

Shared reading for initial literacy in students of the multigrade classroom

Lectura compartida para la alfabetización inicial en estudiantes del aula multigrado

Leitura compartilhada para alfabetização inicial em alunos da aula multinível

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Abstract: The present research aims to implement shared reading as a strategy for the promotion of initial literacy in a multigrade classroom of the San José de Oriente Agricultural Technical Educational Institution. Methodologically, it was located in the post-positivist paradigm, framed in pedagogical action research. For the exploration of the results, the participant observation technique was applied and the field diary and the self-evaluation workshop were used as an instrument. The work unit consisted of eight children from the multigrade classroom. The results showed that when using shared reading strategies for literacy from the first steps through schooling, resorting to creative forms framed in innovative and motivational methods, their interest and motivation for learning grows. In the same way, it was confirmed that the contextualization of the spaces attending to the particular needs of the students allows for achieving satisfactory results. Therefore, it is recommended to carry out a flexible evaluation before, during, and after the activities, that verify their interests, as well as using teaching techniques that provide meaningful experiences gradually strengthening the academic, emotional, and relational areas where indicators that validate the proposed objectives are displayed.

Keywords: Reading, literacy, reading comprehension, educational strategies, educational workshop.

Resumen: La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo, implementar la lectura compartida como estrategia para la promoción de la alfabetización inicial en un aula multigrado de la Institución Educativa Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente. Metodológicamente se ubicó en el paradigma pospositivista, enmarcada en la investigación acción pedagógica. Para la exploración de los resultados, se aplicó la técnica de observación participante y como instrumento, el diario de campo y el taller de autoevaluación. La unidad de trabajo estuvo constituida por ocho niños del aula multigrado. Los resultados evidenciaron que, al utilizar estrategias de lectura compartida para la alfabetización desde los primeros pasos por la escolaridad, recurriendo a formas creativas enmarcadas en métodos innovadores y motivacionales, crece el interés

y la motivación de los niños por el aprendizaje. De igual manera, se pudo corroborar que, la contextualización de los espacios, atendiendo las necesidades particulares de los estudiantes, permite lograr resultados satisfactorios. Por tanto, se recomienda realizar una evaluación flexible antes, durante y después de las actividades, que verifique los intereses de los niños, así como utilizar técnicas de enseñanza que provean experiencias significativas fortificando gradualmente el área académica, emocional y relacional, donde se visualice indicadores que validen los objetivos propuestos.

Palabras clave: lectura, alfabetización, comprensión lectora, estrategias educativas, taller educativo.

Resumo: A presente pesquisa visa implementar a leitura compartilhada como estratégia de promoção da alfabetização inicial em uma sala de aula multinível da Instituição de ensino ‘Técnico Agrícola de San José de Oriente’. Metodologicamente, localizouse no paradigma pospositivista, enquadrado na pesquisa-ação pedagógica. Para a exploração dos resultados, foi aplicada a técnica de observação participante e como instrumento, o diário de campo e a oficina de autoavaliação. A unidade de trabalho era composta por oito crianças da aula multinível. Os resultados mostraram que, ao utilizar estratégias de leitura compartilhada para a alfabetização desde os primeiros passos até a escolarização, recorrendo a formas criativas enquadradas em métodos inovadores e motivacionais, seu interesse e motivação para a aprendizagem aumentam; da mesma forma, constatou-se que a contextualização dos espaços atendendo às necessidades particulares dos alunos permite o alcance de resultados satisfatórios. Portanto, recomenda-se realizar uma avaliação flexível antes, durante e após as atividades, que verifiquem seus interesses, além de utilizar técnicas de ensino que proporcionam vivências significativas fortalecendo gradativamente a área acadêmica, emocional e relacional onde são apresentados indicadores que validam os objetivos propostos.

Palavras-chave: leitura, alfabetização, compreensão da leitura, estratégias.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is considered the action of teaching to read and write, where reading and writing are two abilities or skills that are traditionally learned in the initial literacy process that happens with the first linguistic interactions within the family and during the first school years of preschool education (Rugiero and Guevara, 2015). Likewise, children at this stage begin to take their first steps to build their social skills, such as respect, self-esteem, and collaborative work, in parallel with academic skills.

In general terms, the world is becoming more literate every day; according to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016), the global adult literacy rate is 86% and that of young people is 91%; however, there are still 750 million people who are not literate and of these, two-thirds are women. As for Latin America and the Caribbean, some 32 million illiterate people are counted and, although the gender parity index is good, 94% vs. 93%, girls continue to be the most vulnerable population, especially in rural areas.

According to what has been pointed out by authors such as Castañeda (2016), Chén (2017), Salvatierra and Game (2021), and Vega (1998, as cited in Rugerio and Guevara, 2015), it can be evidenced that children acquire pre-academic and linguistic skills, such as perceptual aptitude, verbal comprehension, pronunciation, sound discrimination, and basic vocabulary management, among others, through the interaction of experiences shared with their teachers and the environment, which prepare them for the school literacy process.

