Critical reading through the stories of Gabriel García Márquez

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Abstract

The article presents the results of research aimed at strengthening the critical reading of tenth-grade students through the stories of Gabriel García Márquez. The study was framed in the sociocritical paradigm, with a qualitative approach, supported by pedagogical action research, developed in three phases: deconstruction, reconstruction, and evaluation of the reconstructed practice. The sample consisted of 20 tenth-grade students. The results showed that, with the research teacher's support and their peers' collaboration, they gradually overcame the initial difficulties and progressed towards critical reading. The workshops were designed based on the stories of Gabriel García Márquez and the constant evaluation in each activity demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategy implemented. Through frequent reading, students recognized its importance, showed interest in learning, questioned ideas, identified implicit information, analyzed and understood texts, expressed informed opinions, and communicated their ideas effectively, strengthening their critical reading skills.

Keywords: reading; story; critical thinking; skill; text comprehension; cognitive process; integration; assessment

Lectura crítica mediante los cuentos de Gabriel García Márquez

Resumen

En este artículo se presenta los resultados de una investigación cuyo objetivo fue fortalecer la lectura crítica en estudiantes de décimo grado a través de cuentos de Gabriel García Márquez. El estudio se enmarcó en el paradigma sociocrítico, con un enfoque cualitativo, sustentado en la investigación acción pedagógica, y se desarrolló en tres fases: deconstrucción, reconstrucción y evaluación de la práctica reconstruida. La muestra estuvo conformada por veinte estudiantes de grado décimo. Los resultados señalaron que, con el apoyo de la docente investigadora y la cooperación entre pares, los estudiantes superaron progresivamente las dificultades iniciales y avanzaron hacia el logro de una lectura crítica. los talleres diseñados a partir de los cuentos de Gabriel García Márquez, junto con la evaluación constante en cada actividad, demostraron la efectividad de la estrategia implementada. Mediante la lectura frecuente, los estudiantes reconocieron su importancia, mostraron interés en el aprendizaje, cuestionaron ideas, identificaron información implícita, analizaron y comprendieron los textos, emitieron opiniones fundamentadas y comunicaron sus ideas de manera efectiva, fortaleciendo su capacidad de lectura crítica.

Palabras clave: lectura; cuento; pensamiento crítico; habilidad; comprensión del texto; proceso cognitivo; integración; valoración

Leitura crítica através dos contos de Gabriel García Márquez

Resumo

Apresenta os resultados de um projeto de pesquisa que visa fortalecer as habilidades de leitura crítica em alunos do décimo ano por meio das histórias de Gabriel García Márquez. O estudo foi enquadrado no paradigma sociocrítico, com abordagem qualitativa, apoiado pela pesquisa-ação pedagógica, desenvolvida em três fases: desconstrução, reconstrução e avaliação da prática reconstruída. A amostra consistiu de vinte alunos do décimo ano. Os resultados indicaram que, com o apoio da professora pesquisadora e colaboração dos colegas, os alunos superaram gradualmente as dificuldades iniciais e progrediram em direção à leitura crítica. Os workshops projetados em torno das histórias de Gabriel García Márquez, juntamente com a avaliação constante em cada atividade, demonstraram a eficácia da estratégia implementada. Por meio da leitura frequente, os alunos reconheceram a importância da leitura, mostraram interesse em aprender, questionaram ideias, identificaram informações implícitas, analisaram e compreenderam textos, expressaram opiniões informadas e comunicaram suas ideias de forma eficaz, fortalecendo suas habilidades de leitura crítica.

