrease rather than improve. In conclusion, learning would no longer be enjoyable for students, making the process less effective and hindering language acquisition.

Rosales (2024) highlights that the connection between formal schooling and self-study is becoming increasingly relevant worldwide for fostering English learning as a foreign language among young learners. Teaching English in public institutions presents significant challenges, such as a lack of English teachers, a shortage of resources such as computers, internet, teaching resources, and electronic devices, a lack of experience among English teachers, and a lack of knowledge about how to teach English outside the classroom. Similarly, there is little information on how teachers can implement self-study with young EFL learners, the implementation of new strategies, and how these strategies can achieve positive results.

Nationally, Ecuador exhibits a very low level of English proficiency. According to the English Proficiency Index (EF), (2025), Ecuador ranks 82nd out of 116 countries with a score of 465, well below the average of 447, due to its low English proficiency. Moreover, within Latin America, Ecuador ranks 19th out of 21 countries, reflecting the nation's ongoing challenges in achieving higher levels of English language competence. This is important to consider because the index is biased on the results of adults selected to determine this study and their

competencies. Therefore, it shows the shortcomings and relevance found in the educational field, making it possible to see and analyze students' needs.

Through observations conducted at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor, it was observed that both institutions present practically similar problems in teaching English. A large group of students experienced difficulties learning and acquiring English. Moreover, the teaching strategies employed by the instructors were not always appropriate or adequately adapted to the learners' needs. Likewise, the teachers were unable to effectively promote or encourage self-study, nor to integrate it as a learning strategy that could help students apply their knowledge in real-life contexts. Consequently, it significantly affects English language acquisition, its implementation, and practical use in everyday situations, which ultimately hinders students' linguistic proficiency in English.

Problem Question

General Question

- How do the strategies used by EFL teachers at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor promote self-study that fosters autonomous language learning in young learners?

Specific Questions:

- What strategies do EFL teachers at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor most commonly use to promote self-study among young learners?

- Which teacher-promoted self-study strategies do young EFL learners at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor perceive as most helpful for their English learning?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the self-study promotion strategies currently implemented by EFL teachers in young learner classrooms at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor?

Objectives

General Objective

- To describe the strategies used by EFL teachers at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor to promote self-study among young learners in order to understand their role in English learning and suggest improvements.

Specific Objectives:

- To identify the most common strategies used by EFL teachers at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor to promote self-study among young learners.
- To determine the self-study strategies promoted by teachers at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor that young learners perceive as most helpful in their English learning process.

- To examine the strengths and weaknesses of current teacher-promoted self-study strategies at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor to suggest improvements.

Justification

Educational institutions are not exempt from challenges related to the development of effective learning, especially when it comes to acquiring EFL. According to Soto et al. (2024) the significance of this worldwide phenomenon lies in its potential to foster individuals' literacy and awareness of data, which contributes to the updating and innovation in understanding second language acquisition processes. In Ecuador, many elementary schools continue to rely on traditional teaching methods that often overlook the implementation of structured self-study and learner-centered strategies

The EF (2025) establishes that Ecuador is ranked 82nd out of 116 countries, demonstrating that it is well below the average for countries with low English proficiency. However, it is known that this information is reflected in national situations where young learners must follow the steps of a new educational system. There is another perspective from the research, where it was found that the strategies used by teachers are not usually effective for all students. There are different types of students with different learning styles, such as active, auditory, and kinesthetic, among others, who need individual and perhaps personalized strategies for each student to help them gain better knowledge and retain information. Therefore, trying to understand how young EFL English learners approach learning and study, and what strategies they use or do not use, is of utmost importance for them to achieve good academic results.

Likewise, self-study is very relevant for students because it helps them develop a conviction in wanting to learn, since this is rooted in motivation, promoting the development of new cognitive skills in learning English.

This research aims to explore the role of teachers' strategies in the English learning process of young learners or students. It seeks to identify which strategies and self-study are most common, how they vary among different kinds of learners, and what impact they have on the acquisition of English as a foreign language. The study is highly feasible, given the availability of human, informational, and logistical resources, and it is supported by the educational community's interest in improving English instruction at all stages.

Now, on the educational side, the research being conducted will be very useful for students and teachers, as they will be able to use it to improve their learning process, both in the strategies that teachers can apply and to encourage self-study in different learning styles. The goal of this research is to strengthen the strategies and self-study practices teachers employ in practice and, therefore, promote study strategies for learning or acquiring English. It thus provides a framework for academic reflection and pedagogical innovation around self-study and language acquisition. This research, whether academic or professional, provides valuable insights into national English education, fostering more effective, inclusive, and student-centered practices to improve academic achievement in learning EFL.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Teachers Strategies

The way students are exposed to and process information during English classes plays a fundamental role in their overall learning experience. The strategies and approaches used by the teacher, as well as the way the content is delivered, can significantly shape students' engagement and comprehension. Consequently, this dynamic may lead to either positive outcomes, such as motivation and better understanding, or negative effects, such as confusion and lack of interest, directly influencing how effectively students acquire the language.

According to Bruggink et al. (2022), teachers and the strategies they apply play a fundamental role in students' self-study, as they guide them step by step so that they can have a vision based on their own learning. An example would be that teachers can encourage students to evaluate, plan, and supervise activities individually or independently, since this would help them establish clear and decisive personal goals that encourage creative avenues for exploring language. By doing this, cognitive and metacognitive strategies can be added, where the teaching part would come in, helping students discover their strengths and weaknesses, and thus they themselves question or can see the progress of their learning. These approaches foster autonomy, motivation, and responsibility, allowing learners to develop effective self-study that extends beyond the classroom. In this way, teacher strategies and self-study practices work together to support meaningful learning and long-term language development in young EFL learners.

Learning English as EFL is a popular strategy among learners who aim to enhance their English Language Proficiency. Furthermore, language learning strategies encompass various techniques for acquiring a language in its entirety or accomplishing specific linguistic objectives (Zha, 2023). According to Domínguez (2024), learning strategies are intricate and dynamic mental processes and actions that learners consciously choose and apply in particular situations to manage different aspects of themselves, cognitive, emotional, and social, with the goal of: a) completing language-related tasks; b) improving their performance or language use; and c) developing long-term proficiency. Learners tend to use these strategies in flexible and creative ways, combining them into clusters or sequences to address their learning needs. These strategies can be taught, but it is ultimately up to learners to decide which ones to employ according to their personal and contextual circumstances.

