



The Reading Habit in Students' Reading Comprehension



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Abstract

The reading habit is related to cognitive and critical thinking skills that are essential for effective reading comprehension. The study aims to analyze the reading habit in reading comprehension, for this, the benefits of reading habits were identified, the strategies applied by teachers to strengthen reading comprehension were determined, and the level of reading comprehension of the students was evaluated. A mixed approach, exploratory, inductive, and analytical, was used as a methodology, with survey, observation, and interview techniques to collect data from high school students and the Language and Literature teacher. The results showed that the majority of students have no major interest in reading and have limited reading comprehension skills. Likewise, it was concluded that the reading habit favors reading comprehension because it increases fluency, expands vocabulary, and improves inferential and critical comprehension.

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1 Introduction

The reading habit is a constant concern of educational agents who emphasize the importance of its motivation, regardless of age. According to [UNESCO \(2022\)](#), the main obstacle to the formation of reading habits is the absence of books, as a consequence, millions of people do not read, which limits literacy. Countries such as Thailand, China, the Philippines, and Egypt have a population with a greater reading habit than Ecuador, with an average time dedicated to reading ranging between seven and nine hours a week ([Excelsior, 2022](#)).

In America, Canada leads this list with an average of 17 books per year, in the Andean region, Chile has an average of five books per year, according to [UNICEF \(2022\)](#), more than half of the adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean who complete secondary school do not reach the required levels of proficiency in reading ability, 36% of children and adolescents in the region do not have adequate reading levels, at the primary level 26% do not reach proficiency in reading.

In Ecuador, an annual average of one complete book and two incomplete books is read annually, although 76.7% read daily according to the survey of reading habits, practices and cultural consumption carried out by the [Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador \(2022\)](#). This figure is inconclusive, although it reflects the lack of reading habits, which, according to [Henríquez et al. \(2020\)](#), is because social contexts such as family and school do not promote the creation of reading habits. After all, there are no reading measurement tools and strategies.

The variables considered in the study are reading habit and comprehension. Reading is one of the fundamental activities aimed at the development of abilities, skills and knowledge, a structural basis in the comprehensive development of the student ([Henríquez et al., 2020](#)), for its part, the reading habit is the motivation and predisposition that exists towards the practice of reading ([Barrera et al., 2020](#)), while reading comprehension comprises a complex cognitive skill that requires the ability to integrate information from a text with the knowledge of a listener or reader and that results from the elaboration of a mental representation ([Guaman et al., 2020](#)).

Through a review of the state of the art, it was possible to identify relevant and updated literature that exposes an interrelationship between reading habits and reading comprehension. Among these studies, the findings of [Guevara et al. \(2021\)](#), stand out, which found that the reading habit influences the comprehension of texts at a moderate level and is especially related to inferential comprehension. For its part, [Cadme et al. \(2020\)](#), demonstrated the importance of the company of the family to strengthen the reading habit.

Furthermore, the study by [Altamura & Salmeron \(2021\)](#), is relevant, which found that although the paper format favors the development of these skills from childhood to adulthood, digital reading with texts closer to oral language than to academic language, significantly changes the bidirectional relationship between reading habits and comprehension. In this sense, [Elche & Yubero \(2019\)](#), maintain that reader behavior is currently more diverse, which is why reading practice should be measured in digital and printed formats. Finally, the contributions from [Anilema et al., \(2020\)](#), who recognized reading comprehension as an indispensable factor for academic success, as one of the main skills for learning, because it allows the acquisition of new knowledge.

The problem that gave rise to the study focuses on insufficiencies detected at the upper basic level of the “Amazonas” Educational Unit of Chone, Manabí, Ecuador, where the majority of students show little interest in reading, which results in the lack of reading habits that impact the students' comprehension skills ([Delgado et al., 2018](#)).

In consideration, the research is important because in the current context, reading comprehension skills are essential to face academic, social and work challenges, in addition, the reading habit is related to learning and performance, nourishes imagination and creativity, and contributes to the formation of critical and committed citizens, therefore effective strategies focused on both strengthening the reading habit and comprehension are required. The theme allows addressing the diversity of learning styles and levels of reading comprehension, its conclusions can help the creation of inclusive approaches adapted to the needs of students ([Karadeniz & Can, 2015](#)).