In this sense, shared reading for literacy facilitates the teacher's intervention in the learning process, flexibly and dynamically, in an environment rich in printed materials, respecting the particularities of the child's development. In this regard, Mol and Bus (2011) emphasize that reading comprehension as a support for the strengthening of shared reading should be reflected as a spontaneous activity that transcendently marks the development of phonological and letter knowledge, previous conditioning factors to sustain learning that will contribute to their future reading and academic performance in advanced grades. Now, for Tracey and Morrow (2017):

The incipient weakness that exists in the teaching of reading and writing in Latin American countries is conditioned by the anchoring of old models that are no longer functional, which makes it relevant to modify the theoretical views on innovative models of reading, recognizing the context where the teaching and learning process takes place, which entails rethinking how it is taught. Accordingly, shared reading and literacy immersed in the language is constituted as a fundamental element that makes possible the act of speaking, reading, understanding, interpreting, and expressing ideas and meanings about a particular subject. (p. 58)

This scenario shows the challenge that Colombian preschool educational institutions currently face and reflects the urgency of supporting educational schemes that support the promotion of creative and diverse thinking over cognitive aspects, at least in the early education stage. In this sense, the Colombian State has made significant progress in the consolidation of the technical and operational line that allows offering an initial education with quality and relevance, based on the comprehensive development of early childhood children, by the provisions of Law 1804 of 2016 and the curricular bases for preschool education; however, the PISA report (2019), in comparison with the results of 2009 and 2012, evidences a setback in the area of reading comprehension, where the most affected countries were Uruguay, Chile, and Colombia; the latter reflects that 51% of students in the first grades are in level 1 performance (Contreras, 2016).

Therefore, the initial level educational system should set off its alarms about the shared reading strategies that are developed within the educational spaces to strengthen literacy, reinforce its processes, and maintain a logical and psychological order of everything related to the preparation of the environment, as well as the organization of the environment in three moments of reading: before, during and after, where socio-affective elements that give meaning and significance to the learning process are considered (Leal, 2012).

Seen from these perspectives, paradoxically, the institutions that run the preschool level in the region of La Paz, as part of a system, are affected by the transformations of the environment, specifically in the Educational Institution 'Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente', Nuevo Oriente, in the township of San José de Oriente, which, despite being in the presence of the knowledge and information era driven by scientific advances, in the unstructured observations made by the researchers, it became evident that the problems presented at the preschool level in terms of reading comprehension and literacy go beyond their objective manifestation, a scenario that requires updating the teaching staff on the evolutionary development of children in school and their requirements, in addition to following models that are adapted to the reality of the institution, to achieve the expected results in reading comprehension and shared reading.

Another problem observed is directly related to the interest generated in teachers and parents in focusing on learning to read, where they learn with words that designate an object, without much concern about how it is constructed, ignoring what Maturana and Valera (2012) call "operational coherence, which is the meeting space between the child's movement, the corporeality of the participants, and their interaction in what happens before and after" (p. 16).

Following this order of ideas, Law 115, called the Education Law, directed towards preschool, seeks to intentionally enhance the comprehensive development of children, recognizing their characteristics and the particularities of the context that favor interactions through pedagogical experiences, exercising the basic skills, necessary to begin to read and write, which entails the construction of programs adapted to their reality, with innovative strategies and techniques that allow the development of the learning stages in preschool.

Hence, this duality between the law and the conceptions of the objectives set out in the Institutional Educational Project and the existing reality in the institution, sometimes makes the teacher confused about the decision to be made in the classroom, since another of the fundamental objectives in the early education system lies in developing the social, intellectual, affective and motor areas, directly related to the child's preparation to advance to higher grades. It is through these areas that activities conducive to reading comprehension and shared reading should be carried out.

Based on the previous paragraphs, the following research question emerges How does shared reading promote initial literacy in students of the multigrade classroom of the Educational Institution 'Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente', Nuevo Oriente, La Paz, Cesar?

To make this question operational, the general objective revolved around implementing shared reading for initial literacy in students. Based on the arguments that support the research, it is justified at a scientific-theoretical level because it contrasts the positions of various authors and considers research and background information related to the object of study, providing updated and relevant information within the educational context of a multigrade classroom, to build, together teacher-researcher, shared reading strategies and actions that favor a successful literacy process.

In practice, the research is aimed at the implementation of shared reading in the promotion of initial literacy, with which it is intended to support and strengthen the development of children in academic and social spaces, going from being conventional students to subjects capable of expressing their ideas and achieving their meaning.

For the behavior of the categories under study, we proceeded to the review of previous works, highlighting at the international level, the research conducted by Arzapalo (2019), who set as an objective, to train teachers on the knowledge inherent to the reading process in students, to develop in children the skills for optimal participation in the competence in reading of various types of written texts in their mother tongue. The study was conducted under the communicative approach, focused on developing learning in a real context, relying on shared reading as a methodological strategy that has as a basic element, the giant book. The research was directed to five teachers and 56 children; for its realization, a diagnosis of the problem was elaborated, using the SWOT Matrix and the construction of the problem tree, the objectives, and the consistency matrix.

As a result of the educational innovation project, it led to significant achievements that made it possible for the five teachers to be trained and updated in the process of reading acquisition and in the use of innovative strategies for reading and the use of didactic resources, significantly favoring the pedagogical practice and, therefore, the children's performance, especially in the development of their linguistic skills and the competence of various types of written texts in their mother tongue.

The contribution to the present research refers to the promotion of the teaching of the four linguistic skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening, through the communicative approach, emphasizing shared reading, conceived as a learning strategy that enhances the process of reading initiation, imbuing it with naturalness, spontaneity, and entertainment for the students.