Palavras-chave: leitura; conto; pensamento crítico; habilidade; compreensão de texto; processo cognitivo; integração; avaliação

Introduction

Reading, as a complex human activity, is an aspect that involves a variety of elements; among them, comprehension, analysis, and synthesis; it is also considered a superior operation of thinking. For this reason, from antiquity to the present day, its fundamental action has been rethought in the educational field, where it is increasingly required, as well as the different methodologies that have been implemented to awaken the habit of reading in the student. In this regard, Acuña and López (2017, cited in Morales, 2020) point out that reading is:

> Understand, analyze, and critically comprehend information through cognitive processes that allow the reader to identify purposes, viewpoints, assumptions, implications and consequences, data, interpretations and inferences, and concepts from which to construct the world. (pp. 64-65)

In this process, reading comprehension plays a predominant role. Cassany (2019) distinguishes three concepts that encompass the interdependent processes in the acquisition of meaning: linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociocultural. These elements combine to give meaning to written texts in the different contexts in which individuals develop as social beings. According to Benavides and Sierra (2018, cited in Brito, 2020):

> Understanding texts as a cognitive process emphasizes the role of progress in the three levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, and critical. The basic skills of critical reading are developed: interpretation (main idea and inferences); organization (summarizing, generalizing); and evaluation (causal relationships, true or false, author's argument). (Para. 30)

Despite the changes made by the Ministry of National Education, there are still disturbances in the critical reading of students, which affects their performance and learning. Therefore, it is necessary to improve their sense of criticality and intellectual quality, which promises linguistic and innovative skills that link knowledge, being, and doing, in addition to promoting encounters where they can resolve situations through argumentation and where their thinking is open to imagination and reflection.

Authors such as Avendaño (2016), Pernía and Méndez (2018) and Brito (2020) state that despite these changes in the educational system, in the classroom, not only in the field of language, but also in other areas of knowledge, the difficulties that many students face in the critical reading of texts are still evident and, as a result, they are indifferent to reading; they do it to fulfill an obligation or to complete a task, but it is clear that they find it boring.

The above suggests that students are unable or afraid to take a critical position on the content of the text or the author's approach. There are many reasons for this problem, including poor reading habits, limited access to libraries, lack of books or works to read at home, illiterate parents, or those with little time to encourage their children to read.

The researchers found that tenth-grade students in secondary education lacked the skills necessary to achieve the language proficiency required for their academic level. There is evidence of a lack of comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the texts they read, basic skills that influence their learning when solving problems, conducting research, and inferring information in narrative texts. These skills are essential for processes such as comprehending, interpreting, and evaluating texts, as well as for adopting a critical stance toward reading.

Another relevant aspect is the role of the teacher in mediating learning. It has been observed that in many cases tasks are designed without promoting motivation for reading comprehension, which prevents the connection with topics relevant to the student's reality. The lack of strategies that stimulate imagination, creativity, and contextualization hinders the development of critical thinking in the learning process. In this sense, it is essential to implement approaches that reinforce learning and promote the development of the skills necessary for this level of education.

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

Consequently, Gabriel García Márquez's stories were used as a tactic to achieve meaningful learning in a collective, group, and individual way. In this sense, competencies and content were integrated so that the student could understand the local units of meaning through the text, integrate this information to give a global meaning to the text and take a critical stance. It should be noted that these were selected for their content since the aim was to promote meaningful reading that would allow the understanding of situations, and contexts, the transformation of information, and above all, the development of critical thinking.

The reading of Gabriel García Márquez's stories used as a mediating resource, contributes to significant learning that will affect the 20 tenth-grade students. From a theoretical point of view, the study allows us to understand and develop critical reading based on these stories, which will affect cognitive processes and reading comprehension, thus promoting critical thinking.

The contributions of different theorists support the research, and the results derived from this study could serve as a basis for future research in which the literary narrative is considered a resource for reflective teaching. This is especially important at the secondary level when students are preparing for new challenges in higher education.

The study seeks to establish itself as a methodological contribution based on the principles of Pedagogical Action Research (PAR), to transform pedagogical practice through the participation of educational actors, with the aim of understanding, proposing and improving pedagogical practices. Therefore, the research is based on the contributions of Rodríguez (2021), Piña-Ferrer (2023), Polanía et al. (2020), Restrepo (2002), Caminotti and Toppi (2020), Jara (2018), Luna-Gijón et al. (2022), among others, whose postulates guide the study from a methodological perspective (following the phases proposed by PAR) and from a theoretical and practical approach. This makes it possible to influence the transformation of educational practices, especially in the use of didactic strategies for teaching mathematics with the support of social networks. In turn, it

will contribute to the improvement of students' academic performance and their performance in standardized tests.

