

THE LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION: EXPERIENCES FROM A CASE STUDY AS AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH METHOD

EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA COMPRENSIÓN LECTORA: EXPERIENCIAS DE UN ESTUDIO DE CASO COMO MÉTODO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA

Yester Marllory López Zambrano. jesterlopez1234@yahoo.es. Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Ecuador. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5442-8529>

Gema Gabriela Cantos López. gabucha.cantos@gmail.com. Unidad Educativa Fiscal Doctora Guadalupe Larriva, Manabí, Ecuador. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5021-5953>

**Corresponding author:* jesterlopez1234@yahoo.es

Received: December 21, 2025

Accepted: January 29, 2026

ABSTRACT

Considering the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes quality education, the teaching of reading comprehension and the development of reading habits and skills constitute an urgent task. Consequently, the aim of this study is to present the main results of a case study conducted in the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program at Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (Uleam), following the implementation of didactic procedures designed to foster reading comprehension as a communicative skill. The fundamental method employed was direct observation, which allowed for the characterization of the socio-educational context in which the activity took place, complemented by document review. The results reveal the relevance of the procedures developed, provide validity criteria regarding the quality of teaching and learning of reading from the communicative approach, and highlight the positive transformations in the training process at Uleam.

KEYWORDS: reading comprehension; communicative approach; pedagogical process; professional training

RESUMEN

Al considerar los objetivos de la Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible, de las Naciones Unidas, que apunta a una educación de calidad, la enseñanza de la comprensión de la lectura y el desarrollo de hábitos y habilidades de lectura constituyen una labor urgente. En consecuencia, el objetivo que se persigue radica en exponer los principales resultados de un estudio de casos aplicado en la carrera de Pedagogía de la Lengua y la Literatura de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (Uleam), luego de la implementación de los procedimientos didácticos para desarrollar la comprensión de la lectura como habilidad comunicativa. Como método fundamental se empleó la observación directa que condujo a caracterizar el contexto socioeducativo en que se desarrolla la actividad; además de la revisión de documentos. Los resultados revelan la pertinencia de los procedimientos elaborados, ofrecen criterios de validez acerca de la calidad de la enseñanza y del aprendizaje de la lectura desde el Enfoque comunicativo y las transformaciones positivas en el proceso de formación de la Uleam.

PALABRAS CLAVE: comprensión de la lectura; enfoque comunicativo; proceso pedagógico; formación profesional

INTRODUCTION

Making students enjoy reading is a challenge for 21st-century education, since reading not only provides information but also educates by creating habits of reflection, concentration and criticism from different perspectives, opening the mind to other dimensions (Tipán & Rodríguez, 2012).

It is considered that Ecuadorian education should be based on the training of the future professional in values, attitudes, in the development of thinking and creativity as instruments of knowledge, and in practice as a strategy for operational training in the face of reality. The first stage of the process is learning to read, followed by a constant effort of practice and development of the reading comprehension skill. This skill is, in fact, part of one of the basic competencies for

learning: communicative competence. This leads to emphasizing the importance of cultivating reading habits and taste for reading.

Given the demands of the contemporary world that impose new challenges on Higher Education institutions, updates in educational processes are proposed. There is data that illustrates the problems in the development of reading comprehension among students in the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program, at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, at Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (hereinafter ULEAM).

In this sense, the need for modifications in the curricular processes used for professional training is corroborated, in order to achieve a subject capable of solving problems of their future profession and their daily life. It is required to train a professional as a responsible citizen who adapts quickly, with flexibility, capacity and creativity to the educational field, with a vision of progress, success and innovation of knowledge in their way of learning and achieving goals throughout their life.

Higher Education demands that the pedagogical process be systematically and continuously improved, with a close relationship with productive, academic and technological institutions applied to specific contexts of the profession that form their comprehensive, humanistic and professional culture. All this so that they can achieve effective insertion, once graduated, in the exercise of their profession.