In the national context, quasi-experimental research from a qualitative and quantitative approach was presented by Cardozo (2018), whose objective revolved around the development of a didactic strategy mediated with ICT for the improvement of reading and writing skills in first-grade elementary school students. The sample consisted of ten firstgrade elementary school students. As data collection techniques, a checklist was used to measure the student's reading and writing skills in five performances. The results showed that innovation is needed to improve these skills, considered the basis for learning in the different areas of

knowledge, and to motivate students learning. The study highlighted the importance of incorporating ICT in teaching and learning processes to improve the quality of education and the evolution of communities, increasing literacy skills through digital resources.

At the local level, the study of Mejía and Torres (2019) was found, whose main objective was to design new didactic models oriented to innovative educational strategies, to optimize the teaching and learning process, stimulate the participation of students and encourage reading through storytelling, conversations, interaction through images, videos, music, and other texts, simultaneously. The authors were inclined towards the qualitative paradigm, based on action research, with a descriptive approach, relying on observation, survey, and description for the data collection process. The data collected were subjected to interpretation, analysis, and respective evaluation. The study population consisted of 32 children and five teachers.

As relevant results, the effectiveness of using ICT-based didactic strategies to facilitate classroom activities, especially reading, was observed, showing greater attention from the children in the allusive activities. At the same time, they awakened their curiosity regarding technological devices such as telephones, tablets, and computers, which ratified that the use of ICT, attached to educational purposes and as a support to the cognitive processes of the teaching-learning process, especially favors the learning of reading and writing at an early age and stimulates the skills of expression and creativity, among other areas.

This research is a significant contribution to the current study, as it presents a proposal for a didactic strategy leveraged on the use of new information and communication technologies, which constitutes a viable and necessary option to move towards an innovative pedagogical model, to be replicated at different educational levels.

The works reviewed have a mixed methodology because they were supported by quantitative and qualitative paradigms; one used the qualitative paradigm through the action research approach, which highlights a methodological relationship with the proposed study, using a variant of action research: pedagogical action research (PAR).

Having clarity about the behavior of the research in the different areas, it was necessary to locate the theoretical contributions to give the study scientific relevance, therefore, for initial literacy, Morrow (2009, as cited in Rugerio and Guevara, 2015) was consulted, who stated that this is not restricted to reading and writing skills, but integrates communicational competencies, since their development strengthens skills related to written language and vice versa.

In this sense, children are considered literate when they develop the competencies that allow them to identify the codes and texts of a specific language, as well as the social language in which that language is immersed, when they can understand the texts accepted by the community and when they can elaborate meanings in that language (Hernández et al., 2009). This process is associated with the recognition of written words as a starting point in learning to read, what Bruner (1980, as cited in Vergara, 2017) posed as an iconic representation in his cognitive theory, identifying and employing recognizable visual elements and symbolic use.

For direct instruction, learning to read and write are the two most important processes involved in initial literacy; thus, because they are communication skills, their development begins in the early years with the acquisition of oral language and continues into adulthood, acquiring different ways of responding to the individual's needs and requirements. Direct teaching is an educational model centered on the teacher, giving a large part of the responsibility to the planning and explanation of the contents, whose methodology focuses on teaching concepts to foster the development of skills through modeling and explanation (Carrera and Marín, 2011).

Cuetos et al. (n.d.) point out that there are three levels of information processing within the process of reading and writing acquisition: the first, referred to the lexical level; the second to the syntactic level and, finally, to the semantic level, taking into account for its development, the degree of difficulty of the same, as

well as the individuality of the learner, making it necessary to identify the characteristics of these processes to design effective teaching tools, adapted to develop a quality experience for the child. In this sense, when we speak of the lexical process, we refer to the set of crucial procedures in reading and writing, which are essential to access knowledge about words; in another order, it corresponds to the memorization of linguistic information, both phonological, semantic and orthographic, which is integrated around words.

The syntactic process, as knowledge of the basic grammatical structure of language, is linked to the ability to understand the relationship between words, essential to be able to read efficiently and fluently, or to adequately structure the expression of an idea through the assumption made by the learner, to be able to understand and identify the order of words, the grammatical difficulty of the sentence, as well as the category of words and their morphological aspects. On the other hand, the lack or deficit of this process, within a strategy oriented to promote initial literacy, will produce difficulties in reading words and understanding the sentences that make up a text or in the organization of phrases and sentences of written content.

In addition, a shared reading program as a strategy for the promotion of initial literacy must be able to generate an understanding of the meaning of words, sentences, and text, validating that this semantic process integrates the new information imparted with that which the child already has. Hence, the reading process is consolidated when the reader can interpret, analyze, criticize, and infer the meaning of the text, steps that Ferreiro and Teberosky (as cited in Vissani et al., 2017) conceptualize as “an active process in which the reader understands a text at the moment he/she can extract the meaning that the text offers” (p. 10) and, this process, considered of syntactic improvement, starts from the age of six when he/she can already make linguistic inferences and perform text analysis.

In the search for new strategies to optimize the learning process at an early age, enhancing the development of thinking, especially in skills such as expressing adequately in writing or orally, developing active listening, and cultivating the habit of reading, Goodman (1989, as cited in Tabash, 2009) has developed the integrated language model, defined as “a way of uniting the vision of language, the vision of learning, the vision of the human being and, especially, that of two groups of human beings, boys and girls, as well as teachers” (p. 188).

Regarding reading methods, Solé (1993) states that three models of reading processing can be generated in the classroom for the acquisition of reading comprehension in children: the first is based on a bottom-up processing model, where learning to read is centered on decoding information, whether graphics, words, letters, paragraphs, or complete text. This bottom-up model is also known as the syllabic method, where importance is given to the text and not to the reader and the knowledge they bring with them, focusing mainly on the visual recognition of letters to, subsequently, carry out the semantic processing of the text as a whole that extends from bottom to top.