In the social sphere, the research aims to create spaces for reflecting on the pedagogical practice of teachers, to reconstruct their practice and be able to implement the story in the training of students and develop a critical attitude based on approaching the literary work, seeking the critical and argued expression of interpretations that address cultural, social, ethical, affective and ideological aspects of everyday information.

Therefore, the following research question was posed: How do Gabriel García Márquez's stories contribute to strengthening the critical reading of tenth-grade students? To answer this question, the following general objective was raised: to strengthen the critical reading of tenth-grade students through Gabriel García Márquez's stories, which was operationalized through specific objectives, namely: 1) to identify the difficulties present in tenth-grade students about critical reading; 2) to design reading workshops through Gabriel García Márquez's stories to strengthen critical reading; 3) to implement workshops with Gabriel García Márquez's stories to strengthen critical reading and, 4) to evaluate the results of the implementation of the workshops.

In this context, based on the general vision of the problem and the final objective, research was carried out to know the real panorama of the categories in different contexts. Thus, at the international level, the study carried out by Morales (2020) was considered, who points out that the objective of the university should be to teach how to learn and try to help students achieve intellectual autonomy; for this, teachers must implement specific strategies, among which reading stands out as a key procedure to promote learning, promoting the development of critical thinking.

Morales (2020) highlights the importance of motivation in achieving reading acquisition as an intellectual process that provides reflective reasoning with complex theoretical foundations, diverse content, and new ideas in the process of understanding and solidifying the world. Therefore, he carried out pedagogical

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

interventions adapted to the interests of the students, stimulating their participation and effective interaction with discursive genres, their characteristics and conventions, along the themes of their discipline.

He concludes that his study helped students use critical thinking skills to identify implicit positions and underlying approaches in reading, acquire meaningful learning across curricular areas, and thus address intellectual autonomy as students face the challenges of the dizzying changes in today's world.

At the national level, Bolaño and Fontalvo (2021) conducted a study whose purpose was to analyze the tensions and challenges in developing general critical reading skills based on classroom management at the university, using a mixed research approach and sequential design. Teachers' and students' perceptions of general critical reading skills at the university indicated sufficient intention; however, from the students' point of view, this description revealed opportunities for improvement. Therefore, in this study, teachers need to strengthen their understanding of methods, strategies, techniques, reading levels, and types of texts to manage academic subjects related to critical reading.

The study's contribution lies in the fact that it reveals a perspective of improvement in students' critical reading, linking it to other subjects; on the other hand, in teachers, the recognition of methods and strategies that guide critical reading is presented. Significantly, the process of understanding other subjects begins thanks to reading, where motivation and pedagogy play a fundamental role.

In the regional context, Villareal and Jiménez (2020) conducted a study whose objective was to promote critical reading through the fable as a teaching strategy in fourth-grade students. Methodologically, the research was framed in the postpositivist paradigm, under the pedagogical action research method. Its design was implemented in three phases: deconstruction of the pedagogical practice, reconstruction, and evaluation of the practical activity. The designed teaching strategy included reading workshops; this was applied on four occasions,

which increased the complexity of reading up to the level of critical reading. The results showed an interest in reading at its three levels: literal, inferential, and, above all, critical-analytical, reflected in the identification of main ideas, and characters, inferring relationships, as well as in taking a position and questioning the message of the moral of the fable. The application of the teaching strategy based on this literary genre helped the students to develop levels of complex reading comprehension, such as critical reading, accompanied by values such as respect, mutual support, and responsibility.

This research is relevant to the present study because it used narrative texts as a teaching strategy for students' reading comprehension. The nature of the research of the study provided ideas for the application of the phases of pedagogical action research following the objectives and recording the experiences of the intervention.

When dealing with the categories of the study, critical reading, for the authors consulted, means understanding what has been read, analyzing the content to verify successes, errors, and the way the information is presented; that is, testing their framework of ideas and arguments concerning a context, tradition, or genre in which they are inscribed; in addition, providing elements for a complete and complex understanding of the text (Cassany, 2019; Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education [ICFES], 2018; Arias, 2020; Jurado, 2016). Regarding the narrative, authors such as Jurado and Herrera (2022) and Rocha and Rocha (2023).