According to Oktavia (2022), teachers are not limited to the simple transmission of knowledge, but rather they are the ones who assume multiple and diverse roles within the teaching and learning processes. For this reason, teachers' responsibilities include being guides, facilitators, and simultaneously coaches, acting as evaluators, where they can add practices to address all the students' educational needs. This inconsistency underscores the importance of teachers in ensuring students' learning and overall growth.

Being an excellent teacher is not only about providing information or teaching knowledge, but also about being a guide and example for students, demonstrating that the teacher displays values and behaviors that inspire students. Teachers should not only be examples, but also managers of the learning process who provide resources and guidance, observe students' progress, promote participation, and offer advice when needed. In addition, they take part as

active participants in class dynamics and serve as tutors who support students individually in their academic and personal development (Erlina, 2023).

Although young learners possess strong abilities in acquiring a new language, they still require careful guidance due to their special and unique characteristics, which clearly differ from those of adult learners.

According to Yuang (2021), there are two parameters: students' development and learning are distributed in a specific field, meaning that younger students learn depending on the circumstances or situations surrounding them. This idea highlights the importance of having capable and knowledgeable teachers who can create highly meaningful learning environments for students. Therefore, students require new, interactive and engaging strategies that can ignite student motivation.

Classroom Management

According to Thi and Nguyen (2021), classroom management relates to methods and routines that ultimately become rituals, as classroom discipline focuses on student behavior and self-control. Therefore, the term classroom management is accepted as the creation of a predictable and consistent set of task-oriented tasks.

Scaffolding

Al-Busaid et al. (2021) emphasize that the use of scaffolding in classrooms could help eliminate certain problems through prepared lessons, tutoring, and a wide variety of resources. In the context of language learning, this could be planned by classifying classes specifically dedicated to language learning or teaching.

Didactic Strategies

According to Jucan (2021), a didactic strategy refers to the way in which teaching actions are planned, carried out, and continuously improved, with the purpose of guiding students toward achieving a clearly defined educational goal. Jucan emphasizes that these strategies are not limited to methods, but also include the intentional selection of resources, activities, and approaches that foster meaningful learning.

One of the key problems related to English learning disabilities is the lack of implementation of teaching strategies to develop all language skills. The lack of these strategies reduces students' opportunities to strengthen their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills, which hinders their learning, as it is generally understood that this process requires students to recognize the fundamental skills that will help them in their future academic and professional development. Without well-planned didactic strategies, learning often becomes mechanical and superficial, preventing students from achieving meaningful understanding and effective language use (Alcivar, 2024).

Role-Play

According to Alghamdy (2022), when using role-play as a didactic strategy, several obstacles may arise during the teaching- learning process. Sometimes, students experience doubts or confusion when trying to recognize their assigned roles, whether individually or in groups, which can lead to problems, misunderstandings, or conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss and adequately practice the assigned roles beforehand. In the classroom, however, these

challenges can be overcome by giving students opportunities to perform and become familiar with role-playing activities, which ultimately enhances their participation and engagement.

Games and Gamification

According to Huseinović (2023), the use of gamification in education is grounded in the integration of various types of games that incorporate a wide range of approaches, methods, and teaching strategies aimed at enhancing the teaching-learning process involved in language acquisition. Its primary goal is to increase students' motivation and engagement, encouraging them to participate actively and enjoy the learning experience. Furthermore, gamification provides an interactive and dynamic environment where learners can develop linguistic skills through meaningful practice, collaboration, and feedback, turning the learning process into a more enjoyable and effective experience.

Self-Study

According to Hernandez-Serrano (2021), self-study is understood as the process of examining oneself and one's own professional practice, which requires a strong moral commitment to continuous improvement. It is not limited to personal reflection, but also involves a systematic inquiry aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness and professional growth. Self-study is used in the fields of teaching and research because its purpose is to explore the understanding of the different roles of the teacher. This perspective also addresses the analysis of teaching and instruction, as well as learning, and everything related to the educational process. Therefore, it becomes a strategy for both the personal and practical aspects of education.

Self-study should not be viewed as meaningful to the student or individual doing it, but rather as a way of producing meaning and helping teachers or those who train teachers gain greater knowledge and understanding. This self-study research is a perspective on understanding one's own practice and one's self-concept; it implies that the teacher educator looks critically at their own professional values, works towards a better self-understanding, and develops a strong sense of moral purpose. Also, this process allows educators to identify their strengths and weaknesses, reflect on their pedagogical decisions, and generate insights that may serve as valuable contributions to the wider teaching community. In this way, self-study becomes both a personal and collective tool for professional growth, innovation, and the improvement of educational practices (Hernandez-Serrano, 2021).

Motivation

Ajmal (2021) discusses Skinner's theory of motivation, emphasizing the crucial role of environmental reinforcement in shaping and guiding human behavior. According to this perspective, external stimuli such as rewards, recognition, or positive feedback serve as reinforcement tools that encourage individuals to repeat certain actions. The central ideas are that when behavior is followed by a pleasurable or rewarding outcome, the organism experiences satisfaction, which increases the likelihood of repeating the behavior in the future.

Intrinsic Motivation

According to Fishbach (2022), intrinsic motivation arises from the relationship between an activity and a goal. But from another perspective, intrinsic motivation occurs when the

activity aligns with the same goal. Similarly, it is known that intrinsic motivation is separate from external dissociators, since our understanding of motivation is based primarily on the use of external reinforcers as conceptual and experimental tools. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is present in the relationship between an activity and its purpose, since it is not restricted to specific contents of an activity that may possibly be addressed with the same purpose.

Extrinsic Motivation

According to Selimovic (2022), extrinsic motivation refers to behavior in which people act to earn rewards, such as high academic averages, a raise, or to avoid discipline. Extrinsic motivation could be said to be experiential because it can be linked to desired results. An example would be a young man who helps his father in his business so he can buy a PlayStation. In another context, students are more committed to learning English due to their extrinsic enthusiasm, such as overcoming a challenge or completing an unfinished task. Therefore, this type of motivation is associated with unfavorable outcomes along with a very low level of learning. Because students only want to continue studying the language if they are rewarded, also diminishes students' commitment to learning.

Pedagogical Basis

According to Nguyen (2021), self-study is widely understood as a constructivist learning approach that moves away from the traditional lecture-based model, where learners are usually passive recipients of information and have little or no chance to take control of their own learning. Instead, self-study emphasizes the active role of students in shaping their learning path, making decisions about strategies, resources, and pacing in order to construct knowledge in a

particular field of study. This approach not only promotes autonomy and responsibility, but also allows learners to connect new information with prior experiences, develop critical thinking, and engage more meaningfully with the content, which ultimately leads to a deeper and more personalized understanding of the subject matter. Others view as a learning method where students direct their own study outside the classroom without direct guidance, supervision or instruction (Bonilla, 2021).

