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Reading Comprehension in English as Foreign Language from an Action Research Approach

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Abstract

Action research is considered fundamental in several knowledge construction processes, particularly in the education field. For this reason, the present article makes a bibliographic review from different data bases through documentary analysis. This is in order to characterize studies related to the processes of enhancing reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, which use the previously mentioned investigative method. As a result, the information was organized into tables and statistical graphics, which allowed the identification of epistemological, methodological and pragmatic tendencies in relation to categories such as year of publishing, educational stage, used method, type of improved strategy and place where the investigations was developed. Finally, we conclude that action research is a significant tool for the encouraging of the acquisition of English and related competencies at an international level in recent years, in various levels and at professional training levels.

Keywords: English, Reading Comprehension, Action Research, Educatio,; Teaching.

Introduction

Action research has been a source of information in different fields of knowledge in recent years. This is due to it being characterized as a research method that looks to perfect an occurrence of a social nature (Elliot, 2005). This same statement is shared with Fernández (2016), who treats action research as a critical study of analysis and questioning that seeks the resolution of problems that arise in the context of action. In summary, it is coincidental that action research has as a main objective the search for answers to situations that generate concerns for and from the practice. As a consequence, this research method gains great value for the different disciplines of knowledge to the extent that it offers the possibility of establishing complex and systemic bridges of convergence between knowing and doing, as well as strengthening the relationship and allowing the optimization of its results. Therefore, the question arises: *How has this approach contributed to the development of effective strategies for reading comprehension in English as a foreign language?*

Within the educational field, action research has acquired enormous usefulness. Especially, when considering appreciations such as that of Martínez (2014) who stipulates that it favors knowledge and innovation in relation to the educational aspect. Likewise, Horvathova and Nad'ová (2021) mention that action research helps in the search and achievement of progress in the act of teaching and learning. Starting from these statements, it is recognized that this research

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method becomes a substantial device for the understanding and strengthening of the formative processes and the elements related to it; hence its importance in the area of teaching English as a foreign language. In this context, reading comprehension is understood as the ability to interpret and construct meaning from texts in English, which is an essential skill for learning.

The previous acquires greater value when contemplating that currently, English is one of the indispensable elements for the actions of the subject, since it is consecrated as one of the most widespread languages internationally (Olín, 2018; Castro and Jessup, 2022). To which is joined by what Villalobos (2011) expresses by relating better livelihood possibilities to the use of English. This is also stated by Castro (2020) and Castro and Toledo, (2024), authors who stipulate that this language is a primary instrument for access to various environments in which human beings interact. In other words, it is inferred that it is essential for the individual to be able to understand, emit and produce messages in English so as to establish effective communication processes in said language. For this reason, various educational systems have focused on this aspect and the elements related to it (Ochoa, 2016). Even more so when referring to reading comprehension of texts in English as a foreign language.

It is identified that, according to Shukri et al. (2018), reading in English is transcendental in academic aspects. Similarly, Ardila et al. (2021) mention that this skill is fundamental for communicative exchange. Zhou (2022) and Castro & Londoño (2024) recognize that through reading, the knowledge of English linguistics is expanded. In short, the leading role of reading comprehension in various communicative processes and linguistic access to English, whether as a native or foreign language, is specified. For this same reason, reading comprehension is characterized as one of the main priority skills in education. However, Llanos and Montenegro (2019) detail a great deficiency in formative processes related to this aspect. That is, didactic gaps are recognized in respect to the ways and means used to promote reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. These gaps include the scarcity of pedagogical strategies adapted to specific contexts, which limits the development of this competence.

This work seeks to develop a bibliographic study of various works characterized by being of an action-research nature and the process of reading comprehension in English and its improvement. Therefore, through documentary analysis, the documents found are categorized and trends are found regarding the year of publishing, country, educational level, both work and population with which it was developed and the approach and type of strategy used in each work. This review covers works published between the years 2010 and 2024 in international databases, this is done in order to provide a global overview.

Finally, it is concluded that action research has been used from different approaches in the field of languages worldwide, as well as in each of the educational levels. In addition, it is identified that its use has allowed the creation and evaluation of various types of strategies in the educational field. Therefore, it is vital to expand the didactic and pedagogical knowledge of the educational processes related to reading in English. These findings can help teachers and curriculum designers to create more effective classroom practices.