The study is located in the field of linguistics, its objective is to analyze the reading habit in reading comprehension, in its development the importance of reading habits is diagnosed, strategies applied by teachers to strengthen reading comprehension are identified and the level of reading comprehension of the students is evaluated, which will allow us to answer the following question: How does the reading habit influence the reading comprehension of the Eighth Year students of the “Amazonas” Educational Unit?.

2 Materials and Methods

This corresponds to a scientific investigation that is based on an orderly and systematic procedure of analysis and study through the application of methods and criteria to obtain knowledge or increase existing knowledge (Leyva et al., 2021).

It has a mixed or qualitative-quantitative approach in which the advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches are taken advantage of to establish a significant relationship between the reading habit and students' understanding. The use of this approach is justified according to Caro et al. (2014) because it allows a greater understanding of the phenomena studied.

It is exploratory, oriented towards the description of some factors that characterize reading habits and reading comprehension. The methods of the inductive and analytical theoretical level were used. Theoretical level methods are useful in describing essential relationships of the research object that are not directly observable, favoring the conceptual interpretation of empirical data, as well as the construction and development of theories (Avila et al., 2020). It uses the inductive method, ideal for drawing up the conclusions of the study based on the data analyzed in the context studied. While the analytical method was used to decompose reading habits and comprehension into different elements.

The techniques used are the survey and observation directed at the students and the interview applied to the teacher in the area of Language and Literature. The questionnaire, the observation guide, and the interview were used as instruments. The survey and observation were applied to Eighth Year Basic students during the development of a class in the area of Language and Literature. For observation, students were provided with a reading along with a sheet to evaluate reading comprehension. The results were recorded individually in the observation guide. The interview was applied directly to the Language and Literature teacher, the results were recorded in written form (Poe et al., 2004).

The population is the universe studied and on which the results will be generalized, the accessible elements or unit of analysis that belong to the special area in which the study is developed (Condori, 2020). The population is made up of 1,526 people, corresponding to 1,456 students and 70 teachers from the "Amazonas" Educational Unit. The sample is a fraction of the population (Leyva et al., 2021); the sample is 100 Eighth Year Basic students and a teacher in the area of language and literature.

3 Results and Discussions

The reading habit includes a means of involuntary awareness where there is motivation to read; preferably developing cognitive abilities, the development of this is part of an essential task of all educational centers, as reading is an indispensable resource for the formation of personality and the improvement of the cognitive abilities of individuals. It is up to teachers and parents to motivate interest in the development of reading, so that students from an early age have the necessary skills that allow them to read analytically, critically and comprehensively, so that they can reflect deeply on those they read (Ormaza & Rosillo, 2021).

This habit arises especially from practice through critical reading tools, with communicative, oral and written skills (Corimayta, 2021). For this reason, teachers must provide students with books of interest, to motivate a taste for reading and prevent it from becoming a monotonous and tedious process. From an early age it is necessary to facilitate access to reading and books (Barrera et al., 2020);

It is also important that they invite students to try different topics, this will allow them to expand their knowledge on innovative topics. E-books, digital books that allow you to take advantage of the advantages of technology for the development of reading habits, are also useful (Ormaza & Rosillo, 2021).

The fundamental importance of using technology in learning to read is vital to enhance skills and experiences, since when applying technological strategies, the creation of reading habits is favored, which will be of considerable value within the child's development both personally and at school, thus promoting positive results (Barrera et al., 2020).

Reading Comprehension

Its antecedent is reading, a context in which reading constitutes an intellectual and cognitive process through which information is obtained. During reading, the message contained in a piece of writing is not passively received, but rather the understanding is elaborated for which the text is interpreted according to the needs and experiences of the reader, at the same time certain types of information are evaluated, selected and discarded. For this reason, text comprehension is present at all educational levels and is considered a determining activity for learning, because what students acquire, discuss, and use. In classrooms it originates from written texts (Guaman et al., 2020).

Reading comprehension is the ability that individuals have to apply cognitive and metacognitive thinking strategies when faced with a written text to understand it, therefore, it is an individual process (Romo, 2019). In this process, the importance of the concept of knowledge of the world, shared knowledge or simply knowledge of the world is crucial (Jiménez & Di Pierro, 2021).

Reading comprehension is part of a complex constructive activity of a strategic nature that is applied to the interactions of the characteristics of the reader and the text within a given context. It is a constructive activity because during this process the reader does not simply carry out a unidirectional transposition of the communicative messages that are inserted in the text based on his or her knowledge, but also tries to build a reliable representation based on the meanings that emerge from the text, thus exploiting the different psycholinguistic marker indexes and those of formats that are immersed within the written discourse (Rivadeneira-Paz et al., 2024).