Fukuda (2021) states that self-study employs a process where self-regulation strategies and certain student beliefs play a fundamental role when students plan and maintain their personal learning. Therefore, self-study works best when motivational beliefs are applied, as they encourage students to set clear long-term goals and maintain their commitment to learning. The benefits have been demonstrated in classrooms where assessments and teachers dictate the process, and self-study projects in a different field. At this point, students are in the hands of internal motivation along with discipline, making their beliefs about learning fundamental.

Jucan (2021) highlights that the strategies that teachers use within the teaching-learning process are of utmost importance to ensure both aspects, such as effectiveness and efficiency, in the educational field. This implies not only designing, but also applying modern, creative, and innovative didactic approaches that go beyond traditional methods. Therefore, strategies must be flexible and adaptable, allowing teachers to respond to the needs, abilities, and learning styles of each student. In this way, teachers can foster meaningful engagement, encourage active participation, and create an environment where students feel comfortable and motivated to learn. Furthermore, the reflective use of these strategies contributes to students' academic achievement, as well as to their personal growth, lifestyle, confidence, and social success, reinforcing the idea

that effective teaching must incorporate metacognitive, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions into the learning process.

Theoretical Bases

Developing English Language skills in young EFL learners requires strategies that encourage autonomy and active engagement in the learning process. On this point, teaching strategies play an important role in the development of learning, leading students to take into account their responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, creating interactive and creative activities tailored to different age groups allows teachers to help students develop self-study strategies that help them improve their desire and motivation to learn. These strategies, in addition to helping students build confidence, also aid them in the academic sphere, along with their linguistic development when learning a language. Understanding the relationship between teacher-promoted strategies and self-study practices is therefore essential for creating an effective and meaningful learning environment for young EFL students.

Self-Directed Learning Theory

Another important concept is self-education, proposed by Malcom Knowles. This theory suggests that students can set their own goals and evaluate their progress. For instance, a student might decide to write a story and track how many pages they complete each week. Self-direction stimulates motivation and encourages students to take ownership of their learning journey, which is important for developing writing skills (Knowles, 1979).

Autonomous Learning Theory

One of the key theories in language learning is autonomous learning, introduced by Holec (1981), which highlights the ability of students to take control of their own learning process. This approach enables learners to recognize their strengths and areas that need improvement. For instance, a student who notices difficulties in grammar can deliberately focus on practicing and strengthening that specific skill. Learners who engage in autonomous learning tend to be resourceful, persistent, and proactive, actively seeking opportunities to enhance their language abilities and overall learning outcomes.

Self-Efficacy Theory

This theory, developed by Bandura (1997), emphasizes the importance of believing in one's own ability to successfully complete specific tasks. Furthermore, when students contribute to independent and autonomous learning and monitor their own progress, their confidence increases, motivating them to take on more challenging activities for continued improvement. These principles reinforce the usefulness of self-efficacy learning, demonstrating that students can take active control of their own learning process. By integrating concepts such as autonomous learning, self-efficacy learning, and achieving meaningful outcomes. Teachers can leverage these insights to design both student autonomy and collaborative engagement.

Legal Basis

This study is conducted in accordance with the laws and regulations of Ecuador, ensuring compliance with national and international standards for ethical research. The legal framework relevant to this study includes:

Article 27 of the Constitución de la República del Ecuador guarantees that education is a fundamental right and a duty of the State, prioritizing comprehensive development, along with values and competencies. This article promotes the capacity for independent learning as a part of students' comprehensive development. Therefore, in the field of English as an EFL, it provides legal support for the implementation of teaching strategies that encourage self-study and motivate young students to participate in their own learning (Ecuador A. C., 2008).

Article 11 of the Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI) promotes educational autonomy, giving institutions and educators the freedom to apply creative and innovative approaches. This autonomy supports educators in designing effective teacher strategies that encourage self-study, enabling learners to take responsibility for their own learning and achieve better academic outcomes (Ecuador A. N., 2011).

Article 344 of the Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2008) establishes that the national education system comprises institutions, programs, policies, resources, and actors in the initial, basic, and high school levels, articulated with higher education. This legal framework authorizes and supports the use of pedagogical methods to enhance the quality of education.

Article 5 of the Reglamento de Experimentación con Seres Humanos ensures the protection of human subjects involved in research. This study adheres to these regulations by

prioritizing participants' rights, dignity, and well-being, while examining how teacher strategies influence self-study practices among young learners (Ecuador M. d., 2003).

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Methods

Qualitative Methodology

This research project employs a qualitative methodology with teachers from Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor, aiming to explore their perspectives on strategies to promote self-study among young EFL learners. The decision to select two private institutions was made because, in Playas, most private schools have only two or three teachers per institution. Therefore, it was necessary to include two educational institutions in order to complete a representative sample of five teachers. The study seeks to gather insights into the strategies and practices that educators consider most effective in fostering learner autonomy.

Qualitative research delves into the rich textures of human experience and perspective, capturing contexts and nuances is not just a methodological choice but a commitment to exploring the depths of social phenomena, enabling researchers to connect with the subjective experiences of their subjects (Lim, 2025).

Type of Research

Phenomenological Studies

The type of research is a phenomenological study, which aims to explore the meanings and experiences of teachers regarding the strategies they use to promote self-study among young EFL learners. Phenomenological studies emphasize the characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated through the lived experiences and diverse perspectives obtained from the participating teachers.

According to Bonyadi (2023), phenomenology attempts to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of participants who have experienced it. In other words, by bracketing any preconceived notions about the phenomenon, the researcher provides a detailed description of it.

Although phenomenology asserts that knowledge begins from an individual's first-person perspective, this does not mean the aim is to produce a purely subjective account of experience. According to Martiny (2021), phenomenology seeks to avoid biased or purely personal interpretations and instead focuses on identifying and understanding the consistent patterns present across individual experiences.

Data Collection Techniques

One-on-One Interview

Among the various techniques available for qualitative research, interviews are a widely used method for data collection due to their effectiveness. Interviews can be conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on the convenience of the participants. In this study, some interviews will be held online via the Zoom platform, scheduled to accommodate teachers'

routines and for those who are not locally available. Conversely, in-person interviews will be arranged for teachers who have available time. In both formats, the responses provided by the teachers will serve as valuable data to support the research and contribute significantly to the understanding of strategies used to promote self-study among young EFL learners.

Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. A questionnaire is a specific tool or instrument for collecting data. Questionnaires can be used to collect qualitative information. Designing a questionnaire means creating valid and reliable questions that address your research objectives, placing them in a useful order, and selecting an appropriate method for administration (Bhandari, 2023).

According to Kishore (2021), questionnaires are widely used as instruments to gather data on aspects that are not directly observable, such as attitudes, beliefs, intentions, or behaviors. Regarding the learning of EFL, its tools are fundamental for investigating students' different perceptions, taking into account the learning strategies they apply. By adding several items that cover specific areas of learning, the questionnaires also provide researchers with essential information that might not be available through direct observation. Even so, it is important to ensure that each area is studied and evaluated in detail, both individually and in general, thus allowing for reliable information on student practices.

Type of Questions

Open-Ended Questions

According to Turner and Hagstrom (2022), the standardized open-ended interview is characterized by a highly structured format in which all participants are asked the same questions, though these are framed in a way that permits open-ended responses. This design enables participants to provide detailed answers and gives the researcher the opportunity to use follow-up probing questions. Such interviews are among the most commonly used in research because the open-ended format allows individuals to freely share their perspectives and experiences. However, one of the main drawbacks of this method is the challenge of coding and analyzing the collected data.

Open-ended questions provide opportunities for well-developed responses and stimulate critical reflection. When teachers are encouraged to share their perspectives and recommendations, these questions contribute to building a collaborative context in which innovative solutions may arise.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, following several stages to ensure the accuracy and depth of the interpretation of the responses provided by the teachers or participants. The process began with the transcription of the interviews, which allowed the interviewer to become familiar with the data obtained. Subsequently, a data coding process was carried out, identifying key ideas related to self-study,

teacher strategies, and motivation. This coding process allowed the information to be organized into meaningful units.

A specific coding system was then used to organize similar ideas and identify emerging categories. The most relevant categories identified in the analysis were:

- Use of digital and gamified tools to foster autonomy.
- Teacher encouragement and feedback as motivational support.
- Challenges related to students' lack of motivation and parental support.
- Institutional and technological limitations.

These categories were analyzed in depth to investigate patterns and relationships between teachers' experiences and the strategies they implemented to promote self-study among young EFL learners.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the analysis, triangulation was performed, comparing the responses of teachers from the two educational institutions. A peer review was also conducted with the thesis advisor to verify the consistency and coherence of the data, the research objectives, and the interpretations. This process ensured that the findings accurately represented the participants' perspectives and reduced researcher bias.

Ethical considerations

This study adhered to ethical research principles to safeguard the rights and privacy of participants. Teachers who participated in the interviews were informed about the purpose, objective, and scope of the study and, therefore, gave their informed consent to participate

voluntarily. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time if they wished.

To preserve confidentiality and anonymity, the teachers' names were not revealed; therefore, during data analysis and the presentation of results, pseudonyms such as Professor 1, Professor 2, Professor 3, Professor 4, and Professor 5 were used. The data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic and research purposes. The researcher clarified that this information would not be used for any purpose other than research.

Table 1

Data Collection Procedures and Resources

<i>Basic Questions</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
What?	To collect information
Where?	At Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor
When?	PAO 2025-2
How	One-on-one interview, questionnaire
What For?	To learn about the strategies applied by teachers to foster self-study in EFL young learners and to explore their experiences in promoting independent learning.

Note: All details about the strategy, time, and purpose of data collection

Population and Sample

The participants in this study will consist of the teachers of the Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa María Luisa Luque de Sotomayor, located in the Canton Playas. The selected teachers belong to private schools, where they were interviewed to share their perspectives on the strategies, they use to foster self-study in EFL young learners. The decision to include two institutions was made because, in Playas, most private schools have a limited number of teachers, usually no more than two or three per institution, making it necessary to involve both schools in order to complete the sample of five participants. They provided essential and detailed information about their teaching experience. It is evident that this topic is fundamental for teachers when employing strategies to foster independent or autonomous learning, and the information gathered will be crucial. Therefore, the participants will contribute to the research, as each response will be examined in detail to ensure that no unsubstantiated information is obtained, or any details are overlooked. The study will involve a total of 5 teachers.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Findings

Brief Explanation of the Findings

The qualitative analysis followed the processes of coding, transcription, categorization, and data validation to gather relevant information from the participants' responses. The analysis revealed patterns that aligned with the research objectives, specifically regarding how teachers apply teaching strategies to foster self-study in young EFL learners. The categories derived from the interviews represent the teachers' shared experiences and perspectives, which were systematically interpreted in light of relevant theoretical frameworks. The findings were validated through cross-participant comparison and tutor oversight, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the interpretation.

In the analysis of the gathered information, respondents highlight personal comments and opinions that reflect their background and teaching strategies to promote self-study in young EFL learners. These perspectives are evident through the experiences they have developed; and the improvements achieved throughout their professional journey. A detailed analysis of the key points from each question and the corresponding answers will be presented, followed by an explanation and a comparison of the findings with the existing literature review.

Interpretation of Bibliographic Review

1. Question number one was: **What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?** Teachers described the most common strategies for promoting self-study among young learners are the use of

interactive resources or technological tools, which could be called ICTs, as well as digital platforms and the use of gamification-related activities. Teachers highlight the importance of digital resources such as BBC Learning, Duolingo, Kahoot, and Quizzes, as they help students achieve more individual and autonomous learning, while also motivating and connecting them outside the classroom. Therefore, this perspective indicates that teachers view technology as a link between students' learning in the classroom and their independence in practice. Huseinović (2023) emphasizes that the use of gamification in education is grounded in the integration of various types of games that incorporate a wide range of approaches, methods, and teaching strategies aimed at enhancing the teaching-learning process involved in language acquisition.

2. Question number two was: **Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?** Following the teachers' responses, it was observed that the strategies that young learners find most interesting and engaging are those that teachers refer to as games and interactive activities. They all agreed that digital platforms such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizzes, and Gamification are the most motivating for students, as they make learning more engaging, participatory, and enjoyable. Therefore, by using these activities, students do not perceive English as something more enjoyable and entertaining, but also offers a pleasant challenge.

Teachers understand that younger students enjoy using technology in the classroom, especially when it includes visual and auditory resources, such as videos, songs, and short

games. These tools facilitate learning and make it more memorable for younger learners, helping them develop better vocabulary and retain information. For instance, one teacher commented that when students use English-language game apps, they tend to be more engaged and committed to learning the language.

