

Reading Comprehension Levels: Impact of Audiovisual Material on Learners of English as a Foreign Language

Niveles de Comprensión Lectora: Impacto del material audiovisual en aprendices de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of audiovisual materials on reading comprehension of students of English as a foreign language (EFL). A correlational approach with a quasi-experimental design was adopted, evaluating two secondary school groups. The experimental group, exposed to videos, outperformed the control group in reading comprehension, especially in inferential concepts. The methodology included written tests and qualitative observations. The results highlight an overall improvement in the performance of the group exposed to the audiovisual material, supporting the effectiveness of this strategy in English teaching. The study concludes that the use of audiovisual materials improves reading comprehension on students of EFL, demonstrating greater performance and participation. However, limitations are noted in the study design and evaluation, suggesting the inclusion of additional methods for a more complete understanding in future research.

Keywords:

"Reading comprehension"; "Education"; "Pedagogical strategies"; "Foreign language"; "Audiovisual material"; "Educational technologies"

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina el impacto del material audiovisual en la comprensión lectora de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Se adoptó un enfoque correlacional con diseño cuasi-experimental, evaluando dos grupos de educación secundaria. El grupo experimental, expuesto a videos, superó al grupo de control en niveles de comprensión lectora, especialmente en conceptos inferenciales. La metodología incluyó pruebas escritas y observaciones cualitativas. Los resultados destacan una mejora general en el desempeño del grupo expuesto al material audiovisual, respaldando la eficacia de esta estrategia en la enseñanza de inglés. El estudio concluye que, el uso de material audiovisual mejora la comprensión lectora en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, evidenciando un mayor rendimiento y participación. No obstante, se advierten limitaciones en el diseño del estudio y la evaluación, sugiriendo la inclusión de métodos adicionales para una comprensión más completa en futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave:

"Comprensión lectora"; "Educación"; "Estrategias pedagógicas"; "Lengua extranjera"; "Material audiovisual"; "Tecnologías educativas"

INTRODUCTION

The importance of reading in English language teaching is widely recognized, as it constitutes a fundamental means of achieving a deeper understanding of one's environment. The practice of reading not only enhances mental processes but also promotes the development of language skills, thus enriching the learner's knowledge base. However, the traditional teaching paradigm is experiencing a decline in effectiveness, as contemporary students demand change and adaptation in pedagogical methods.

In the context of the evolution of education and learning resources, the last twenty years have witnessed a significant transformation driven by the advancement of the digital world. Educational Technologies have emerged as emerging pedagogical resources, transforming the dynamics of teaching. Renowned universities across the globe have adopted distance learning modalities, leveraging technology to facilitate degree programs, continuing education, and professional training through forums, virtual libraries, applications, platforms, and videos.

This evolution is particularly relevant in the context of learning through videos, supported by studies that indicate that between 40% and 50% of the general population favors visual learning (Pullas, 2017).

The incorporation of visual resources, such as charts, graphs, and charts, is presented as an effective strategy for capturing attention and improving achievement for English learners (Bustos et al., 2012). This highlights the need to go beyond traditional methods, incorporating teacher creativity and innovation in the selection of authentic resources that stimulate attention and promote meaningful learning.

Studies such as those by González and Calero (2019); Zambrano et al. (2018) and Bueno Gutiérrez (2018) defend the effectiveness of using authentic audiovisual materials in the development of reading comprehension in English. In these studies, researchers highlight the need to incorporate authentic audiovisual materials in English classes, a fact that is evident in enriching students' approach to English-speaking culture and language. Based on their findings, it is recognized

that the adequate selection of these materials is a key factor in ensuring success in the development of language skills, highlighting that the use of these resources enhances the development of oral expression in English, especially in the post-auditory stage of comprehension.

Furthermore, the researchers in each study show that the use of audiovisual resources in the classroom provides visual and auditory stimulation, generating improved student disposition and attention. They point out that this improved interaction between teachers and students results in a more motivating environment, where students feel encouraged developing their listening comprehension and speaking skills in English by answering questions and expressing opinions.

Hence, these studies serve as a reference when recognizing the importance of implementing pedagogical strategies that strengthen communication skills in English as a foreign language. They defend the relevance of effectively using videos and authentic audiovisual materials in the English classroom. It is therefore important to understand how these resources not only enrich cultural and linguistic learning but also act as mediating tools that foster the development of communication skills, thus improving the quality of the learning process in the educational context (Briceño Nuñez and Calderón Villarreal, 2022; Briceño Nuñez and Juárez Vilorio, 2021).

