

Strengthening reading comprehension through Isabel Solé's reading strategies (1992)

Fortalecimiento de la comprensión lectora mediante las estrategias de lectura de Isabel Solé (1992)

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Abstract

This research with a qualitative approach and a non-experimental design has the general objective of strengthening reading comprehension through the “Reading Comprehension Strategies” Theory by Solé (1992) in ninth grade students of the María Concepción Loperena Municipal Educational Institution. This objective is intended to be achieved by using observation and unstructured interview techniques to identify deficiencies in reading comprehension that affect academic performance. Based on these results, workshops and activities focused on reading stages and comprehension levels were implemented. The results showed a significant improvement in reading comprehension, especially in critical and analytical skills, and in reading interest. Prior to the intervention, there were difficulties at the inferential level. However, after implementing the strategies, the students made significant progress in literal, inferential, and critical comprehension, demonstrating the effectiveness of Isabel Solé's strategies.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Isabel Solé, Levels of Comprehension.

Resumen

Esta investigación con enfoque cualitativo y un diseño no experimental tiene como objetivo general fortalecer la comprensión lectora mediante la Teoría “Estrategias de Comprensión Lectora” de Solé (1992) en estudiantes de Noveno grado de la institución educativa Municipal María Concepción Loperena, se pretende alcanzar este objetivo haciendo uso de técnicas de observación y entrevista no estructurada para identificar las deficiencias en la comprensión lectora que afectan el rendimiento académico. A partir de estos resultados, se implementaron talleres y actividades centradas en las fases de lectura y niveles de comprensión. Los resultados mostraron una mejora significativa en la comprensión lectora, especialmente en habilidades críticas y analíticas, y en el interés por la lectura. Previo a la intervención, existían dificultades en el nivel inferencial. No obstante, tras implementar las estrategias, los estudiantes avanzaron significativamente en la comprensión literal, inferencial y crítica, demostrando la eficacia de las estrategias de Isabel Solé.

Palabras clave: Comprensión lectora, Isabel Solé, Niveles de Comprensión.

I. Introduction

Reading is conceived as a substantial part of the life of the human being, which accompanies him continuously, being found in all areas and at all times. From the beginning of the day until nightfall, the human being is constantly reading, whether unconsciously or not.

This lack can prevent students from developing pleasure in reading, and even generate aversion to it due to the bad experiences they have had when exposed to it inappropriately. In addition, a bad accompaniment within the process of improving reading comprehension creates the possibility of causing students a severe impact on academic performance,

since it is necessary for the learning of all the knowledge provided within schooling.

Likewise, a large number of studies have shown that a significant part of children in basic schooling face many deficiencies in this area of knowledge. For this reason, this research seeks to strengthen the development of reading comprehension through the application of the theory proposed by Isabel Solé.

Continuing with this order of ideas, Solé's theory (1992) offers us a firm basis for the design of effective interventions to strengthen the improvement of the way in which students understand texts. According to Solé (1987), “understanding

a text, being able to interpret it and use it is an indispensable condition not only to successfully pass compulsory schooling, but also to function in everyday life in literate societies" (p. 1). 1) It is understood that in order to pass a subject or course in an educational institution and also for daily life is very important and it is necessary not only to know how to read but also to understand what is being read, despite this statement, according to a study by Colombia Aprende (2003), ensures that more than 70% of Colombian students who belong to an educational institution are at a basic reading level, that is, they only answer questions with explicit answers within the text, thus presenting a problem to develop a culture where reading is encouraged in the country (p.11)

The strategies proposed by Solé allow textual comprehension, thus facilitating the work of students and teachers. Solé, (1992) mentions "Why is it necessary to teach comprehension strategies? In short, because we want to make autonomous readers, capable of intelligently facing texts of a very different nature, most of the time different from those used when instructing".

2. Theoretical framework

The theory of "reading strategies" by Isabel Solé in 1992 establishes the basis for the development of this project. This theory mentions several strategies that seek to develop reading comprehension, seeing reading as a challenge, routines,

means and processes that must be taken into account in order to understand texts more easily. For example, it states that it is necessary to make adequate use of the three main moments of reading: before, during and after. These moments involve different actions such as the application of what has been read in daily life, depending on the text.

Daniel Cassany establishes several researches on reading and writing, among these are "La cocina de la escritura" (1993), "Tras las líneas" (2006) and Caicedo et al. (2023) who address the relevance of reading different textual typology, these theories are focused on the development of writing, however their main focus is on the development of critical reasoning, which involves the development of text comprehension based on various activities such as the technique called "the panoramic look" where the student prior to reading performs a brief reading where he highlights the most striking aspects of the text, which allows him to analyze and understand the text more easily.