Action Research in English as a Foreign Language Teaching

Action research was developed in the twentieth century under the premise of improving social action. In particular, according to Fayad (2015) and Fernández (2016), its main author was researcher Kurt Lewin, who designed it as a type of study that transcends the positivist stereotypes of knowledge construction in order to understand reality in a different way.

Consequently, this research method emerges as an emancipatory response to the systems of knowledge previously normalized by the scientific method. This approach seeks to integrate practical experience with critical reflection, questioning the traditional ways of the generation of knowledge. Therefore, it is worth asking: how has action research influenced the improvement of the teaching of English as a foreign language, especially in reading comprehension?

According to Saltos et al. (2018) there is no trend regarding the conceptualization of action research. However, despite this difficulty, it is possible to bring up what is said by Castro et al. (2007) who conceptualizes it as the reflective process that leads to progress in the face of a problem. Restrepo (2004) agrees by identifying that the primary objective of this research method revolves around the change and change of action. In other words, action research is a path to the improvement of the practical part. For this reason, authors such as Latorre (2005) and Martínez (2014) mention that through this research method, strong links are established between the pragmatic and epistemological reality of a phenomenon. This means that, it can be affirmed that action research allows the providing of practical solutions to conflicts that arise during the subject's actions, through the research process. This implies that researchers not only observe, but actively intervene to transform the reality of their study.

On the other hand, one of the main characteristics of action research is that it promotes validation processes based on experience (Elliot, 2005). It also promotes a conceptual and practical approach to reality (Castellanos and Garzón, 2013). Additionally, it also establishes a deep connection between the researcher and the phenomenon under investigation (Corral et al., 2016). Lastly, it favors the promotion of the skills and knowledge of professionals (Saltos et al., 2018). Furthermore, it implies a change and modification of the studied reality (Molina, 2018). That is, the use of action research leads to various benefits for the work of the professional. As a result, this type of research has been widely used in various fields of knowledge, especially in education. These characteristics make it a dynamic tool that adapts to the specific needs of each professional context.

According to Latorre (2005), action research is the basis for the strengthening of formative action. On his part, Elliot (2005), who was one of its main authors in the educational field, mentions that this is the research developed by a teacher in order to provide a solution to a problem situation in his pedagogical work. Likewise, Pérez (2019) conceptualizes action research as an instrument for the creation of pedagogical and educational knowledge. Del Campo (2010) presents it as a means to address the concerns, interests and worries of the members of the educational community. In other words, action research can be identified as one of the key devices for teachers and the educational environment because, on one hand, it allows the characterization of educational dynamics, and on the other hand, it favors the transformation of the latter into a dynamic being in constant metamorphosis. In this sense, the teacher becomes an active agent who not only teaches, but also reflects and adjusts their practice in real time.

Based on what was previously mentioned, Gamboa (2017) recognizes that action research is a mean to obtain strategies that allow optimizing the work of teaching. Similarly, Díaz (2017) and Bustamante et al. (2018) stipulate that it promotes reflection and construction facing different types of constituent aspects of the training system and educational action. Osenjo (2009) identifies that this kind of research facilitates self-evaluation by the teacher, in such a way that it allows them to know and make choices regarding their actions. In other words, through action research it is possible to generate curricular changes and educational practices translated into pedagogical knowledge and the design of strategies that maximize the act of teaching and

learning. These strategies usually arise from a cyclical process of trial and error, progressively adjusting to the demands that are created within the classroom.

Therefore, Rodríguez (2005) recognizes that it stimulates the transition of pedagogical action. This is because it is the type of action research that focuses solely on the didactic-formative process in such a way that it studies the actions of each of those involved in it. In other words, educational action research can be considered as individualized and particular to each reality and subject in which the teacher as an educational agent acquires a decisive role, as Lucas (2020) mentions, they assume a double function. Therefore, from this research method, the teacher is both an educator and researcher of their own performance and everything that's related to it. This dual role allows teachers to adapt their methods to the particularities of their students and their environment.