It is evidenced under a symbolic dimension in which an individual interacts with a text to generate meanings in a sociocultural, historical and political context. By this, it is classified as a cognitive, semiological, cultural, and historical process of a complex nature, in which a direct relationship is established between elements such as the text, knowledge, purposes, expectations of the reader, in social, cultural, political and historical scenarios (Guaman et al., 2020). Figure 1 shows when they read for pleasure outside of schoolwork.

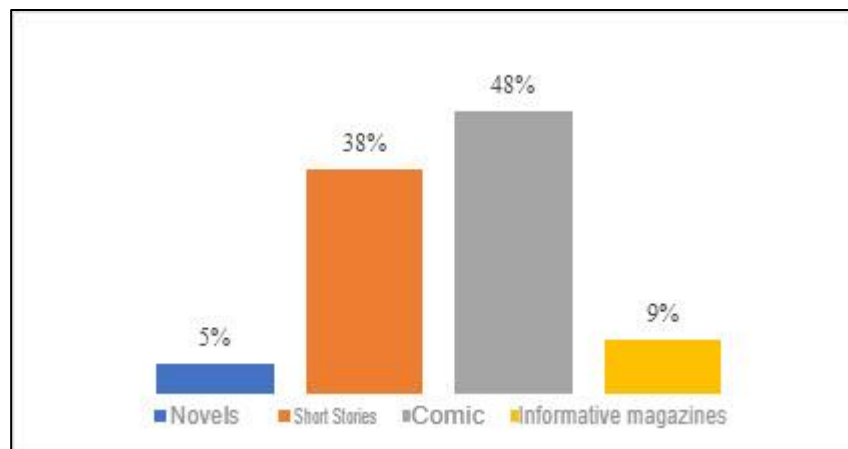


Figure 1. Reading for pleasure outside of schoolwork

As it is shown that 37% of students rarely read for pleasure outside of their schoolwork, 19% read occasionally, 17% read frequently, 14% never read for pleasure, and only 13% of students read for pleasure outside of their schoolwork. Which shows a poor development of reading habits. Figure 2 shows how they describe their interest in reading.

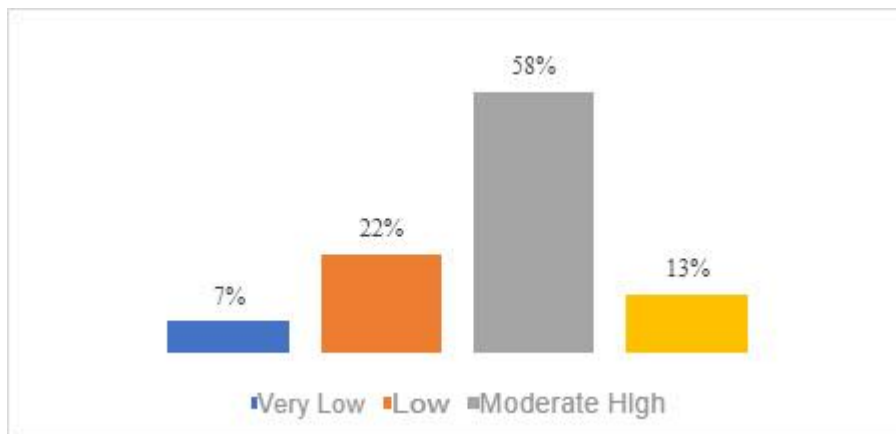


Figure 2. How they describe their interest in reading

The figure shows that 58% of the students surveyed describe their level of interest in reading as moderate, 22% classify it as low, 13% define their interest as high and 7% as very low. Therefore, students do not have adequate motivation towards reading. Figure 3 shows the types of text that are of interest.