Methodology

The research was framed within the socio-critical paradigm, which, according to Rodríguez (2021), provides social and pedagogical responses and allows us to identify the social processes, interests, and practices that structure society, denaturalizing previous conceptions and values. Likewise, the qualitative approach was adopted, since cultural processes were addressed from a subjective perspective, through which an attempt was made to understand and interpret all human actions, experiences, and feelings to create ways of being (Piña-Ferrer, 2023).

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

The study was also framed within the framework of PAR since it was necessary to know the continuous structure of each teacher's practice and its theoretical roots to identify it and subject it to criticism and improvement. The structure of practice consists of ideas (theory), tools (methods and techniques), and rituals (customs, routines, demands, habits), all of which are susceptible to deconstruction (Polanía et al., 2020).

The research was developed in three stages. The first, deconstruction, refers to the diagnosis, considered as a procedure that transcends criticism itself since it goes beyond the self-examination of the practice. The second is the reconstruction of the practice, through the application of strategies, after designing a proposal that aims to be more effective for educational transformation. The third is the validation of the effectiveness of the practice, where the analysis of the results is carried out to complete the evaluation phase (Restrepo, 2002). The work unit was made up of twenty students, whose ages ranged between 16 and 18 years.

The collection of data was defined as a precondition for the acquisition of scientific knowledge; therefore, the instruments were aimed at creating the conditions to abstract from the real world and from the sensory (perceptible by the senses), the information that would provide answers to the objectives set (Caminotti & Toppi, 2020).

The techniques applied were in line with the objectives and phases of the action research. Therefore, in the first phase, a written test was applied; in the second phase, systematization was carried out because, according to Jara (2018),it seeks to produce a reading that goes beyond the stories of its actors, which underpinned the theoretical bases captured in the field diaries. For Luna-Gijón et al. (2022), it is a training tool that allows students to learn significantly about information design; in addition to promoting reflection, it makes visible the work and thinking process of the design processes they follow, records the emotions that intervene in the creation of the projects and contributes to the formation of information design thinking.

The third phase was evaluation, which was carried out during the implementation process by developing the skills of analysis, identifying causal relationships, synthesis, and argumentation in the presentation of texts to question the author's ideas, giving new meanings to reading and relating the meanings of reading to everyday events. The evaluation showed that the participants strengthened their critical reading skills.

Results

The results of the diagnostic test confirmed that the students had problems identifying the characteristics of the main characters in the text, understanding the author's argument, interpreting the information, identifying the central idea, understanding the meaning of the author's argument, making inferences, connecting elements into a whole, relating sequences between parts of the text, understanding, expressing opinions, and expressing ideas about the reading.

Consequently, these results indicated the need to find a strategy that would transform students' critical reading problems. A theoretical review of previous research on the topic under study was carried out. Based on these findings, the researchers planned a strategy based on the selection of eight stories from the work *Doce cuentos peregrinos* by the Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez.

Once the proposal, consisting of eight workshops, was designed, it was implemented. To ensure its effectiveness, the process to be followed was explained to the students and informed consent was obtained, as well as the authorization of parents and caregivers. In the planning stage, eight stories from the work were selected around which specific activities were designed in line with the objectives of the research.

Workshop 1 focused on the biography of Gabriel García Márquez, to understand his career and personality. During a 90-minute session, students were encouraged to get to know the author, interpret the underlying message in his texts, and formulate conclusions based on arguments.

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

After this introduction, the students began to study his literary work, which was a motivating element for them. During the activity, they read and wrote about the aspects of his life that they considered most relevant, and they commented among themselves on the number of works published and the awards received by the author.

In Workshop 2, based on the story *Buen viaje, señor presidente*, the teacher-researchers began reading aloud and invited the students to continue. There was a high level of interest and excitement to participate. A video related to the story was then shown, during which an atmosphere of silence and concentration was observed.