In 2010, changes were made in the updating and curricular strengthening of Basic General Education in Ecuador. In this context, the communicative approach is weighted in function of communicative competence; from this approach, it is proposed to teach the language based on linguistic macro-skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing complete texts in real communicative situations (Básica, 2010). From here, the area of Language and Communication is renamed the area of Language and Literature; in the former, the development of linguistic skills was prioritized, while the latter surpasses the previous conception, insofar as

it is studied with the objective of using it as a tool for interaction; furthermore, a greater balance is achieved between the two subjects.

In the aforementioned program at Uleam, research actions in the area of language and literature have led the authors of this work to determine manifestations about the real state of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in students. It is necessary to highlight that this process has potentialities and limitations that affect its development.

The following are manifested as potentialities: the balance achieved in the curricular conception of the Language and Literature discipline between the linguistic and literary components; the concern of teachers and administrators to find study methods that enable students to understand written texts more efficiently. It should also be mentioned that students understand the need to develop more effective reading in order to achieve greater scientific and cultural information, and to learn to read efficiently in order to enjoy literary works during their studies and in their future professional practice, as well as recognizing the importance of reading to broaden their cultural horizons.

Despite this, students persist in insufficiencies linked to the limited development of reading habits of texts of diverse typologies and thematic variety, printed or digital, specifically literary and specialized ones related to the profession; as well as a lack of knowledge of techniques or procedures leading to the collective evaluation of the text under study, within the framework of joint activity, based on exchange, debate and discussion. Methodologically, insufficiencies are also recognized in the planning, orientation, revision and evaluation of tasks for comprehending texts of diverse typologies, aimed at critical and interdisciplinary reading; in addition, an inadequate selection of educational research methods has been found to investigate advances and setbacks in reading learning, and to derive improvement actions from this.

The analysis of the professional training carried out in the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program, for searching and evaluating causes of such insufficiencies, allowed specifying as a problem to be solved that, although professionalized

academic activities are carried out through their insertion in educational centers, these do not guarantee, by themselves, that students appropriate the different reading comprehension strategies; during the teaching-learning process, they achieve the systematic practice of critical reading as the culmination of the process addressed.

With the purpose of finding a solution to the stated problems, the approach to the theoretical foundations on reading comprehension makes it possible to determine that this has received extensive treatment in recent years. Although the approaches are diverse, today one can speak of points of coincidence and of important and useful results at the theoretical level. However, dissatisfaction remains evident among teachers, professors, language teaching specialists and linguists regarding the didactic and methodological treatment for the development of reading comprehension.

Montaño (2010) addresses the interactive and information-exchange character of reading when approaching the text-author-reader-context relationship. However, in terms of learning reading comprehension, it does not specify, with all the necessary sufficiency, the elements that point to the educational value of this and how it influences the student-student relationship, within the framework of joint activity, in this case, the language and literature class.

Regarding the critical character of reading, Roméu (2007) places it at a level of interpretation, but this critical sense that the reader makes of reading should be placed at higher cognitive (comprehension) levels. This aspect finds greater recognition in critical-evaluative reading, as a consequence of the didactic sequence provided by López (2016) when addressing reading comprehension as a communicative competence.

In the particular case of the Republic of Ecuador, for the most part, the theoretical sources related to reading and comprehension come from Europe or other Latin American countries. However, the studies of the group of authors from the Andean University and the research by López (2016), which is part of this work, stand out.

The positions of these, in a general sense, coincide with those of other international authors. Although in them one can find the necessary guidance of steps or stages for reading and comprehending texts, from a critical, creative position and developing it as a skill, as intended from the Communicative Approach, not in all cases are guidelines, indicators or suggestions addressed for evaluating the development of reading comprehension from the aforementioned perspective: How to assess the transformations in the learning of reading comprehension and specifically of critical-evaluative reading?