The second is called the top-down processing model; unlike the previous one, it gives relevance to the reader and their previous knowledge; it is based on a comprehension process that begins with the previous knowledge of the reading, formulating predictions or hypotheses that will be validated throughout the process to then move towards the comprehensive recognition of the text read, whether letters, words or paragraphs. The third is an interactive model which, being the most complete, integrates the two previous approaches, where both the child who reads and the text become the main actors; in other words, this model facilitates text comprehension, since it is oriented in parallel both by the data offered by the written text and by the previous knowledge that the reader has regarding what he/she reads.

Under this scenario, shared reading “is the act of reading aloud, performed by an adult to one or more preschool children” (Goikoetxea and Martínez, 2015, p. 308), which has a spontaneous and routine nature, where texts with illustrations, drawings and visual elements that capture attention are used. In this regard, Condemarín (2001, as cited in Ministerio de Educación República de Chile, 2018) expresses that, its origin dates back to New Zealand, and was born as an initiative of kindergarten educators initially inspired by the family tradition of telling stories to children at bedtime, additionally highlighting that, the most common use is textbooks in a large and eye-catching format.

Through reading, the pre-reading child can recognize the following:

the organization of a text (e.g., writing direction from left to right, top to bottom and front to back, order by sentences, paragraphs, leaves), basic notions about writing (e.g., letter identification, word identification), interest in written language and in the elements that make up a book (e.g., author, cover, title; see Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka, & Hunt, 2009). (Goikoetxea and Martinez, 2015, p. 307)

Therefore, to strengthen initial literacy through a shared reading program, the adaptation of the classroom becomes the first step to creating the appropriate psychological conditions that allow the child to be comfortable and willing to learn, recognizing the existence of a direct relationship between school effectiveness and the environmental conditions of the classroom. In the case of the complexity of multi-grade classrooms, the psychological well-being of the child should be one of the first factors to be considered. Finally, the teacher must ensure that the child has adequate furniture, where seats, drawers, tables, or chairs are level, as well as doors or windows, with closures in optimal quality.

Berrios et al. (2018) describe the organization of a program's environment as a consecutive process structured in three parts: before, during, and after reading. Accordingly, in the first stage, constituted by what they call the 'before', reading micro-skills are put into practice, as the child makes predictions from the title of the reading and builds hypotheses of the text, as well as from the illustrations, silhouettes, among others; at this stage, the teacher may ask the child to share his or her first impressions and ideas about the text, to move on to the second stage, understood as the 'during' stage, in which the adult reads aloud and the child listens attentively, validating his or her hypotheses and reconstructing the meaning they gave to the reading; in this stage, the adult guides the process through questions that encourage the child to think about what he/she understood, generating, among other benefits, that the child expands their vocabulary, syntax skills, and spelling.

The third stage is constituted by the 'after', where the teacher, as a guide of the process, applies different strategies to verify the comprehension of what has been read; among them, comparison diagrams, sequence of facts, open-minded mirror and cause-effect diagram, to mention a few. The objective of these strategies is to validate the level of comprehension, opening the door to constructive discussions that nurture the child's learning process.

The assessment of the reading process is obtained as a product of the result, by measuring the speed, accuracy, and reading comprehension shown by the child before a reading text, understanding reading as a complex activity in which different cognitive elements come into play, such as the comprehension of letters, ocular ability, and its speed, as well as perceptual processes (Cuetos et al., 1996).

In this order of ideas, for the analysis of the category 'Valorization of the reading process', we take into account the precursors, recognized as those elements that children obtain during their first years of life, related to the acquisition of reading, which shape the way they interpret texts; likewise, the reading micro-skills, aimed at strengthening the development of shared reading, as a strategy for the promotion of initial literacy in multigrade classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is immersed in the postpositivist qualitative paradigm, which, according to Guba and Lincoln (2012), is developed in natural scenarios, gathering information in the real moment, where important elements related to the behaviors and conduct of the actors involved emerge, supporting them in determining their meanings and purposes, in their actions. Thus, this paradigm proposes the analysis of reality with a reflective stance, allowing the researcher to become sensitive to reality and interpret it critically, as it is preceded by humanistic conceptions directly related to human experience (Hernández et al., 2014).

Under this perspective, the central problem of this research seeks to answer the following question: How does shared reading promote initial literacy in a multigrade classroom of the Educational Institution 'Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente', Nuevo Oriente branch, San José de Oriente La Paz, Cesar? considering the performance of children in the initial learning stage, to understand the complexity of the categories and subcategories that derive from the object of study, given that they directly involve the teacher in charge of the classroom.

The method marks the path to be followed in the research. In this regard, Restrepo (2002) states that the PAR method in the educational field achieves exhaustive research, building knowledge that strengthens the disciplinary area; thus, it gives children in multigrade classrooms, the possibility of appropriating the learning provided by literacy through shared reading, so that they reinforce their values by sharing experiences with their peers and strengthen the basic and higher cognitive processes, to make the experience a meaningful process.

At this point, it should be noted that the qualitative research design retains a flexible characteristic; therefore, it follows Lewin's model (1946, as cited in Colmenares and Piñero, 2008), consisting of the following stages:

1. Description of the problem situation.
2. Construction of the theoretical bases.
3. Methodological design - fieldwork.
4. Analysis and interpretation of the instruments, and proposal.
5. Recommendations and conclusions.