At the end of the screening, the students were asked to carry out the proposed activities. However, the process was slow because they had difficulty answering the questions, which led them to seek guidance from the research teachers until they completed the task. Despite these challenges, the students were able to identify the main ideas of the text, interpret information through images, and organize their ideas.

In Workshop 3, based on the story *La santa*, the session began with a word game as an icebreaker that caught the students' attention. With the voluntary participation of one of them, the reading began, which was continued in two voices and later as a group.

Students were then invited to listen to the audiobook, followed by a guided analysis through questions designed to encourage reflection. This activity showed greater participation as students asked questions without fear and completed the assigned tasks. Their ability to identify and characterize the abstract information in the text was observed, as well as their ability to write their own story.

Throughout the process, students commented on their writing, organized ideas, discussed readings, interpreted arguments, identified cause-and-effect relationships, and distinguished between main and supporting ideas.

In Workshop 4, based on the story *El avión* de la *bella durmiente*, the activity was carried out through individual reading. Students had the opportunity to look up unknown words in the dictionary, which facilitated their understanding of the text. To reinforce this process, they did a second reading in a group and later they were shown the audio-video of the story.

At the end of the screening, questions were asked to assess comprehension and critical analysis of the story. Although the students' progress in critical reading was evident, more practice is needed for everyone to master this level of reading. Only a group of ten students were able to identify semantic and formal relationships in the text, interpret the author's argument, summarize content, identify central ideas, appreciate the importance of reading, and expand their vocabulary.

The remaining ten students did not develop the skills necessary to become critical readers. However, they showed interest and, with the support of their peers and research teachers, managed to complete the assigned activities.

In Workshop 5, based on the story *Me alquilo para soñar*, the teachers started the session with questions related to the title of the story, which allowed the students to express their ideas and expectations about the reading. Afterward, the group reading took place, alternating between the oral and individual reading modes. Then the video of the story was projected to complement the experience.

At the end of the reading, students were asked a series of questions to assess their understanding of the text. It was evident that they were able to relate the information in the story to previous knowledge and personal experiences; they characterized the narrative voices through a brief simulation and demonstrated greater cognitive maturity by making inferences with less difficulty.

They also identified the discursive strategies used by the author, improved their communication skills, and wrote their own story with a critical approach.

Workshop 6, based on the story *Sólo vine a hablar por teléfono*, provided a new opportunity for students to strengthen critical reading skills that had been challenging at the beginning of the process. To motivate their participation, the session began with a musical activity in which they sang a song to promote group integration before beginning the reading.

First, the reading was done individually and then as a group. In the end, they were presented with a series of questions about the content of the story to guide their analysis and reflection. A remarkable interest in learning was evident, especially in the group of ten students who had not yet fully developed critical reading skills. They were able to relate sequences within the text, distinguish between what was true and what was fictional, interpret the reading, question the author's ideas, and respond confidently to the questions posed. They also identified explicit information, understood the meaning of keywords and main ideas, and wrote new stories based on the story.

In Workshop 7, which was based on the story *Espantos de agosto*, the students expressed their joy at their progress in developing critical reading skills. With this characteristic dynamism, they were invited to enter the new work session where the story was presented, whose images motivated them to participate and read it individually.

Through the assigned activities, students demonstrated their ability to make inferences by identifying and contextualizing the ideas presented by the author. They also identified the structure of the story —introduction, development, and conclusion— and established relationships between discursive strategies and specific sociocultural contexts.

In addition, they analyzed the type of language used by the author, shared comments about the reading, and wrote new stories expressing their opinions about the arguments in the text.

Workshop 8, which focused on the story of *Maria dos Prazeres*, began with a silent reading of the story, followed by the showing of the corresponding video. During this activity, the students showed a high level of concentration.

Through the activities designed to assess the achievement of the objectives, it was found that the students were able to identify the semantic and formal relationships within the structure of the story. They also made connections between the content of the story and their daily experiences, expanded their vocabulary with new words, strengthened their communication skills, and proposed coherent changes to the story.