One of the core aspects to overcome, from a didactic point of view, is to consider comprehension as synonymous of identifying, which denies not only the active role that the reader should play in their interaction with the written text during reading but also the transition that, in a natural and progressive manner, the student-reader should make through the different levels of assimilation, even reaching the level of creativity.

In this sense, a concept that is important to address is that of the circularity of reading. López (2016) conceives the circularity of reading as a process that channels reading comprehension, as a procedure that the reader must use to achieve comprehension of the text, obviously, in relation to their characteristics as a reader, their needs and reading objectives, which should constitute the beginning or starting point of teaching and learning reading comprehension.

This global understanding of reading requires new concepts that guide its teaching and learning, so that it progressively reaches higher levels of quality. At this point, it is equally necessary to allude to the development of comprehension as a skill inherent to the pedagogical profession (Morales et al., 2019), for which language and literature teaching must make use of novel resources and means, beyond traditional ones, such as (virtual) learning objects (Hernández et al., 2022).

Based on the above ideas, this work aims to: present the main results of a case study applied in the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program at Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (Uleam), following the implementation of didactic procedures to develop reading comprehension as a communicative skill.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As a fundamental method, direct observation was used, which led to characterizing the socio-educational context in which the activity takes place. Document review allowed identifying and evaluating information on the forms of teacher and student preparation, as well as the effectiveness of the implementation of essential concepts and didactic procedures for reading comprehension as a communicative skill, derived from the theoretical study of the analyzed process and from analysis-synthesis processes.

The case study, in its interpretive variant, was applied to a sample of 30 students from the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program, which also has as a precedent its application to students of the Primary Education program at Uleam (2010-2021). This allowed describing, analyzing and interpreting the information obtained and judging what meaning these findings have in the professional training process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the main elements of discussion in this work are those of a theoretical nature, corresponding to the topic under investigation. International authors have insisted on proposals for tools to enhance reading comprehension, and how to evaluate the construction of meanings before, during and after it, where guidance toward critical reading underlies (Condemarin & Medina, 2000).

Another group of authors has made contributions to critical-reflective reading to promote critical and divergent thinking, inherent to the development of students' capacities to question the reality of their environment and develop new meanings

from it, so that resilient, creative, meticulous, and proactive citizens are achieved (Cassany, 2006; Castillo & Pérez, 2017; Callohuanca, 2021).

The considerations of the aforementioned authors, regarding critical reading, are closely related to the essential concepts and to the didactic procedures for developing reading comprehension as a communicative skill (López, 2016). The essential concepts are subdivided according to the taxonomy of essential, basic - and categories.

As secondary concepts, the following were considered: circularity of reading; phases of reading comprehension; and functional communicative means. These concepts refer to the necessary regressions in reading (re-reading), which contributes to a global understanding of the text from each student's worldview, as well as the conscious transition from sensitization, to elaboration, redefinition and generalization of reading from a personal and critical perspective.

For their part, the written text and the communicative approach are taken as basic concepts. These concepts involve literal or explicit, intentional or implicit, and complementary or cultural meanings, as well as senses that will be given to them by the student according to their worldview, decisive for the general and scientific cultural formation of the student, and as a carrier of aesthetic values; in addition to focusing the objective or purpose of reading on the development of communicative competence, so that the student is capable of elaborating communicative acts efficiently, in a socialization process in which student-student and teacher-students interaction prevails during joint activity.

Finally, as a category or concept of the highest hierarchical level, the communicative skill of reading comprehension is assumed as a process through which the student-reader, in interaction with their teachers and classmates, mediated by the written text, in textbooks and with the facilities of new technologies; develops comprehension, based on the establishment of interdisciplinary relationships for the analysis of semantic content and the assumption of a critical position from their worldview; for this, they go through

phases that contribute to the development of reading strategies and favor the solution of habitual and professional problems, in close connection with cognitive and affective-motivational factors.