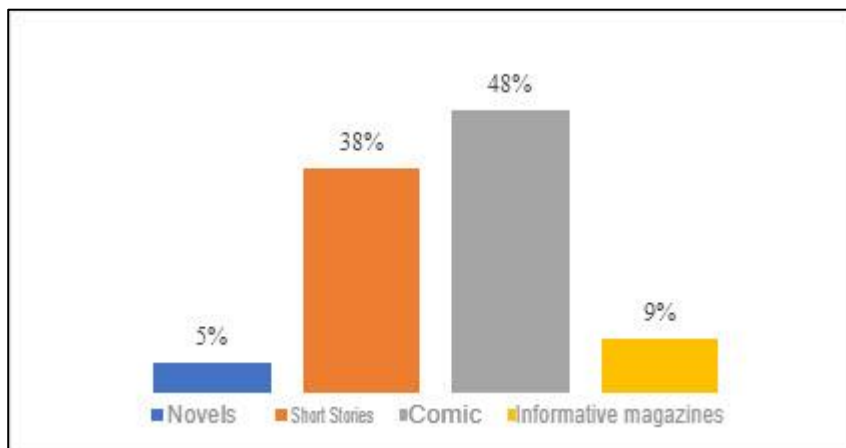


Figure 3. Interest in texts

Figure 3 shows that 48% of those surveyed are interested in comics, 38% in stories, 9% in informative magazines and 5% in novels. Comics are one of the literary themes that arouse the greatest interest in students. Figure 4 shows the factors that limit interest in reading.

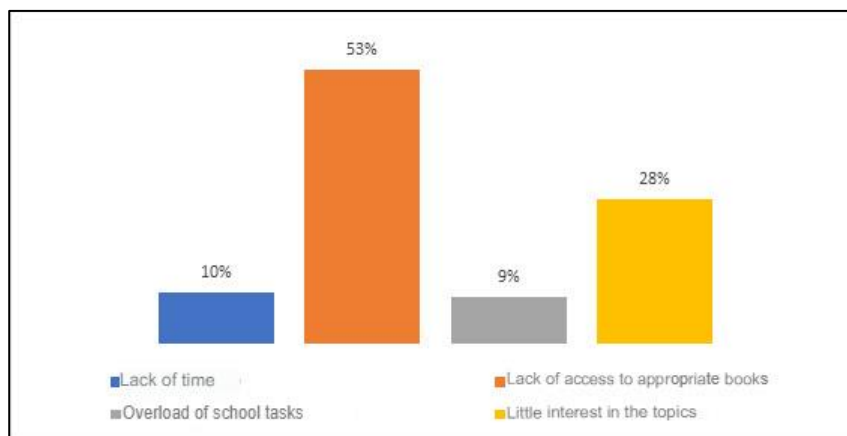


Figure 4. Factors that limit interest in reading

Figure 4 shows that 53% of the students surveyed consider the lack of access to appropriate books as the main factor that limits their interest in reading, 28% point out the lack of interest in the topics, 10% point out the lack of time and 9% the overload with schoolwork. This shows that the material offered to students determines their interest in literary content. The results of the observation applied to Eighth Year Basic students are also presented, through which the students' reading comprehension was evaluated. Figure 5 shows aspects of reading comprehension evaluated through observation