3. Question number three was: **What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?** Teachers' responses show that the main challenge in using strategies to encourage self-study is a lack of motivation and autonomy. Teachers explain that students have not been taught and have not developed the self-study skills to learn autonomously or independently. This means that, despite teachers providing learning strategies and tools, it is difficult for students to rely on external motivation to stay motivated to learn outside of the classroom. Another challenge teachers mention is the lack of support students receive from home, as well as the lack of an adequate, designated space for quiet, independent study. This, therefore, hinders their continued learning after school hours. These conditions demonstrate that self-study is not only influenced within the classroom but is also limited by the socio-environmental factors that influence it. Ajmal (2021) discusses Skinner's theory of motivation, emphasizing the crucial role of environmental reinforcement in shaping and guiding human behavior. According to this perspective, external stimuli such as rewards, recognition, or positive feedback serve as reinforcement tools that encourage individuals to repeat certain actions.
4. Question number four was: **In your experience, what are the strength of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?** Teachers revealed that the main strengths of

self-study strategies implemented in the classroom lie in their ability to promote young students' autonomy while encouraging their active participation in the learning process. Therefore, teachers consider these strategies very useful and help young learners assume greater responsibility for their own learning, as this develops students' confidence and independence in completing tasks without external supervision.

Another strength was identified: the incorporation of technology, as it is a fundamental tool that complements and supports self-study. Teachers realized that the use of digital platforms provided students with interactive resources outside the classroom, making their learning more enjoyable and entertaining. Furthermore, with the use of technology, students can strengthen the weaknesses they identified while listening to English classes and practicing at their own pace, providing them with feedback, which generates a sense of achievement and motivation.

5. Question number five was: **What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?** Teachers' responses demonstrated that some of the main weaknesses and limitations of self-study strategies implemented with young students are related to a lack of parental support, low student motivation, and limited access to resources. Many teachers agree that, in the later years of primary school, parents tend to show less interest and involvement in their children's learning, so students do not receive as much supervision at home. Therefore, this lack of attention to students results in an inability to maintain consistency in self-study and complete assignments or projects independently.

6. Question number six was: **Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?** Teachers' responses indicate that self-study activities that are often highly successful as teaching strategies include interactivity, personalization, and creativity. Teachers state that activities that incorporate gamification, the introduction of technology, and student creation of materials are often the most effective in increasing student motivation in the classroom. For example, one teacher indicated that she uses the Genially platform to work with board games and challenging activities, as this encourages students to progress through an enjoyable and entertaining experience that rewards them.
7. Question number seven was: **How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?** Teacher responses indicate that assessment of students' progress in self-study is based on ongoing observation, performance evaluations, and reflective classroom activities. Teachers revealed that they evaluate whether young students benefit from self-study strategies by monitoring changes in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and student participation in face-to-face classes. This can be done through interactive activities such as games, songs, karaoke, and short discussions, as teachers can observe how much their students have improved in language acquisition during the teaching process. Therefore, teachers suggest using a combination of formative and participatory assessment methods to quantify the process of self-study strategies, as this not only allows for assessing academic improvement but also measures motivation, enjoyment, and autonomy.

8. Question number eight was: **What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?**

Teachers' responses indicate that suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of self-study strategies in English language learning involve gamification, technological innovation, technological feedback, and parental involvement. They also emphasize the need to develop institutional digital applications that motivate students to practice English vocabulary and grammar independently and earn rewards for their practice. Therefore, teachers agreed that these activities would engage students in an active manner, making their learning more engaging, autonomous, and fun. Hernandez-Serrano (2021) emphasizes that self-study is understood as the process of examining oneself and one's own professional practice, which requires a strong moral commitment to continuous improvement. It is not limited to personal reflection, but also involves a systematic inquiry aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness and professional growth. Self-study is used in the fields of teaching and research because its purpose is to explore the understanding of the different roles of the teacher.

Table 2*Teachers' perceptions of teacher strategies to promote self-study*

Questions	What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?	What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?	What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?	What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?
Answers	Teachers use digital platforms, ICT, and gamified tools such as Quizzes, Kahoot, and Duolingo to increase student motivation and autonomy.	Teachers cited a lack of autonomy, low motivation, and a lack of support at home as the main challenges.	Teachers observed a lack of parental support, low levels of motivation, and a lack of resources to encourage self-study and consistency in students.	Teachers suggest feedback, support from parents to motivate and the use of gamification.
Authors	Huseinović (2023) mentions that	Ajmal (2021) emphasizes that	Fishbach (2022) emphasizes that	Hernandez-Serrano (2021)

gamification helps	external	intrinsic	emphasizes that
in language	reinforcement is	motivation limits	self-study
learning by adding	essential to	students'	encourages
games and	maintain	engagement in	continuous
multiple teaching	motivation in	self-study	teaching
methods.	students.	activities and	improvement.
		reduces their	
		consistency in	
		learning.	

Critical Discussion

The results of this study indicated that teachers employ various strategies to foster self-study among young EFL learners, especially when these strategies focus on interactive digital tools and gamified platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Duolingo. These findings clearly align with the principles of self-directed learning, which emphasize student autonomy and responsibility for their own learning (Knowles, 1979). The teachers explained that these platforms do encourage self-directed learning outside the classroom and help students develop independent learning processes. However, the results also demonstrate that students need teacher supervision and support for guidance and external motivation. Therefore, this partial dependence suggests that while self-directed learning can be fostered in education, its development requires

ongoing support and detailed guidance from teachers and parents. In summary, the study partially supports Knowles' theory, confirming that autonomy can be cultivated gradually but is limited by contextual and developmental factors.

The results support the motivation theory, as teachers indicated that students are more engaged when learning is meaningful, fun, and interactive. This aligns with Ajmal's (2021) study on Skinner's motivational principles, where external reinforcement, such as recognition or positive feedback, helps maintain student motivation.

In the same way, Fishback (2022) highlights that intrinsic motivation is usually higher when students participate in interactive and personally relevant activities. Therefore, in the study, teachers understood that students respond better and more positively when they participate in activities related to games, technology, and songs, making learning English fun and engaging. Furthermore, the use of external rewards, such as extra points or gifts, demonstrates that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in maintaining student interest.

Regarding gamification, the study supports the findings of Huseinović (2023), which confirm that game-based learning promotes and improves motivation, participation, and engagement. The incorporation of games and digital challenges by teachers created dynamic environments that helped students associate learning English with enjoyment and achievement. It was also observed that gamification promotes perseverance and effort, thus fostering early forms of autonomy. However, some teachers noted difficulties, such as a lack of digital resources and the need for effective classroom management to maintain gamified activities effectively.