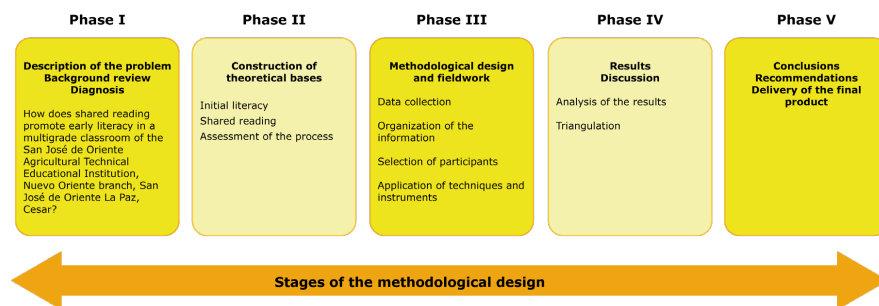


FIGURE 1

Stages of the research design

Note: Adapted from Colmenares and Piñero (2008).

The unit of analysis corresponded to the total number of students in the multigrade classroom of the institution under study. The work unit was limited to eight children in the classroom. The following selection criteria were used: students living in the township of San José de Oriente, belonging to the multigrade classroom, with more than one year in the institution (1st and 2nd), male and female, aged between 6 and 11 years old.

Information-gathering strategies were carried out through an initial diagnosis, with which it was perceived that most of the students do not master the reading process, manifesting insecurity, poor comprehension, low participation in classes, and difficulty making known in writing their points of view and ideas regarding a text. Participant observation was also used, where the subjects and their reality were involved, to influence them; and, the field diary to systematize relevant information that was later used for the evaluation workshops in the creation of strategies and the implementation of the follow-up system through the PAR.

Given that the data collection strategies met the criteria of quality and credibility, the instruments developed were submitted to the judgment of an expert, whose purpose was to demonstrate their relevance, guaranteeing the validation of the subject with accuracy.

RESULTS

For the approach to the results, we started from the objectives and categories of the study; for the diagnosis and category 'Initial literacy level' in students of the multigrade classroom, it is highlighted that most of them had difficulties to develop reading because they were unable to answer the proposed exercises. In addition, insecurity, fear, and poor reading comprehension were observed. This a situation due to differences in age, maturity, and learning pace, as well as poor participation in class and difficulty in expressing in writing their points of view and ideas regarding a text; this led to the development of the 'Initial literacy' category, in which participant observation was used as a technique, which made it possible to record in the field diary the students' behavior through the activities 'I construct my learning', 'Choose the topic', and 'Let's read together and answer the questions'.

In the aforementioned activities, the necessary conditions were created to meet the differences and needs of each of the participants, starting from an appropriate environment, seeking at all times to empathize with them to generate trust, so that there was an openness that allowed them to interact freely and that they could show their behavior and understanding of the text, to validate the literacy level of each one of them.

In this way, the development of the activities was carried out; in the first one, 'I construct my learning', aimed at the subcategory 'Direct teaching', the students were motivated and fixed their attention on the images. The transition students had difficulty writing the correct names of the words that were formed by joining the syllables; the first graders asked the teacher about the correct spelling of some words; and the second graders showed greater ease in reading and writing the words.

In the second activity, 'Choose the topic', aimed at the subcategory 'Integral language', whose purpose was to demonstrate the development of skills to observe, predict, and propose through the observation of images, the students were motivated and chose one of the animals (dog, fish, parrot). To answer the questions: What do we know about the topic, what do we want to learn about the topic, and how can we study it? Each one of them expressed their particular answers in the following way:

In the first question, they expressed in writing what they were interested in knowing about the animal of their preference; in the second question, they highlighted the following: how they are born, how they feed, and, in the case of birds, how they stay in the air. In the end, they participated orally to share their answer to each question. For their part, the transition students responded entirely orally, since they had difficulty writing.

In the third activity, 'Let's read together and answer the questions', aimed at the subcategory 'Reading methods', the children were introduced to the reading 'Creative animals'. The teacher showed them an illustrated poster and then read it aloud, and invited them to read the paragraphs individually, to ask questions about what they observed in the text based on their perspectives: what animals appear there, are the animals wild or domestic, what do the animals do in that place? Students recorded their answers in written and oral form.

Regarding the category 'Shared reading', the technique used to collect information was participant observation, whose data are described in the field diary. The evidence found showed the attitudinal, knowledge, and behavioral traits of the children at the moment of executing a shared reading in a conducive environment.

The activity developed to obtain the information was called: 'The Camilo Rabbit'. It had a process of preparation and organization of the environment, allowing us to observe, in a scenario of trust, the enthusiasm of the children to participate actively in the programmed activities, getting involved from the joy of learning; likewise, the participation and willingness of parents to take them to the institution and that they could share through living the experience, the shared reading with their classmates were observed.

During the development, the children who were part of the study sample participated at all times, asking questions, inquiring, and reflecting on the readings, interpreting the meaning of the characters and

comparing them with their daily experiences, as well as identifying their emotions according to what they were hearing.

Regarding the category ‘Evaluation of the implementation of activities in the reading process’, the reflective workshop ‘Learn from Ye’ was used as an instrument for the analysis of the information, where the story of ‘Chocokín and the little clown Yaya’ was dramatized. This workshop was held outdoors, to connect students with their environment, break the classroom routine, and promote their participation; they spontaneously, willingly, and happily joined the activity.