The theory called "The 6 readings" proposed by Miguel de Zubiria (2021) allows those who teach to establish a basis on which to rely when strengthening the ability to understand texts in students, as well as the way in which they reason critically. Through various stages in which the student manages to analyze and apprehend the information that is provided in the texts, in addition to

decoding the information in two different stages, one more complex than the previous one.

3. Method

During the development of the research in question, use is made of the Participatory Action Intervention method, analyzing through pedagogical immersion in the classroom the difficulties presented by the students in a text comprehension process in order to identify specific deficiencies and design an effective educational strategy that precisely addresses the needs of the course being evaluated.

Balcázar (2003), following Fals Borda, points out that the participatory action method is linked to learning and promotes social awareness among those involved in the research. Prior knowledge allows students to learn to apprehend by developing the means and seeing the world through a critical mind, which helps them develop analytical skills.

In the words of Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, (2010) Non-experimental research consists of studies that are carried out without misrepresenting the information and only observe phenomena in their natural environment and then analyze them.

The study focused on a group of high school students from the María Concepción Loperena Municipal School, specifically on a group of 15 ninth grade students. The selected population participated in a series of activities based

on the reading strategies proposed by Solé (1992), with the purpose of strengthening their reading comprehension processes.

The intervention used a collaborative approach and consisted of 10 sessions designed to apply and evaluate the methodological strategies.

During the development of this study, several techniques were used, which allowed for an in-depth understanding of the problem and the factors that influence it.

Among them, the use of observation as a technique for data collection is evidenced in order to generate an in-depth understanding of the problem as evidenced, allowing to establish assumptions or ideas, developing a perception of the shortcomings that occur in the course and thus generate a pedagogical strategy that takes into account the needs and strengths of students in junior high school.

The use of this technique will be carried out through the use of the field diary as a research instrument on the development of the classes. This instrument allows the generation of analytical, specific, individual annotations on the way in which the participants act, which allows for a more complete and systematic analysis of what happens in the classroom.

Likewise, use is made of the "Focus groups" research technique. This technique is carried out by means of a

guided interview, in the development of which a guide of questions related to the understanding and writing of texts by the participants is posed with the purpose of acquiring detailed data on the characteristics that identify the group, in the same way it seeks to identify patterns and tendencies in the participants around the problem.

4. Results

This section presents the categories, subcategories and attributes identified through observation and semi-structured interviews with 15 students from the María Concepción Loperena institution. The results allow us to understand factors that influence the reading habit and reading comprehension, as well as the relationship with the teaching practice and the impact it has on academic life.

4.1. Reading levels

Reading is crucial in academic and personal development and its comprehension is structured in 3 levels: literal, inferential and critical. Isabel Solé (1998) defines these as the progressive set of skills, from knowing the explicit information to wondering what the author's purpose is. Zubiría (2001) adds that these reading levels improve critical thinking but also the connection with the text.

4.1.1. Literal

Literal comprehension represents the basis of the reading process, focused on the identification of explicit information

such as characters, places and facts. Isabel Solé (1998) argues that this skill is the first step towards deeper levels of reading, while Miguel de Zubiría (2001) complements by pointing out that it implies and recognizes textual patterns and not only encodes words.

These results point to the need to strengthen vocabulary and read gradually more complex texts, selected according to the student's interest and level. Solé and Zubiría emphasize the use of visual diagrams and support activities. Cases such as that of P15, who prefer clear texts, show the importance of a better choice of materials to facilitate not only literal comprehension, but also progress to inferential and critical levels.

4.1.2. Inferential

The inferential level represents an advanced stage in reading comprehension, since it requires the reader to interpret non-explicit meanings in the text. According to Isabel Solé (1998), this level allows discovering intentions, emotions and implicit relationships, through strategies such as formulating hypotheses, establishing cause-effect relationships and connecting with personal experiences. Miguel de Zubiría (2001) complements this idea by highlighting that the reader's emotional interest directly influences the quality of inferences, making the text more comprehensible and meaningful.

Based on these findings, three fundamental pedagogical actions are

proposed: (1) choosing texts that balance thematic complexity and emotional relevance; (2) applying guided strategies such as the formulation of hypotheses in groups; and (3) promoting spaces for sharing and contrasting interpretations. These elements favor the development of interpretive thinking, especially when the content connects with the reader's interests and is accompanied by active teacher mediation.