Didactic procedures for the development of the communicative skill of reading comprehension:

1. Textual decoding:

- Reading the text
- Summary
- Vocabulary work

2. Determination of pragmatic content of the text:

- Verification of knowledge of the author/sender and the specific socio-historical conditions in which the text is written.
- Exploration of experiences or knowledge in relation to the text's theme.
- Anticipation of the author's intentionality in writing the text.
- Specification of the purpose of reading

3. Analysis of functional communicative means:

- Identification of the textual typology to which the text corresponds.
- Recognition of the communicative function(s) prevailing in the text.
- Analysis of the phonic, morphological, lexical and syntactic communicative means employed and the connotation they acquire in the context in which they are used, or the intention or purpose with which they are used by the author

4. Recognition of the semantic content of the text:

- Verification of the information possessed about the text's content
- Establishment of causal, temporal and spatial relationships
- Inferences.
- Identification of possible relationships of the text's content with other disciplines and with the reader's contexts of action.
- Identification of the main concepts appearing in the text.
- Determination of the main and secondary ideas of the text.
- Establishment of relationships with other texts and contexts.
- Contextualization of the reading content to new communicative situations

5. Critical-interactive evaluation:

- Evaluation of the text's content from the particularities of the textual typology, the theme or discipline which it corresponds, with an interdisciplinary approach.
- Transfer of the critical message derived from reading to other texts, contexts or communicative situations for the solution of professional and global or everyday problems.
- Dissemination of the elaborated critique or its practical result, based on the creation of interactive digital products, forums, on the web, in chat, etc., in order to broaden the critical evaluation of the message and urge the critical reading of the text by new potential readers: students from other years and programs, program graduates, teachers and professors, authorities and faculty of ULEAM.

Results of the interpretive case study applied to a sample of students from the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Uleam:

A sample of 30 students from the first to third year of the program was taken, due to the preponderance of the reading comprehension skill in the objectives and contents of the curriculum of these years, and due to the disposition and skills shown in classes and in scientific-student activities; the evaluations also consider the results of the first application of the case study to students of the Primary Education program (2010), as a precedent.

Likewise, the case study takes into account textual typologies due to the transdisciplinary nature of the training of the Pedagogy of Language and Literature professional.

Case studies and their main results:

Case 1. «Global Warming»

Context: it is carried out mainly in university areas, specifically in the classroom, library and computer lab. These spaces have appropriate hygienic conditions for the development of academic activities, good lighting and climate control. There are also adequate technological facilities such as slide projectors and computers with Internet access. Support staff show willingness to assist students.

From a subjective point of view, although initially students' interest in reading the text is not notable, as they show limitations and low motivation for reading; the levels of motivation which the teacher arrives at the classroom stimulate and guide their students, causing their motivational levels to increase significantly.

Objective: to understand the content of the written text «Global Warming» through the explicit and implicit elements in the text, from the possibilities of the individual characteristics of the students and from a critical position, evidencing levels of

awareness about the importance of decision-making to address the implications of global warming, both at the personal and collective levels and by governmental authorities.

Data source: the main evidence was obtained by the researcher through her direct and participant observation as the executor of the activity's direction. She also conducted apparently informal conversations with her students outside the classroom, as well as with other colleagues from the teaching staff and with family and friends of the students involved in the case.

Description of the experience: the researcher teacher proceeded to develop the text analysis through the transition through the assumed phases. That is, she began with a sensitization process, relating students to the topic and establishing a personal experiential connection, creating interest in the reading content and preparing them to face the new text and obtain basic information on the first contact with the reading. In this regard, the orientation of tasks for the first reading that gives possibilities for comprehension to students whose comprehension models are both ascending and descending, through the search for the central idea and more specific elements such as words and grammatical structures, is significant.

Then she proceeded to the reading, that is, the phase of comprehension elaboration. For this, tasks were oriented from the general to the particular, which addressed the comprehension of the contents expressed directly in the text and attention to elements of the language system, particularly vocabulary and grammar. The logical ordering of ideas was also oriented for attention to verbal fluency.