They also reaffirmed the importance of the act of reading, located explicit information in the text, established logical relationships between premises and arguments, and improved their communication skills. With these advances, it can be said that critical reading has begun to consolidate among tenth-grade students.

Workshop 9, based on the story *Diecisiete ingleses envenenados*, was a source of great joy and satisfaction for the students and researchers, thanks to the progress made with García Márquez's stories. This time, as a closing activity, the day was dedicated to the title of the story; the silent reading to discover the evolution of the work caused concern and curiosity among the students, who concentrated on learning about the world in which the events took place.

This interest led the participants to consolidate themselves as critical readers, which was evident in the development of the activities designed to assess their learning. The students completed the tasks with ease, worked confidently, analyzed the texts, synthesized the content, summarized and generalized information, identified central ideas, integrated elements into a whole, expanded their vocabulary through the use of the dictionary, formulated conclusions, and organized and expressed ideas coherently.

As a result of this progress, the researchers were able to determine the effectiveness of the workshops and the progress of the participants in the strengthening of critical reading skills.

In the evaluation of the results obtained in the implementation of the workshops based on the stories of Gabriel García Márquez, it was found that the students, with the initial support of the

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

research teachers and the collaboration among peers, gradually overcame their difficulties and advanced in the development of critical reading. Throughout the process, they identified the main ideas in the texts, interpreted information from images, organized ideas, characterized abstract information, constructed stories, captured the meaning of arguments, recognized cause-and-effect relationships, distinguished main ideas from secondary ideas, and established semantic or formal relationships in the texts.

Students were also able to synthesize content, understand the importance of reading, expand their vocabulary, relate explicit and implicit information, characterize narrative voices, make inferences, identify discursive strategies used by the author, and improve their communication skills. In addition, they showed interest in learning, established sequences between parts of the text, distinguished between true and false statements, interpreted the reading critically, questioned the author's ideas, responded assertively to questions posed, located specific information, and wrote new stories. Finally, they instituted logical relationships between premises and arguments, thereby strengthening their reading skills.

With these achievements, it can be said that the students have reached the level of critical readers. It should be noted that the evaluative observations, progress, and results of each of the workshops were duly recorded in the field diary.

Discussion

Following the results, the discussion was based on the data collected in the data collection process through a diagnostic test and records in field diaries, as well as the documentary review or previous studies. In the examination of the data, analyzed and systematized in the light of the question that guided the research, the first action was to apply a diagnostic test and then a bibliographic review, actions that produced the results described below.

The results of the diagnostic test indicated that the students had difficulty identifying the characteristics of the main characters in the story, understanding the author's point, interpreting the information, identifying the central idea, making inferences, connecting elements to form a whole, relating sequences between parts of the text, understanding, expressing opinions, expressing ideas about reading, and analyzing the information. Based on these results, a strategy was developed to alleviate this problem.

These results differ from the approach of Campos (as cited in Avendaño, 2016), who states that it is necessary to refer to critical thinking to understand critical reading, understood as «the deliberate and self-regulated judgment that results from the analysis, synthesis, evaluation, inference, and explanation of conceptual, methodological, and contextual considerations; it is an indispensable process in research practice» (p. 213). The author adds that critical reading results from the intellectual exercise of drawing simple or complex conclusions.

For Benavides and Sierra (2013), the act of reading is a cognitive process that highlights the development of three levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, and critical. Each level, in turn, develops three basic skills: interpretation, to form an opinion, identify a central idea, and draw conclusions; organization, to establish sequences in the text, summarize, and generalize; and finally, evaluation, to identify causal relationships, distinguish what is true from what is false, and understand the meaning of the author's arguments.

For his part, Cassany (2017) states that to reach the critical level of reading, it is necessary to understand the text, that is, to synthesize the content, to separate the main ideas from the secondary ones, and the author's evaluation concerning a proven fact. It is also important to find another bibliography or source that deals with the same topic, to make a comparison between the data and the arguments described in these different treatments. Arias (2020) adds that critical reading then involves understanding different modes of interpretation; that is, considering the different meanings hidden in the text. From these conceptions, the reader will delve into the text, revealing his critical thinking process, and trying to associate and reflect the message that the author wants to convey.