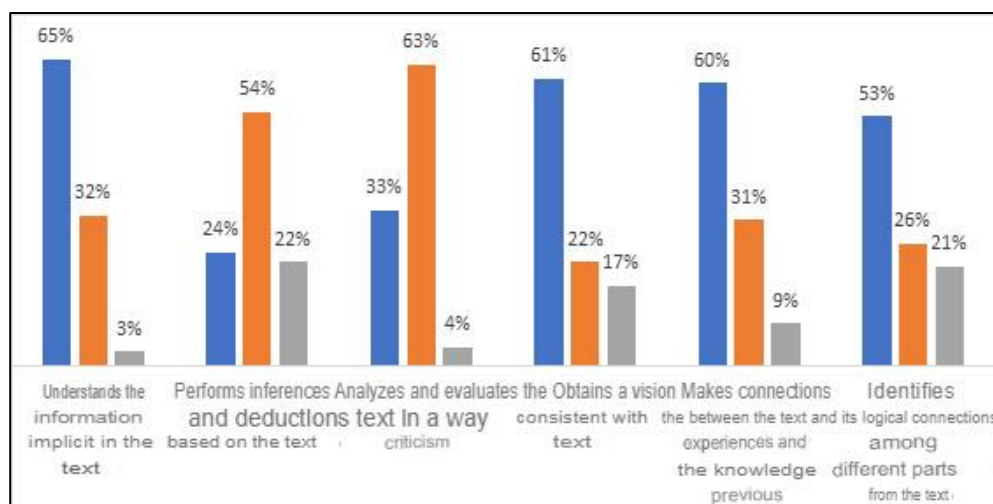


Figure 5 shows aspects of reading comprehension evaluated through observation

The figure shows the different aspects of reading comprehension evaluated through observation. In the aspect one understands the information implicit in the text, 65% of the students manage to do so, 32% are in the process of doing so and 3% require support. In aspect two, they make inferences and deductions based on the text, only 24% achieve it, 54% are in the process of achieving it and 22% require support. In the analyzing and evaluates the text critically, 63% are in the process of achieving it, 33% achieve it and 4% require support. Regarding the aspect, 61% achieve it, 22% are in process and 17% require support. In the aspect they make connections between the text and their previous experiences and knowledge, 60% achieve it, 31% are in process and 9% require support. And as a final aspect, the identification of logical connections between the different parts of the text was observed, finding that 53% of the students achieve it, 26% are in process and 21% require support.

Finally, the results of the interview applied to the teacher in the area of Language and Literature are shown. When asked how he evaluates the reading habits of his students, he stated that they have very poor reading habits and that few students show interest in reading. He was also asked if the reading habit influences the students' reading comprehension and if there are observable patterns, answering that according to his experience there is a direct

relationship between habit and reading comprehension because those students who read more have greater ease in understanding what they read, as observable patterns he indicated that they are students with adequate vocabulary, oral fluency and inferential and critical comprehension.

When consulting about the factors that determine the formation of reading habits, he pointed out the family environment, access to reading materials, personal interests, and motivation towards reading. Regarding the most common challenges that he faces as a teacher to promote the reading habit among students, he pointed out the disinterest they have in books, as well as the lack of adequate texts to motivate students to read. He was also consulted about the strategies implemented to motivate students to read. The teacher indicated that he delegates specific activities that involve reading. Additionally, at the institutional level, the read book program is carried out through which students are required to read at least one literary work per year.

Regarding the level of reading comprehension of the students, the interviewee rates it between regular and adequate, although there are students who reach a good level of reading comprehension, there are also cases in which students have difficulties understanding texts, especially to make inferences and critically analyze what they read.

Finally, we consulted on the strategies used by the teacher to improve reading comprehension, pointing out the use of reading workshops, activation of prior knowledge, prediction related to what is going to be read, monitoring of comprehension, use of contextual clues, summaries, preparation of questions, underlining and taking notes.

The results show that the majority of students do not read for pleasure, which they mostly attribute to the lack of appropriate books; however, they claim to have moderate interest in reading with a preference for stories and comics. In this regard, [Henríquez et al. \(2020\)](#), maintain that the promotion of reading habits is a priority element at all educational levels

The importance of reading habits for learning verbal fluency, vocabulary, inferential and critical comprehension, understanding of textual structure and reflection, results that are related to [Henriquez et al. \(2020\)](#), which found benefits associated with imagination, creativity, reflection, reasoning, and vocabulary

In addition, it was found that the Language and Literature teacher uses different strategies to strengthen reading comprehension, such as the book read, reading workshops, activation of prior knowledge, prediction of the text, monitoring of comprehension, use of contextual clues, summaries, preparation of questions, underlining and taking notes. In this regard, [Barragán \(2021\)](#) emphasizes the importance of using active methodologies.

Finally, the results show that although the majority of students reach an adequate level of reading comprehension, however, they present difficulties in the development of inferences and deductions based on the text and in the analysis and critical evaluation of the text, findings that are related to [Quesada et al. \(2021\)](#), who maintains that the use of inferential activities is essential for reading comprehension, with [Pérez et al. \(2022\)](#), who found a deficient inferential level so that students only reach to inferentially understand 30% of a text, disagreeing with [Leyva et al. \(2022\)](#), who identified an adequate level of process in the development of the inferential level and [Jiménez & Di Pierro \(2021\)](#), who detected limitations at the propositional and pragmatic level.

4 Conclusion

Reading habits provide benefits to learning, especially for verbal fluency, vocabulary, inferential and critical comprehension, understanding of textual structure, and reflection. Although many students do not have adequate reading habits, the strategies used contribute to strengthening reading comprehension, among which the book read is identified, reading workshops, activation of prior knowledge, prediction of the text, monitoring, use of contextual clues, summaries, preparation of questions, underlining, and taking notes. The majority of students reach an adequate level of reading comprehension, however, greater difficulties are found in the development of inferences and deductions based on the text and in the analysis and critical evaluation of the text.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declared that she has no competing interest.

Statement of authorship

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author have approved the final article.

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