Fernández (2016) identifies that it allows the questioning and rethinking of everything that has occurred during the educational process for its understanding and progress. Saltos et al. (2018) detail that this research mode is a way of constructing knowledge in the educational field. Put differently, educational action research is constituted as a substantial device in the field of teaching. This is the reason why it is considered fundamental in the area of teaching reading in English, especially when considering that, according to Zhou (2022), a change is required in the methods used to teach this skill in the classroom. That is to say, there is a need for the creation of strategies, ways and means that allow for a new way of fostering English reading comprehension in students. Here, reading comprehension is defined as the ability to interpret and make sense of English texts, which is essential for learning English.

According to Ramírez (2017), English has become a language of global diffusion. Similarly, Wang et al. (2021) recognize that it allows the encounter between cultures. Bernal (2021) details that its use has extended to each of the social dimensions in which human beings interact. Arias (2017) characterizes its use as means for the internalization of knowledge. Hence its importance, especially when thinking that the current era is characterized as a world where knowledge circulates freely and massively (Yugcha, 2017). Therefore, the use of English, whether as a second or foreign language, becomes an essential condition for the subject, since it promotes his or her actions and functioning, not only in aspects related to the areas of knowledge but also in his or her daily life. For this reason, the means to promote its acquisition become a focus of consideration in the educational field. However, there are some challenges that remain, such as the lack of contextualized methods that respond to specific needs of students.

On the other hand, according to Barrios (2019), the act of reading translates into a wide range of opportunities for the individual. Similarly, according to Ticota (2018), since English is one of the most widespread languages internationally, being able to develop reading processes in this language is a key element for the citizen's actions. In parallel, Castro and Londoño (2021:2024) mention that being able to carry out reading in English allows both the accessibility to information, as well as its internalization. Likewise, Mera (2022) states that reading and its comprehension are crucial for professional development. In other words, reading comprehension in English becomes one of the paths to knowledge, besides being a gateway to various possibilities and gains for the human being.

For this reason, several thinkers have focused on this skill and have positioned it as a determining factor in the teaching and learning of English (Azizifar et al., 2015). That is to say, its promotion has been the core of consideration in the formative processes. This highlights the need for innovative approaches that overcome the limitations of traditional methods of reading teaching.

This is where action research in the educational environment takes on great importance, specifically when thinking that according to Maldonado and Russi (2016) it has been a substantial provider of information and intensifier of the language learning process. In addition to detailing that according to Horvathova and Nad'ová (2021) action research can become a pillar of reinforcement of skills related to reading comprehension. In summary, it can be inferred from the authors that the use of action research in the educational field of teaching and strengthening reading comprehension in English can be beneficial. The above, keeping in mind that it allows the approach to the pedagogical practice in order to know, reform, design and apply strategies that allow the educational act and its results to be promoted. This exploration is based on an analysis of studies carried out between 2010 and 2024 at a global level, with the objective of offering practical tools for teachers to transform their classrooms.

Methodology

The present study was based on documentary analysis, which according to Herrero (1997), it consists of a set of acts that make it possible to describe information. Likewise, Clauso (1993) mentions that documentary analysis is based on the description and organization of documents in such a way as to enhance their study and reading. Finally, Dulzaides and Molina (2004) state that it is a means of categorizing, separating, obtaining and highlighting data found in a document. In other words, documentary analysis is the way in which the researcher can process and manage to plan, prepare, summarize, arrange and reuse the information present in them in a typified, concrete and punctual way. This method is especially useful for handling large volumes of academic information and extracting relevant patterns in a systematic way.

Thus, starting from questions such as: where did the research process take place? When did it take place? At what educational levels was it carried out according to the agreement of the table of equivalencies of the Organization of the Andrés Bello Convention for Educational, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Integration [CAB] (2021)? What type of approach or methodological route did the research have? What were the characteristics of the proposed improvement strategy? The information that was found and related to the research-action processes focused on the strengthening or promotion of reading comprehension in English as a foreign language was ordered.

This was based on inclusion criteria such as that they were research processes in the area of teaching and learning of English, that they included an improvement proposal, that they used action research as a method and that their core was reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. The previous questions were used as a guide for the selection and analysis process, ensuring that the studies reviewed were relevant to the objective of the study. In addition, the inclusion criteria was designed to guarantee the thematic and methodological coherence of the selected documents.