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

The idea of designing and implementing workshops based on the stories of Gabriel García Márquez to strengthen the critical reading skills of tenth-grade students was based on the aforementioned assertions about the elements involved in critical reading and on the results of the diagnostic assessment that revealed the students' critical reading problems. This action was supported by the assumptions of Rocha and Rocha (2023), who state that literary stories are narratives constructed with a specific intention and that, in addition, they are the product of rigorous work by the author, capable of creating a story with a precise atmosphere that generates emotions in an explicit audience.

For De Santos et al. (2020), a literary short story is a brief and simple narrative based on imaginary events that are constructed and disseminated through writing. Its purpose is to entertain the lyrical reader and, at the same time, to convey a moral and ethical message that can generate change and learning. It has a unilateral structure, a distinctive element that distinguishes it from the novel; the simplicity of its forms and the directness and speed of its message make it one of the most addressed literary genres. This definition constitutes important elements to be applied in the educational field, intending to generate the pleasurable habit of reading, thus strengthening all levels, especially the critical one.

These actions are related to the research of Suárez et al. (2020), who concluded that the use of critical reading is a prior and indispensable condition for the achievement of complex competencies such as research, and therefore requires interdisciplinary, methodological, systematic, and unified work in teaching. In the same order, there are similarities with what Bolaño and Fontalvo (2021) proposed regarding the perspective of improving students' critical reading and associating it with other subjects and the recognition of methods and strategies to guide critical reading by teachers.

Likewise, the contributions of Brito (2020), were considered, who in the final reflections highlights the need to generate teaching resources with specific characteristics to develop skills such as

reading comprehension and stimulate critical and reflective thinking in students. Added to this is the work of Vargas and Quiñones (2019), who conducted a series of workshops based on stories by Colombian authors to help students identify their reading level and improve their reading comprehension.

The design of the strategy was based on what Reynosa et al. (2020) stated: «Instructional strategies stimulate learning because they also arouse a concern for knowledge, so they become a key transversal factor in knowledge construction processes» (p. 265).

Conclusions

Regarding the first objective, the results of the diagnostic test showed that the students had various difficulties, including the inability to identify the characteristics that define the characters in the text, difficulty understanding the author's argument, interpreting the information presented, identifying the central idea, grasping the meaning of the arguments, making inferences, establishing relationships between different parts of the text, and expressing opinions about the reading. Limited ability to analyze information and organize ideas coherently was also observed.

Concerning the second objective, the theoretical review allowed us to select the work *Doce cuentos peregrinos* by Gabriel García Márquez. From this collection, eight stories were selected for their ability to motivate and interest the students in the learning process, which were addressed in each of the workshops.

Regarding the third objective, the analysis of the results showed that the students initially struggled to complete the activities proposed in each workshop. However, through peer collaboration and the intervention of the researchers, they gradually achieved greater autonomy in carrying out the activities. With enthusiasm, determination, and dedication, they were able to interpret, analyze, and synthesize ideas, question the author's arguments, and establish semantic relationships, which allowed them to develop critical reading skills.

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis
Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez

Finally, about the fourth objective, the use of dynamic strategies and continuous assessment in each activity demonstrated the positive impact of the proposal. Through frequent reading, students were able to discover the importance of reading habits, demonstrate an interest in learning, question ideas, locate implicit information, analyze and better understand texts, develop critical skills, and communicate their ideas with greater clarity and precision.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, intellectual, racial, religious, or other conflicts of interest that might affect the reliability of this paper.

Ethical Responsibilities

For the development of the research, an informed consent form was signed and submitted to the institution's principal's office to obtain approval for the implementation of the instruments and strategy. Parental consent was also obtained for student participation in the study.

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Contribution

Yelitsa Aramendiz Tatis: Principal investigator. She prepared the introduction, statistical data processing, materials and methods, results collection, conclusions, and references.

Leiden Liseth Márquez Rodríguez: Review of the introduction, statistical data processing, writing of materials and methods, obtaining results, conclusions, and references.

The authors participated in the preparation of the manuscript, read it, and approved it.