4.1.3. Critical

The critical level of reading comprehension represents the most complex stage of the reading process, as it requires the student to analyze, question and evaluate texts from a reflective stance. Isabel Solé (1998) defines it as an essential tool for the development of autonomous thinking, where the reader not only understands the content, but also questions the author and relates the text to social realities. Along the same lines, Miguel de Zubiría (2001) presents the critical reader as an active agent, capable of challenging the ideas presented and generating new interpretations.

4.2. Reading strategies

Reading strategies are highly necessary tools to cope with texts with different levels of difficulty, as they allow the reader to decode information, relate it to previous knowledge and reflect on the content. According to Isabel Solé (1998), these strategies are "intelligent, albeit

risky suspicions" that must be adapted flexibly to optimise comprehension.

The disparity between theory and practice is evident when contrasting Solé's proposals, which highlight the need for personalised and reflective strategies, with the reality of students, where many are unaware of the usefulness of these tools. This scenario poses the challenge of designing didactic approaches that, while maintaining conceptual flexibility, provide clear guidelines for transforming reading into a meaningful experience. The development of adaptive strategies that improve comprehension and connect texts to the individual interests and abilities of readers is key to closing this gap.

4.2.1. Pre-reading

Pre-reading is a fundamental stage which allows the activation of prior knowledge and the establishment of clear purposes for reading. Isabel Solé (1998) points out that these initial actions turn the reader into an "active reader", as they involve working with the general ideas of the text in order to facilitate its comprehension. However, in practice, there is significant resistance on the part of students to this preparatory phase.

The testimonies reflect a clear preference for light and entertaining reading. Students such as P12 and P14 express a preference for 'fantasy novels, adventures and everyday stories' as they consider them more fun and accessible. This

position is reinforced by expressions such as P8, who prefers short, engaging texts to more cognitively demanding readings.

The disconnection with academic texts is evident in testimonies such as those of P6 and P7, who are only motivated if they have 'easy summaries' or if the content is 'exciting'. This preference for the immediate and accessible contrasts with Solé's approach, who stresses the role of the teacher in motivating the reader through meaningful objectives that arouse genuine interest.

4.2.2. Reading

Reading is a key stage in which the reader transcends mere decoding and constructs deep meanings from the text. According to Isabel Solé (1998), this moment of 'constructing comprehension' concentrates all the reader's cognitive activity, requiring strategies such as formulating questions, identifying central concepts and summarising.

In contrast, students show a preference for readings aligned with their personal tastes. P12 and P14 opt for 'youth novels or fantasy adventures' as more accessible and motivating. This discrepancy between Solé's theory and actual practice highlights the urgency of revising teaching strategies.

In order to try to close this gap, it is necessary to design activities that encourage truly active and reflective

reading, going beyond the mechanical. Incorporating dynamics that force students to question the text, relate it to their experiences and synthesise their ideas can boost the development of the critical skills that are essential in the learning process.

4.2.3. Post-reading

Post-reading is the phase in which the student consolidates and reflects on what has been learnt during the whole reading process. Isabel Solé (1998) calls it 'Continuing Understanding and Learning', underlining its function of integrating pre-reading, reading and post-reading through 'Further Practical Concretion', which allows the knowledge acquired to be organised and linked to personal and academic goals.

However, there are exceptional cases that exemplify the reflective potential of post-reading. P5, for example, comments: "Did you remember what we were saying about the topic? I understood that maybe I wanted to say this...", showing how collaborative exchanges can turn this phase into a space for critical analysis.

6. Conclusions

This research made it possible to demonstrate that the implementation of Isabel Solé's (1992) strategies produces a great impact that transforms and strengthens reading comprehension in ninth grade students, since they facilitate

an improvement in reading levels such as literal, inferential and critical, and at the same time promote a notable change in the attitude or posture that students show towards reading, going from being a routine and boring practice to more active and substantial activities.

At the pedagogical level, the strategy applied in this research succeeded in activating thought processes limited by traditional reading methodologies that were not very attractive to students. The pre-reading, reading and post-reading phases, integrated in a structured manner, promoted the ability to construct meaning, formulate one's own ideas and develop skills to give opinions, argue, interpret and analyze information from a text, demonstrating that, when implementing didactic teaching strategies that are clear, accurate, planned and pertinent, it is possible to form autonomous, critical and committed readers with their learning process.

Thus, this project leaves as a mark a model that can be effectively replicated and adapted to the needs of students and their academic context and reading comprehension level, betting on a reflective, inclusive and effective education, making reading a pleasant experience that allows them to grow both in their cognitive skills and in their ability to have an active participation in society.

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