Finally, the results align with Hernandez-Serrano's (2021) perspective that self-study involves a process of reflection and continuous improvement. These strategies employed by the teachers demonstrate that promoting self-study not only improves students' academic skills but also contributes to their personal development and sense of responsibility. However, a lack of resources and insufficient family support limit the effectiveness of these strategies.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that gamification and motivation are fundamental tools for fostering and strengthening self-directed learning among young EFL learners. By combining interactive, technology-based strategies with emotional support, teachers help students become more autonomous and confident in their self-directed learning. Therefore, it is essential to involve parents, facilitate better access to technology, and offer ongoing teacher support to create an environment that fosters both independence and motivation.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this research is to analyze the most effective strategies used by teachers to promote self-study among young EFL learners at Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa Maria Luisa Luque de Sotomayor. After extensive research, it was determined that teachers' strategies play a crucial and valuable role in enabling young learners to engage in self-study processes that enhance their academic performance and language acquisition. Furthermore, this study examined various teaching strategies and analyzed the role of individual differences in fostering self-study. The findings of this research provide highly valuable insights into understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies implemented by teachers to encourage independent and autonomous learning.

Conclusions

- In conclusion, the results obtained show that the strategies most commonly used by teachers to encourage self-study among young English learners at the following educational institutions: Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Unidad Educativa Maria Luisa Luque de Sotomayor, focus primarily on the use of interactive tools, playful methodologies, and technological resources. These strategies, such as gamification and the use of digital platforms like Kahoot, Quizzes, Duolingo, and BBC Learning English, along with short presentations, collaborative work, and role-playing, help develop young learners' autonomy, allowing them to practice English independently and autonomously. Therefore,

these strategies, in addition to promoting interest and active participation, also strengthen the language acquisition process, as they relate learning to highly relevant experiences along with real-life experiences or real-life contexts.

- Now, regarding young learners' perceptions, teachers agree that the most significant strategies for young learners are those that connect entertainment and learning, such as short videos, songs, educational platforms, and game-related activities. Therefore, these strategies not only attract children's attention, but also encourage intrinsic motivation and, at the same time, build confidence by empowering them to learn at their own pace. Digital resources also encourage and facilitate independent practice outside the classroom, promoting personal responsibility and the development of autonomous self-study. For this reason, strategies that employ visual, auditory, and kinesthetic tools are extremely effective in encouraging independent and sustained learning of EFL.
- The implemented strategies proved to be extremely effective, although several limitations were identified that affected the development of self-study. Some of the weaknesses most frequently mentioned by teachers focused on the lack of support from home, the lack of access to technology, and students' lack of motivation to work independently. These external factors could hinder the continuity of students' independent learning outside of the classroom. Even so, the results show that when a teacher employs strategies that adapt to individual

needs and can supervise them, students strengthen their independent study, their confidence, and their responsibility in language learning. Ultimately, the teacher's role as guide and facilitator is fundamental to fostering motivation and directing the self-study process in young learners.

Recommendations

- As a recommendation, teachers should continue incorporating strategies based on the use of information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and active methodologies that incorporate play, interaction, and independent practice. It is essential that strategies adapt to the student's level and pace, promoting their active, meaningful, and ongoing participation in language learning. It is also recommended that educational institutions have classrooms equipped with technology to facilitate access to digital resources and platforms that encourage active, engaging, and ongoing self-study among young learners.
- Based on young learners' perceptions, it is suggested that the use of gamification-focused strategies and creative activities that maintain students' curiosity and interest be expanded. Teachers should integrate reward or positive feedback systems that recognize personal achievements, thus fostering intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. It is also advisable to promote activities that include songs, videos, presentations, and personal projects, as these activities allow students to

explore their interests while strengthening their communication skills and independent English learning.

- Finally, it is recommended that collaborative efforts be established between teachers, students' families, and educational institutions to encourage and strengthen monitoring and guidance for self-study outside the classroom. Educational institutions could plan training or workshops for parents, thus actively including them in their children's independent learning process. It is also recommended that teachers stay up-to-date, receive ongoing training, and be familiar with the design and implementation of inclusive strategies that consider young learners' individual, contextual, and socioeconomic differences. This will allow for the optimization of existing and currently employed strategies, thus ensuring equitable, motivating, and effective independent learning for young learners.

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Annexes

Annex A: Certified Anti-Plagiarism System.

La Libertad, 24 de octubre, 2025

Certificado Sistema Anti-Plagio

En calidad de tutora del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado “EXPLORING TEACHER’S STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SELF-STUDY IN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS” elaborado por el estudiante VILLAMAR SUÁREZ NERY SMITH de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 5 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe, para proceder a la revisión por parte del especialista.

Atentamente,



García Villao Rosa Tatiana, Msc.

TUTOR



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1	link.springer.com Phenomenology as a research methodology in teaching Engli... https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s40862-022-00184-z.pdf	< 1%		Palabras idénticas: < 1% (18 palabras)

Annex B: Questionnaire

Population: Teachers from Unidad Educativa Zenón Macías Vera and Maria Luisa Luque de Sotomayor.

Sample: 5 Teachers

Questions aimed at teachers

- 1. What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?**
- 2. Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?**
- 3. What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?**
- 4. In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?**
- 5. What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?**
- 6. Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?**
- 7. How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?**
- 8. What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?**

Annex C: Transcript Focus Group

Interviews with Teachers

Games

Interactive Resources.

Motivation

Gamification

Professor 1

Q1: What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?

A: I frequently incorporate the use of ICTs in my teaching practice. At the institution, we have a designated classroom for this purpose, as we value working with the **interactive resources** available today. **Gamification** is also employed, since children tend to learn more effectively through **games**. I also employ other strategies, such as teamwork and classroom presentations, that support the topics being covered and connect them to real-life situations. For instance, if we are working with food vocabulary, I try to create dialogues where we pretend, we are in a restaurant, ordering food, and being served by the waiter. I try to bring the topics into a real-life context.

Q2: Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?

A: Well, in the **interactive activities** we find on various websites. For instance, we work with what's known as game-based learning (GBL). It's what they like the most, what motivates them the most. Because the class isn't boring, but through play, they practice, learn, and, when I assess them in writing, they get good results. So far. It's always worked.

Q3: What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?

A: Well, the first challenge is keeping them practicing. You can **motivate** them in class, you can bring them to the classroom to keep them entertained and not feel bored, but at home, there's usually a lot of distraction from video **games** and social media, so they get caught up in that and don't spend their time doing anything productive, I think. That's more than anything.