Finally, redefinition tasks were oriented, which focused on the critical analysis of the text's content. Students were given the possibility to assume personal positions and to criticize official decisions made at the national and international levels in this regard. Finally, as a phase of generalization, they were instructed on how to transfer the mastery of these contents to their daily lives, both personally and professionally.

Interpretation of the case: disposition for reading environmental topics with a critical position and social responsibility; respectful practice of criticism and censorship of inadequate actions regarding the environment and in the search for possible solutions.

Case 2. «The Fight»

Context: similar to the first case, although with an emphasis on the library created by the researcher in the classroom itself, with literary works that emphasize universal human values.

Objective: to understand the content of the literary text «The Fight» through the explicit and implicit elements in the text, attending to the aesthetic potentialities offered by the literary text, from a professional pedagogical approach, with emphasis on the circularity of reading and evidencing levels of awareness about the importance of value education.

Data source: direct and participant observation by the researcher teacher, as well as informal conversations with students.

Description of the experience: from the different possibilities for reading literary works available to students, this work, which has the length of a book, was selected for the case because it possesses potentialities for the formation of universal human values in general and in particular love, respect, responsibility, and solidarity, which should be reinforced in students of the program.

Sensitization begins with the cover, through the exploitation of images and the synthetic written text that appears on it. From here, students speculated on the possible content of the text, which they were later able to verify during direct interaction with it in the following phase. Here it is significant that in the redefinition phase, students produced written summaries, thus achieving the integration of communicative skills. Likewise, they produced conclusive reports on the book's content, with emphasis on the impact and learning that the book left on each student-reader.

Treatment and guidance were given to students who needed it regarding the circularity of reading, that is, enabling them to go back to certain parts of the text and demonstrating that there should be no prejudices about it. The necessary professional pedagogical approach was also addressed by linking the text with texts of similar content but with levels of complexity within the student's reach.

Interpretation of the case: greater enjoyment and aesthetic taste from reading the literary text and evidence of high achievement motivation for the comprehension of this type of text. The axiological value is appreciated from the expression of moral and social values by the students, such as love, solidarity, peace, among others, which are key for the future exercise of the profession, all as a generalization of reading.

Case 3. «The Cultures of Ecuador»

Context: similar to the two previous cases, although with an emphasis on libraries and visits to cultural institutions such as museums, untouched places because they are preserved such as Aguas Blancas Park, Puerto López, Machalilla, and Salango.

Objective: to understand the content of the written text "The Cultures of Ecuador" through the explicit and implicit ideas in the text, from an interdisciplinary approach, with emphasis on student-student interaction during the construction of comprehension and evidencing levels of awareness about the importance of love and conservation of the different cultures of the Republic of Ecuador.

Data source: direct and participant observation by the researcher, exchange with her students during reading in class and with family and other colleagues during the visit to selected places.

Description of the experience: the researcher teacher conducted the sensitization phase in a *sui generis* manner, since before directly interacting with the text, she made visits to representative places of the preservation of the Machalilla, Valdivia, and Chorrera cultures, cultures of the Ecuadorian coast, so that prediction as a

reading comprehension strategy was put into practice. This prepared them to face the text and elaborate comprehension efficiently.

Particularly, the necessary inter-subject link was attended to, through the analysis of the characteristics of the visited natural environment and the social organization of the commune. And the other element particularly attended to was student-student interaction during all phases of reading, through learning tasks that guaranteed it. Different types of pairs and groups were created according to the possibilities and needs of the students and the complexities of the tasks. In this regard, the elaboration and presentation of reports stand out.

Interpretation of the case: it was possible to verify the importance of interacting directly with the environment or natural and social phenomenon subject to treatment in the reading, with evident growth in motivational levels and efficiency in comprehension; objective and subjective conditions are created for interdisciplinary work from different areas of the study curriculum. The importance of facilitating interaction among students during reading, in all its phases, is also connoted, so that experiential learning of reading and for life is carried out.