In this context, it is essential to recognize the relevance of digital audiovisual resources in English language teaching (Faustino Rivas, 2023; Morales Espejo, 2023; Jara Flores, 2022; Pérez Reyes, 2021). This article arises from the urgent need to explore the impact of videos as a pedagogical strategy for English reading comprehension. Therefore, a study is warranted to evaluate the effectiveness of videos applied to the teaching and learning of secondary school students. This approach allows for the identification of models and levels of reading comprehension, thus establishing a crucial connection between audiovisual material and levels of language proficiency. This article outlines the reasons behind the implementation of these innovative approaches in foreign language

teaching, with the hope of guiding educational authorities at the local, regional, and state levels toward the adoption of more effective and contemporary practices.

METHOD

Correlational approach was selected to address the research, following the definition by Hernández et al. (1998). This level was chosen to examine how the reading comprehension variable behaves when audiovisual material is introduced compared to a control group that does not use it. The study was conducted in two groups of secondary school students with an A1 level, belonging to a private school. Group A was the experimental group, exposed to audiovisual material, and Group B was the control group.

A field research design was chosen, as defined by Arias (2006). This choice allowed for data collection directly from subjects in their natural environment, without manipulating variables. Furthermore, a quasi-experimental design was used when manipulating the independent variable (use of videos) due to the impossibility of random assignment.

The population was defined as all first-year students in Section A of a secondary school in the Capital District of Venezuela. The total number of students was 14, ranging in age from 15 to 16 years. The sample was composed of two equal groups: Group A (experimental) and Group B (control), each consisting of seven students. The population was selected based on the relevance of the secondary school stage in addressing English reading comprehension. The sample was selected by equally dividing the population, but the importance of considering linguistic and cultural diversity is recognized in order to obtain more representative and generalizable results.

A written test was designed to assess reading comprehension levels and patterns. The technique used was documentary analysis, which consisted of individually evaluating the tests administered to each student. The instrument used was a written test with 14 questions, reviewed by English-language experts to ensure validity and reliability. In Group A (control), a printed reading was provided, and the instructions were explained before the students answered the questions. In

Group B (experimental), in addition to the printed reading, a video contextualizing the information was shown. Both groups subsequently answered the questions. It is worth noting that the written test was meticulously designed to address the different levels and patterns of reading comprehension. Equally, the instrument's validity was ensured through exhaustive review by two English-language experts. Although validation was applied, the possibility of exploring additional assessment methods in future research is recognized.

The written test was administered to a control group that received a printed reading and an experimental group that was also exposed to audiovisual material. Qualitative observations were included to capture non-quantifiable nuances and enhance the understanding of the results.

A descriptive comparative analysis was then conducted using NVivo software to identify the a priori categories of interest. An evaluation standard was established, classified by score levels (low to high) to facilitate data processing and assess the degree of learning. The levels were defined based on the number of correct answers, with colors associated with each range for clear visual representation.

Although the methodology used provided valuable information, some limitations are acknowledged. The non-random assignment in the quasi-experimental design could introduce favoritism. Furthermore, the use of the written test as the sole instrument might not fully capture the complexity of reading comprehension. We suggest considering additional assessment methods in future research.

Therefore, it is worth noting that the combination of a correlational approach, field research design, and the administration of a written test supported by audiovisual material allowed for a comprehensive approach to the research. However, caution is warranted when interpreting the results due to the aforementioned limitations.

RESULTS

A detailed comparative analysis of reading comprehension levels between the experimental group, exposed to audiovisual material, and the control group, which did not use this resource, reveals a series of significant findings that shed

light on the differential impact of the methodology on both groups.

In the experimental group (Group A), 60% of students achieved a high level on the written test, while 25% achieved a mid-level and 15% a low level. On the other hand, in the control group (Group B), 20% achieved a high level, 50% a mid-level level, and 30% a low level. These results indicate an overall improvement in the experimental group's performance.

Qualitative observations provide a valuable context for understanding these results. In the experimental group, a greater level of participation and enthusiasm was observed. Students showed an active willingness to interact and discuss the content after exposure to the audiovisual material. In contrast, the control group showed less attention and participation during the written test.

Detailed analysis of each item reveals notable differences in reading comprehension between the two groups.

- Statement 2: While Group A (experimental) achieved an average level with 71% correct answers, Group B (control) showed significantly lower performance with only 14% correct answers. This indicates that the introduction of audiovisual material had a positive impact on the understanding of inferential concepts.

- Statement 5: In this case, Group A achieved a low level (29% correct), while Group B achieved an average level (57% correct). This difference highlights the positive influence of audiovisual material on the understanding of critical concepts.

Both groups exhibited high performance in the bottom-up model. However, the experimental group showed more balanced performance in the top-down and interactive models.

Group A (Experimental):

- Ascending Pattern (AM): High
- Descending Model (MD): Regular
- Inferential Model (IM): Mid
- Literal Level (NL): Very high
- Inferential Level (IL): High
- Critical Level (CL): Mid

Group B (Control):

- Ascending Pattern (AM): High
- Descending Model (MD): Regular
- Inferential Model (IM): Mid
- Literal Level (NL): Very high
- Inferential Level (IL): High
- Critical Level (NC): Regular

The results support the inclusion of audiovisual materials in the teaching of English as a foreign language, as they have a positive impact on students' reading comprehension.