Q4: In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?

A: It could be the **motivation**. I think it's the main one. A motivated student always tries to translate that into autonomy, whether in class or at home. A student who maintains that spark, that desire to continue learning, I think, always carries it from school to real life.

Q5: What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?

A: As a weakness, perhaps the lack of support from parents, as there isn't much follow-up. For instance, with young children, there's quite a bit of follow-up. Many parents prefer us to work with **interactive pages**; they're attentive and work with the children, but

we see this weakness especially in the later years of elementary school, because they let the children get out of control. So, maybe I can see something there, or a platform that isn't available at the institution. Yes, obviously, we send activities and all that, but we often see that in the later years of elementary school, there isn't much participation. That's always the challenge for the teacher.

Q6: Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?

A: Yes, when we've worked with a virtual class. For instance, in my case, I really like working with Genially, where we can use **gamification** with **games**. Then they realize that we create, I don't know, virtual board **games**, or a station **game** with challenges. They're really drawn to that aspect because they know that if they complete one challenge, they'll move on the another, and that really **motivates** them.

Q7: How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?

A: Well, when we return to class, we always do it. For example, if we've worked on karaoke, what they like might interest them more in upper elementary school. I always bring to the classroom the same thing I worked on virtually. I don't just do it with paper-based assessment activities, but I do the same thing I worked on there virtually; I do it in English class. I can check it, because sometimes, after a while in front of the screen. We don't know if they're really learning.

But in in-person classes, I see it, because we're playing **games** or doing little skits, almost at the end of the term, where I know they've already improved their level a bit, have

more vocabulary and better pronunciation. So that's where, as teachers, we can analyze that improvement.

Q8: What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?

A: Well, if I knew a little more about programming, even how to create an app, whatever, that would allow them. I see them working a lot with these challenges, not games, and it would be great if they could do something, but something institutional, something that helps them level up based on the vocabulary they learn, like Duolingo, which I see them working a lot with. But if we, for instance, as an institution, had something similar, it would be an advantage for us because we could give them extra points, which is what **motivates** them the most to use these types of activities.

Professor 2

Q1: What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?

A: Well, the strategy I most commonly use with my students is to encourage self-study through **interactive tools** and online platforms to improve their vocabulary. I also assign them creative tasks, such as recording themselves to improve their speaking and creating flashcards they can review independently.

Q2: Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?

A: Well, I guess those from digital apps like Quizlet, Quizzes, and Kahoot. And that's because I think they practice them and feel free to practice with them, since they can be like **games**. And they also respond well to watching short videos in English and then sharing their words or expressions in class.

Q3: What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?

A: Challenges. I think one of them is keeping students engaged. Because sometimes they start out very enthusiastically, but over time they lose **motivation**. Another could happen more specifically when access to technology is very difficult.

Q4: In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?

A: I suppose the main strengths are that students develop independence and responsibility, but also their own learning. It also allows them to practice at their own pace and focus on what they find most difficult, such as pronunciation and grammar.

Q5: What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?

A: One limitation I face is that some students complete assignments superficially, without a deep commitment, perhaps because they consider them to be grade-based and sometimes don't take them seriously. Other limitations or weaknesses could be that they struggle without immediate guidance from the teacher, as they may need the teacher to give them instructions to be clearer or to be able to complete the activity. Therefore, they may sometimes feel that the task is too difficult.

Q6: Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?

A: I don't adapt this to all my classes, but it could be done with simple tasks. Sometimes I give them simple tasks to encourage them to review vocabulary. As I mentioned before, flashcards, are sometimes done in class or at home. Additionally, in the next class, they could share what they learned in the flashcard videos to expand their vocabulary.

Q7: How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?

A: To assess their progress, you can conduct short tests, perhaps a class discussion, or ask them to demonstrate what they've practiced on their own. This will help them gain confidence and be more engaged when using the vocabulary, they've learned on their own.

Q8: What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?

A: Well, I think I would recommend **gamification**, as today's students are more interested in this type of learning. It could also be used with rewards or any point system that **motivates** them. We can also involve parents to provide feedback and allow them to encourage their students to study independently.

Professor 3

Q1: What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?

A: Well. It's important that, as teachers, we encourage these lessons. We **motivate** students in the classroom. The activity I promote most is the use of simple words. At my workplace, although it's a public school, we currently don't have technology in the classroom. It's important for students to be able to produce independently and autonomously. For instance, I use short readings, practice, and dialogues. I also use listening comprehension, but I think one of the challenges students face is listening comprehension, as they lack the ability to develop this skill.

Q2: Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?

A: Now, after the pandemic, I believe activities should always be more **interactive** and engaging, as students lose interest in some topics. Furthermore, it's important to connect real-world content with real-world contexts. It's essential to include these activities, but one of the strategies I use is **gamification**. It's important to use **interactive activities**. The app we use is important, but students like to use their time using technology.

Q3: What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?

A: Well, it's the same, but now. It's **motivation**. Given the current context in our city, there's violence, but young people have other ideas in mind. It's important to **motivate** them today so they can continue their studies and have a vision for the future, which is

what my work with adolescents is all about. I always say we must prepare for the future for five or ten more years. It's important that we plan our lives for the future. One of the challenges is that our students sometimes don't have internet access. And some students had it too. The most useful tool for working with them. Because sometimes, for instance, I have a student with Down syndrome. Well, this is an individual lesson for her, since she needs other materials, but as teachers, we work to find tools, and everyone has their own needs.

Q4: In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?

A: Well, it's important that we have strength in our classes. We teach not only the context, but also the development of personality. The development of values and the fulfillment of obligations are also important. For example, we work with responsibilities, but with homework on time. Perhaps we also need to work on autonomy and independence. At school, we work with parents, since everyone is present. In high school, students are independent, so they all need help from their parents, but they don't get it. It's important for students to develop their autonomy and independence. It's important for us to be aware that they can plan their future as professionals or entrepreneurs, since it's important to teach them values throughout their lives.

Q5: What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?

A: one limitation I observe is unequal access. Not all students have the same resources, materials, or environment. There are students who live with divorced parents and have

personality issues. Additionally, some students complete assignments quickly, but the content is also superficial. We don't have a deep relationship with the language.

However, sometimes students get a good grade. As teachers, we design some activities, but students develop them on the fly and get 10 points. The next week, you try to come back with the same topic, but the students fail the activities. For example, you, a university student, need a certain level of English to earn your degree. But it's part of your life. Yet, as teenagers, we're unaware of its importance. This is a point in this section on limitations. They are very important.