The findings made it possible to describe in the field diary the progress made by the children in the multigrade classroom in reading comprehension; likewise, it was evident that they made progress in the micro-skills of reading and writing. The parents’ assistance was key, as they showed interest and collaboration in carrying out the proposed activities (see Figure 2).

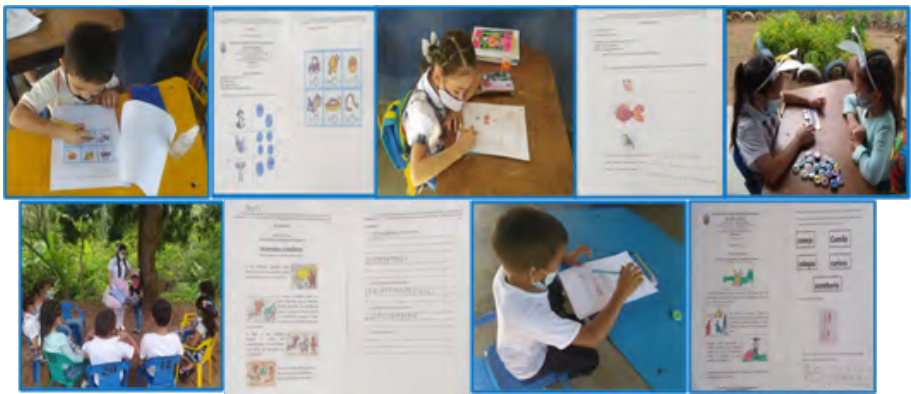


FIGURE 2
Evidence of the results

Based on the results, we proceeded to analyze the data from the participant observations and the reflective workshop, which provided the information to support the categories, subcategories, and their respective triangulation, complemented by the theory that supports the findings and the researcher’s interpretation. The triangulation was done descriptively, considering the elements shown in Figure 3.

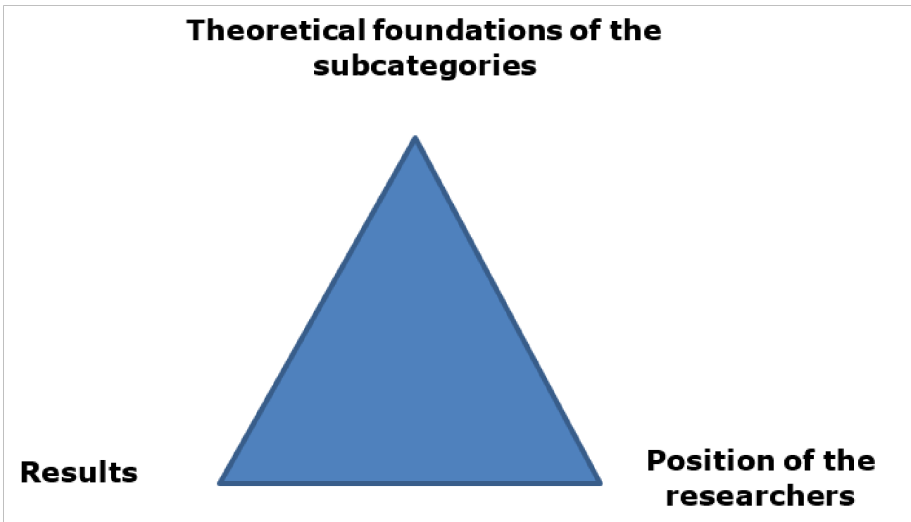


FIGURE 3
Triangulation

Triangulation: Category 'Initial Literacy', subcategory 'Direct teaching'

Theoretical foundations of the subcategories

Direct teaching is an educational model centered on the teacher, giving a large part of the responsibility to the planning and explanation of the contents, whose methodology focuses on teaching concepts to foster the development of skills through modeling and explanation (Carrera and Marín, 2011).

Results

First-grade students showed maturity in following the teacher's instructions, participated and enjoyed reading and writing and, although they paused, they understood the text, knew how to listen, and enjoyed teamwork; they also showed good handwriting but still had difficulty writing in their notebooks what was written on the board. Second-grade students liked to participate and made their points of view on the topic known; they read with difficulty but with confidence; they required minimal help from the teacher to carry out their activities and shared them with ease.

Position of the researcher

The observation shows that the children in the multigrade classroom have a basic language in the comprehension of texts; their learning is still conditioned by direct teaching; it is intended that the students reach reading maturity to achieve independence when reading. Likewise, it can be inferred that, when children are at a basic level, it is difficult for them to express their ideas when discussing with their classmates what, in their opinion, the text means.

Triangulation: Category 'Initial Literacy', subcategory 'Integral Language'

Theoretical foundations of the subcategories

According to Goodman (1989, as cited in Tabash, 2009), integral language is a way of uniting the vision of language, of learning, of the human being, and, especially, that of two groups of human beings: children and girls, as well as teachers.

Results

The activity started with the visualization of various animals to the children so they can find out the differences and the environmental conditions to preserve life. They asked questions related to the animals and commented on the experiences of the family pets. Despite the difficulties in reading, they liked to participate in them and develop activities on the board. They investigated to know the characteristics of each of the animals presented and how to care for them.

Position of the researcher

Observation in the multigrade classroom showed that transitional children are at a level of lexical processing, with more or less elaborate knowledge schemes (typical of their age), with the ability to relate what is observed with the experiences of their context, achieving the interpretation of the text with the support of the teacher. However, by not having reading proficiency, it is difficult for them to understand what they have read in an efficient, productive, and meaningful way. For their part, first and second-grade children are located at a syntactic level, with knowledge of the basic grammatical structure of the language.