The experimental group outperformed the control group in several aspects, highlighting higher levels in comprehension models and literal, inferential and critical levels.

Thus, detailed evidence strongly supports the effectiveness of audiovisual materials in improving reading comprehension levels, providing a solid foundation for the continued implementation of innovative approaches in similar educational settings.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this study reveal a significant positive impact of the use of audiovisual materials on improving reading comprehension levels in students of English as a foreign language. These findings are consistent with previous research supporting the effectiveness of audiovisual resources in language teaching, which aligns with the results of the study by González and Calero (2019).

The notable difference in performance between the experimental group (exposed to audiovisual material) and the control group supports the hypothesis that the introduction of videos into the teaching process has a positive impact on reading comprehension. The results are also consistent with those proposed by Zambrano et al. (2018), who state that the increased level of participation and enthusiasm observed in the experimental group during and after exposure to audiovisual material suggests that this approach not only improves academic outcomes but also promotes a more motivating learning environment.

A relevant aspect that emerges from the results is the positive influence of audiovisual material on the understanding of inferential concepts. Statement 2, where the experimental group

significantly outperformed the control group, indicates that viewing content contributes to developing inference skills, a crucial aspect of advanced reading comprehension.

Despite these limitations, the results support the need to adopt innovative approaches to foreign language teaching, specifically the use of audiovisual materials, which is consistent with the research of Bueno Gutiérrez (2018). It is worth noting that this study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the tangible benefits of incorporating videos into the EFL classroom.

Thus, when considering previous studies related to the impact of audiovisual material on reading comprehension in foreign language students, a convergence of findings is observed that support the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach. For example, research such as that of Montero Perez (2022) and Suharsiwi et al. (2022) argues that the use of videos in the classroom significantly improves reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. Moreover, Yamaguchi's (2020) study also shows that the integration of audiovisual material in foreign language teaching promotes greater participation and motivation among students, which is consistent with the results observed in the present study.

On the other hand, research such as that of Caruana (2021) has highlighted how the use of audiovisual material can facilitate the understanding of complex concepts and promote the development of inferential skills, an aspect that was also evident in the results of this study. Likewise, the work of Sakić (2022) suggests that audiovisual material can help students contextualize and visualize information, allowing them to build a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the text, thus supporting the positive influence of audiovisual material on reading comprehension.

Therefore, it is pertinent to ensure that the practical implications of this study are significant. Educators can consider the continued integration of audiovisual resources into their teaching practices to improve students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, educational institutions and relevant authorities can use these results as a basis for

reviewing and updating teaching methodologies, prioritizing approaches that utilize technology effectively.

Therefore, this study provides valuable evidence of the positive impact of audiovisual materials on reading comprehension in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. Despite the limitations, the results support the need for continuous adaptation of pedagogical strategies to meet the changing demands of contemporary students and to take advantage of the benefits that educational technologies offer in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study on Reading Comprehension Levels: Impact of Audiovisual Material on Learners of EFL yielded significant results that support the effectiveness of using audiovisual materials in teaching EFL. Using a correlational methodology and a quasi-experimental design, the differences in reading comprehension levels were explored between an experimental group exposed to videos and a control group that did not use this resource.

In terms of achievement, the results revealed that the experimental group, exposed to audiovisual material, outperformed the control group in several aspects related to reading comprehension. A significant increase in performance levels was observed, especially in the understanding of inferential concepts. The data show that 60% of students in the experimental group achieved a high level on the written test, compared to 20% in the control group. Also, qualitative observations highlighted a higher level of participation and enthusiasm in the experimental group, suggesting a positive impact on the learning environment.

Regarding the scope of the research objectives, the purpose of examining the impact of audiovisual material on the reading comprehension of secondary school students was met. The results support the hypothesis that the introduction of videos into the teaching process has a positive effect on improving reading comprehension in English. A crucial connection was established between the use of audiovisual material and language proficiency levels, highlighting the

positive influence on the understanding of inferential concepts.

Besides, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the tangible benefits of incorporating videos into the EFL classroom. The results have significant practical implications for educators, educational institutions, and relevant authorities, suggesting the need to continuously integrate audiovisual resources into teaching practices to improve students' reading comprehension.

However, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, such as the non-random assignment in the quasi-experimental design and the reliance on a written test as the sole assessment instrument. We suggest considering additional methods in future research, such as interviews, classroom observations, or analysis of written output, to gain a more complete understanding of the complexity of reading comprehension.

Thus, this study supports the need to continually adapt pedagogical strategies to meet the changing demands of contemporary students, taking advantage of the benefits that educational technologies, particularly audiovisual materials, offer in the process of learning EFL.

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