As generalities of the case study, the following results can be noted:

In the instructive-educational aspect, evidence of the development of the communicative skill of reading comprehension was manifested, seen in a greater approach to the main and secondary ideas, as well as to the achievement of a critical-evaluative stance in relation to them.

Regarding learning, it was observed how they reach higher levels in relation to the communicative skill of reading comprehension, and critical-evaluative reading is achieved as an essential tool of the pedagogical profession, and for life.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the communicative skill of reading comprehension from new perspectives constitutes a necessity and an urgency, with emphasis on the critical character of comprehension, from the Communicative Approach, as a way to ensure the quality of the teaching-learning process of reading, in particular, and of the training process, in general. The essential, secondary and basic concepts, in addition to the category communicative skill of reading comprehension, set the guidelines for new and more effective didactic procedures for reading in light of the Communicative Approach and the demands of human communication in the context of Uleam and current Ecuadorian society. The case study reveals that it is possible to raise efficiency levels in the comprehension of written texts in students of the Pedagogy of Language and Literature program, so that the development of reading comprehension becomes more efficient, both in the Language and Literature area and in other common areas of the curriculum, preparing them for the future exercise of the pedagogical profession.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- BÁSICA, G. (2010). Actualización fortalecimiento curricular. *Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador*. <https://raqueleonv.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/septimoanioegb.pdf>
- Callohuanca-Mamani, W. (2021). Importancia de la lectura crítico-reflexiva para promover el pensamiento crítico en estudiantes de educación básica: Array. *Maestro y sociedad*, 18(1), 326-334. <https://maestroysociedad.uo.edu.cu/index.php/MyS/article/view/5341>
- Cassany, D. (2006). *Tras las líneas: sobre la lectura contemporánea*. Anagrama.

- Castillo González, F., & Pérez Rodríguez, N. C. (2017). Reflexiones sobre lectura crítica como una necesidad más allá del ambiente escolar. *Educación y Ciencia*, (20), 169-188.
https://repositorio.uptc.edu.co/bitstream/001/2460/1/PPS_1079_Reflexiones_sobre_lectura_critica.pdf
- Condemarín, M., & Medina, A. (2000). Evaluación de los aprendizajes. *Santiago de Chile: MINEDUC. doi, 10.*
https://www.rmm.cl/sites/default/files/usuarios/mcocha/doc/201011141500430.libro_mabel_condemarin_evaluacion_aprendizajes.pdf
- Hernández-Domínguez, I., Caballero-Velázquez, E., & Hernández-González, Y. (2022). Los medios de enseñanza y las tecnologías: objetos de aprendizaje de lengua española. *Luz*, 21(4), 95-109. http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?pid=S1814-151X2022000400095&script=sci_abstract&tlng=pt
- López, Y. (2016). El desarrollo de la habilidad comunicativa de comprensión lectora en los estudiantes de la carrera de Educación Primaria de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí en la República de Ecuador. *Universidad de Holguín*.
- Montaño Calcines, J. R. (2010). Aproximación a las tipologías textuales y su papel en los procesos de lectura. Comprensión, análisis y construcción de textos. *Pueblo y Educación, La Habana*.
- Morales-Pupo, B. R., Caballero-Velázquez, E., & Marrero-Aballe, Y. Y. (2019). El desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas en estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Educación Primaria. *Luz*, 18(1), 48-58.
<http://www.redalyc.org/journal/5891/589164355005/589164355005.pdf>

Roméu, A. (2007). El enfoque cognitivo, comunicativo y sociocultural en la enseñanza de la lengua y la literatura. *La Habana: Pueblo y Educación*, 100.

Tipán González, L. F., & Rodríguez Urrego, A. R. (2012). La creación de hábitos lectores: el reto del siglo XXI. <https://ciencia.lasalle.edu.co/server/api/core/bitstreams/416872e0-63c4-4359-bf25-19ed87efa755/content>