Triangulation: Category ‘Initial Literacy’, subcategory ‘Methods of reading’*Theoretical foundations of the subcategories*

Solé (1993) states that there are three reading processing models for the acquisition of reading comprehension in children, which can be generated in the classroom: the first is based on an ascending processing model where learning to read is centered on the decoding of information, either through graphics, words, letters, paragraphs, or the full text. The second is the descending processing model and differs from the previous one in that it gives relevance to the reader and their previous knowledge. The third, an interactive model that is the most complete, integrates the two previous approaches, where the child who reads and the text, become the main actors.

Results

Transition students are not yet able to complete the reading process, but they can write what they see on the board, participate in reading because they understand what they read, enjoy reading stories, and feel confident to ask questions about the topics covered. The reading of the first graders is better, they decode more easily and understand the subject matter; they read slowly, but, since they do not respect punctuation marks, it is difficult for them to understand, making the teacher direct the reading and emphasize the pauses, to facilitate the comprehension of what is read. On the other hand, second-grade students are always motivated, they like to participate and answer the questions posed by the teacher; their reading is more fluent, they write without difficulty and they collaborate with their classmates when writing the answers.

Position of the researcher

Although the activity made it possible to demonstrate that children in the multigrade classroom have an ascending reading process, it was necessary to use strategies adapted to the level of each one, so that they could decode the information, adjust to the visual recognition of the letters and their pronunciation, connecting with their interests and the objective of the activity.

Triangulation: Category ‘Initial Literacy’, subcategory ‘Preparation’

Theoretical foundations of the subcategories

To carry out a shared reading program as a strategy for the promotion of initial literacy, authors such as Berrios et al. (2018) propose developing a sequence of actions aimed at giving order and meaning to the process of learning to read, so that the child cultivates the habit for reading, with enthusiasm and motivation.

Results

The students showed interest in the activity and established similarities and differences; this generated empathy. They were invited to read and participate in dramatizations and dances, imitating the rabbit's movements. Throughout the activity, they were attentive and curious to know what the story was about and chatted with their close peers.

Position of the researcher

The observation carried out allows us to conclude that the children's development is conditioned by their academic level and age, which requires the preparation of the environment. Transition children are attentive, they look for and take the initiative to participate in the activity, which makes it easier for them to identify the characteristics of the character, and share the experiences they have with their family. For their part, first graders are enthusiastic, attentive to the reading, able to predict the outcome of the story, and at the same time participate actively, wanting to look like the character in the story. Similarly, the second graders express curiosity to learn more about the story; thus, the teacher was able to capture their attention through the dynamics elaborated.

Evaluation of the implementation of the activities

Through the activities implemented and the group work, greater motivation and interest in the content of the reading could be evidenced; the children identified images and postures, sequenced them, managed to construct short texts, communicated their ideas and suggestions, and recognized simple words, relating them to sounds. After the shared reading activities, it was possible to verify greater accuracy in executing the association, motivated by the use of the pointer, teamwork, socialization of ideas, and the organization and sequences of images. The students were able to read aloud, and followed the sequence of paragraphs, evidencing progress with a cheerful and motivating attitude; greater autonomy and fluency were noted during the reading process.

By developing the syllabic decomposition of words through voice strokes, students could write sentences without difficulty, with confidence and dexterity in the moments of reading and writing. Through the implementation of shared reading, there was greater interest in selfevaluating their process and controlling their comprehension before beginning and at the end of the reading.

These results allow us to interpret that the workshop was structured so that the children could systematically approach reading and writing, in such a way that they could develop them according to their age and their particular interests in phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, and vocabulary expansion, to later recognize a text and investigate the meaning of the words, until they reached the acquisition of a written code. The whole workshop took place in a fun atmosphere that awakened their

interest in participating in the activity; the children dressed up as some of the characters in the story and performed a dramatization of the story, which generated positive emotions and effusive displays of affection. In interpreting the findings, the researchers corroborated that by creating the appropriate scenario for the development of the reading process, children participate more and focus on meaningful learning.

DISCUSSION

The following is a discussion of the results of the analysis of the different categories that were part of the research. Therefore, it begins with the diagnosis of the initial literacy level of students in the multigrade classroom of the Educational Institution 'Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente', Nuevo Oriente branch. Results showed deficiencies in the reading-writing process, affecting their student performance, which is in discrepancy with the statements of Hernández et al. (2009) who express that a child is literate when he/she develops the competencies that allow him/her to identify the codes and texts of a specific language, as well as the social language in which it is immersed when he/she can understand the texts accepted by the community and is capable of elaborating meanings in that language.

The results of the application of the mentioned activities make it possible to show that, within the multigrade classroom, transitional children are at a level of lexical processing, with more or less elaborate knowledge schemes typical of their age, with the ability to relate what observed with the experiences of their context, achieving the interpretation of the text with the support of the teacher. First and second-grade children are at a syntactic level, with knowledge of the basic grammatical structure of the language; an ascending process was evidenced, thanks to the management of strategies adapted to their level so that they could carry out the activities, adjusted to the visual recognition of the letters and their pronunciation, which allowed them to connect with their interests and the objective of the activity.

These results are similar to those proposed by Cuetos et al. (1996), who ratify the existence of three levels of information processing at the moment of reading and writing acquisition: lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the degree of difficulty and the individuality of the learner and identify the characteristics of these processes to design effective teaching tools, adapted to develop a quality experience for students.