Q6: Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?

A: Yes, it's an experience I had this year, but it's a mix. In the first quarter, we had in-person classes, and now we're online. But it's important that the Ministerio de Educación support us; now we need to use UDL (Universal Learning Development).

But some English teachers have no idea what strategy we should use. We always work the same way, but it's a one-year experience. It's a repetition of the first years. We need to improve other activities. We use **games**. I think students need competitions or challenges in class. But they have two objectives: to promote, they have a prize for students to improve their skills, but to win again in class. But this is part of the class. But this competition, I won first. Perhaps when the group is very large, we don't work with all the students. But perhaps our experience tells us that if students learn the subject, only 10, or maybe fewer, use this content in other ways. But this is important. I encourage my

students to listen to songs in English, watch subtitled videos or movies, read, and develop their listening skills.

Q7: How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?

A: Well, the assessment is now very complex and extensive. We use various techniques, or perhaps tools, in assessment. In my case, I work with short texts, worksheets, words, and reading comprehension. For writing, I use Padlet. It's an app where we post, for example, a paragraph on the topic. I look at this wall on my computer. I review the activity and tell them, "You get 10 points if you write about your favorite movie." I use some words that I include in my vocabulary, but this is part of my toolkit. We always use writing classes, but it's also important to use the necessary **games** to improve speaking. If you develop listening comprehension, you'll probably also develop speaking.

Q8: What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?

A: Okay, but this is important for you: a recommendation. You're just starting this profession. It's a beautiful profession, but we must work daily. We need to plan our activities, but it's important that you use short activities first. You can review them in class first. But don't work with short or long words, because sometimes students just need to copy, copy, or copy from other students. But you don't have to worry about this; it's not about developing writing skills. It's important that you use **gamification**; there are a variety of online **games** you can use, or you can create your own tool. It's also important to connect, for me, but I always say the same thing: It's important that we

connect the content with the context, with real life. But we don't use real life; it's to create parallel words. My recommendation for you, you need to improve sometimes, but it is important that as teachers, day by day, we need to review and continue studying with new strategies and use different methods, according to the context, but it is important to consider the student as an individual, not as a group, but it is important that we have desires for our students, it is important that they are part of our life.

Professor 4

Q1: What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?

A: To promote self-study in young learners, I encourage them to teach back what they've learned to others and create their own quiz questions. I also use engaging, multisensory activities like **games** and visuals to make independent practice fun and meaningful.

Q2: Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?

A: Well, my students find songs, and interactive **games** the most fun and helpful for learning English. These activities keep them interested and make learning easier to remember.

Q3: What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?

A: The biggest challenges I face are that young learners sometimes lack **motivation** and get distracted easily during self-study.

Q4: In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?

A: The self-study strategies I use help students learn at their own pace and build confidence in their skills. They also make learning fun and encourage curiosity, which motivates children to keep exploring English on their own.

Q5: What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?

A: The main weaknesses of self-study strategies I see are that students sometimes feel confused without enough help and get frustrated with difficult grammar or new words. Also, they may lose focus or motivation when studying alone for too long.

Q6: Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?

A: A self-study activity I adapted successfully is flashcards, where students create and use their own cards to learn new words. This helps them practice and remember vocabulary better while having fun.

Q7: How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?

A: I evaluate students' progress by checking their quizzes and listening to their speaking practice. I also ask them to reflect on what they learned and share what they find easy or hard, to see their real understanding.

Q8: What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?

A: To improve self-study strategies, I recommend breaking tasks into small steps and adding fun activities to keep children interested. Also, review and gentle guidance help students feel supported and motivated to learn on their own.

Professor 5

Q1: What strategies do you most commonly use to promote self-study among your young learners in English classes?

A: To improve young learners' self-study in English classes and help them focus, I focus on using the following strategies in the classroom, such as digital tools and activities. I recommend platforms tailored to their age and level, such as Duolingo, Quizzes, and BBC Learning English, to make learning more interactive and accessible outside of class. These two tools strengthen vocabulary and grammar in a fun way, offering continuous feedback. I regularly review their self-study, provide feedback on their efforts, and celebrate small achievements to keep them motivated and engaged in the classroom.

Q2: Among the strategies you use, which ones do your students seem to find most engaging or helpful for their English learning?

A: Well, the use of interactive games in class. They always enjoy going to the computer lab when there are two hours of English, so they want to learn through games that entertain and make them enjoy themselves.

Q3: What challenges do you face when implementing strategies to encourage self-study in your young learners?

A: Well, the challenges they face are a lack of autonomy and motivation. Many young students haven't developed study skills or self-study. Some don't understand the value of studying or the ability to study, because they believe they have a more open mind. Lack of support is another challenge, along with a suitable home environment.

Q4: In your experience, what are the strengths of the self-study strategies you apply in your classroom?

A: Well, the strengths of self-study strategies are those I've implemented in the classroom: those that foster student autonomy. I also mentioned that they've learned during the class and that families participate equally in support, whenever possible. I also integrate technology into my students' education.

Q5: What weaknesses or limitations do you notice in the self-study strategies currently used with your students?

A: Well, lack of support, monotony or lack of control, lack of motivation or self-motivation, inequality in the family, social, and economic context, and dependence on technology.

Q6: Can you share an example of a self-study activity that you have successfully adapted as a teaching strategy for your young learners?

A: Well, the study strategies I've implemented are miniblogs in English. Students record a short 30-second to 1-minute video at home using their cell phone or a family member's cell phone, in which they say something about themselves whenever it relates to the topic. For example, the first week:

Personal introduction

Hi, my name is Adam, and I'm nine years old. I like pizza. I don't like beans.

Week 2: My routine.

I get up at 7 a.m. I go to school at 8 a.m. I play in the yard.

Week 3: My favorite animal:

My favorite animal is the dog. It's strong and fast.

Week 4: My favorite toys:

My favorite toy is my Rubik's Cube.

Q7: How do you evaluate whether your students are actually benefiting from the self-study strategies you promote?

A: Well, I use some self-study strategies, as I mentioned before, but I check whether my students have learned anything through debates or discussions in class, as this is how I know if they're learning. I always tell them to be honest. I don't mind if they haven't learned something, but they should communicate with their teacher. I assess them through debates or small group discussions.

Q8: What suggestions or improvements would you recommend to make self-study strategies more effective for young learners?

A: I suggest including regular feedback, integrating self-study into the classroom, and ensuring the exceptionality of all students with public recognition and effort.