To answer the question: Which shared reading activities would be applied for initial literacy in multigrade classroom students? the 'Shared reading' category was the answer since the results reflected that the development of the child is conditioned by their academic level and their age, such is the case that, at the time of preparing the environment, transitional children are certainly attentive, seek and take the initiative to participate in the activity, making it easy for them to identify the characteristics of the character, sharing the experiences they have with their family. For their part, first-grade children are enthusiastic about the activity, attentive to reading, and can predict the outcome of the story, while actively participating, seeking to resemble the character of the story. In the same way, the secondgrade children express curiosity to know more about the story; in this way, it is evident that the teacher managed to capture the attention of the students.

These results are related to the arguments of Goikoetxea and Martínez (2015), who pointed out that the act of reading aloud by an adult to one or more preschool-age children must be spontaneous and sequential, and through illustrated texts with striking visual elements, drawings, or graphics, it is possible to capture their attention. When children are in a prereading stage, they must help themselves with texts in a large and striking format, which favor the development of emotional intelligence, with diagrammed readings that facilitate the recognition of the organization of the text, in such a way that children can work on directionality and relational space in the basic notions of writing.

Similarly, to answer the question: Of which shared reading activities would apply to initial literacy in students in the multigrade classroom?, the activities developed generated reading-focused reading learning spaces where the children interpreted the written texts, connecting with the characters and daily experiences,

being similar to the approaches of Kaderavek et al. (2009, as cited in Goikoetxea and Martínez, 2015), who stated that the initial literacy method seeks to develop an interest in written language and the elements that make up a book in pre-reading children: cover, title, author, phrases, paragraphs, sheets.

The mentioned evidence confirms that when reading strategies are carried out innovatively, involving children with the environment, the reading, and the literacy process, generates greater flexibility and better results. Thus, a call is made to teachers in multigrade classrooms to renew their teaching work, moving from the traditional to creative processes that integrate children and take into account their desire to learn.

Regarding the evaluation of the implementation of the activities in the reading process, according to what was proposed by Cuetos et al. (1996), seeks to measure the speed, accuracy, and reading comprehension of a child before a reading text; that is, reading is recognized as a complex dynamic where basic and superior cognitive processes underlying, such as analysis, comprehension of letters, perceptual processes, among others. It should be noted that evaluation is a process that the teacher can carry out before, during, and after an activity; even promote changes effectively, if the students' learning scenario requires it (Barone, 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

To validate the first objective, framed in diagnosing the initial literacy level in students of the multigrade classroom of the Educational Institution 'Técnico Agropecuario San José de Oriente' Nuevo Oriente La Paz, Cesar, it was found that transitional children are at a level of lexical processing, with a lack of reading proficiency, a more or less elaborate knowledge scheme (typical of their age), and the ability to relate what is observed with the experiences of their context. Children in first and second grade are at a syntactic level, with knowledge of the basic grammatical structure of the language, requiring the support of an adult to guide the reading process.

Regarding the second objective aimed at planning shared reading activities for initial literacy, the results allow us to conclude that, through shared reading carried out in a structured way, respecting the moments of preparation and organization of the environment according to the needs of the children and their context, a positive effect is achieved in the literacy process, producing visible results that impact the comprehensive education of the student. Likewise, it was verified that the development of the child is conditioned by the academic level that he/she is studying and by his/her age, requiring spaces of trust, flexibility, and close that motivate him/her to acquire reading skills.

Concerning the third objective, which focused on evaluating the implementation of shared reading activities for initial literacy in students of the multigrade classroom, it was possible to verify the viability of the application of strategies to teach pre-reading children, framed in a shared reading program and micro-skills, because with them it was possible for children who are in the transition grade to reinforce their lexical level and, those first and second-grade students, advance from a syntactic level to a semantic level. On the other hand, they gained more confidence when reading, correctly pronouncing the words of the alphabet, identifying them within a sentence, and understanding the relationship with other words to read.

Regarding the general objective referring to implementing shared reading for initial literacy, taking into account the theoretical collection in which the present investigation is framed and previous analysis of the findings resulting from the application of the instruments, it is validated that, when carrying out initial literacy activities supported in an academic structure according to the needs of the child and his/her context, he/she can appropriate his/her abilities and move in the learning of reading in a natural way; even, recognizing how his/her learning is reinforced with his/her partner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the first objective, it is expected to generate proposals for multi-grade classrooms where initial literacy mechanisms adapted to the characteristics and needs of each student are implemented, to provide comprehensive teaching, where the development of skills and competencies is encouraged, not only in the academic area but also in creativity, problemsolving, adaptation and self-management of learning.

As for the second objective, it is recommended that teachers in multigrade classrooms search for creative and innovative literacy strategies for reading, where children are the protagonists and have a direct relationship with their environment and context so that they can adapt to the demands of today to their evolutionary development.

For the third objective, teachers are required to establish a formative and flexible evaluation of the reading literacy process, before, during, and after, which allows them to adapt the plans based on the events and facts that occur in the institution and within the classroom, considering at all times the individual characteristics of the students, to strengthen their relational system and their self-esteem.

Finally, regarding the general objective, it is recommended that teachers permanently implement creative literacy strategies that strengthen the reading process in multigrade classrooms, daring to incorporate new techniques by environmental conditions, adapted to the individual needs of children, so that they motivate them to participate in experiences that add meaning to their learning and achieve the academic and emotional displacement they require.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors of this article declare not to have any conflict of interest regarding the work presented.

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