Finally, the data collection was made through several databases, including Scopus, Erick, Lareferencia, Researchgate and repositories from different universities. This was done from keywords such as “action research”, “reading comprehension in English”, “didactic strategy” and “foreign language”. Next, the large volume of documentation found was processed and classified according to the selection criteria previously established. Thus, we continued with the organization of the researches included in the study in different tables based on categories such as: author, educational level of the project, title, research topic, place where it was developed, population, educational level of the population under the criteria of the CAB equivalence tables (2021), objective, approach, methodological route, data collection instruments, among others.

Finally, an in-depth analysis of these documents was carried out, in addition to recognizing propensities, inclinations and epistemological positions of the authors. The choice of these databases allowed access to a wide range of international studies, covering publications between 2010 and 2024 to reflect recent trends. This classification process facilitated the identification of similarities and differences among the research, providing a comprehensive view of how reading comprehension in English has been addressed. The results of this analysis are intended to provide educators with practical tools to design effective strategies based on the observed trends.

Results

In this part of the study, we show Figure 1. This figure shows all of the documentation that we had access to in its totality, which are related to the improvement of reading comprehension in English and related aspects.

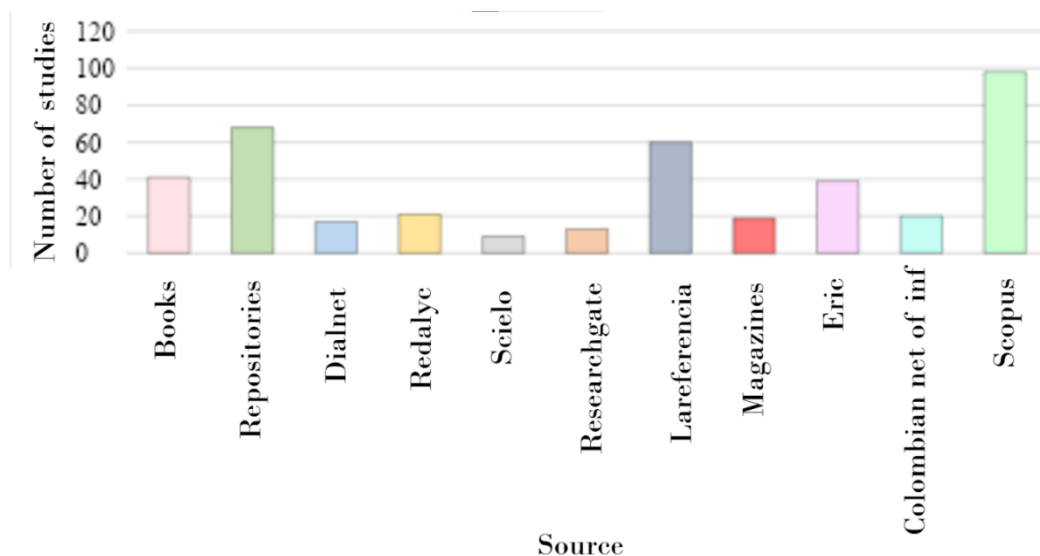


Figure 1: Number of Documents Related to Reading Comprehension in English According to the Original Source.

Source: Own Work.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the number of articles, theses, research papers, books and writings found and their source of origin. A total of 405 documents were found, which dealt with the research topic of the pedagogical and formative processes of English and reading comprehension in that language from different approaches, as well as educational levels. Similarly, from what is shown in this figure, it can be seen that the database that provided the largest amount of documentation was Scopus, followed by the various institutional repositories. The Scielo database provided the least amount of papers.

Finally, it is important to mention that, when considering the criteria of inclusion and exclusion of the documentation applied for the categorization of the information in tables, this magnitude decreased to 34 action research studies. This filtering process allowed us to focus the analysis on research specifically aligned with the action research method and the focus on reading

comprehension in English. The predominance of Scopus suggests that this database offers a broad and up-to-date coverage of the topic.

On the other hand, by focusing on action-research studies whose objective was the process of reading comprehension in English, the following figure emerges, which shows the classification of the works found according to the educational level to which they belong.

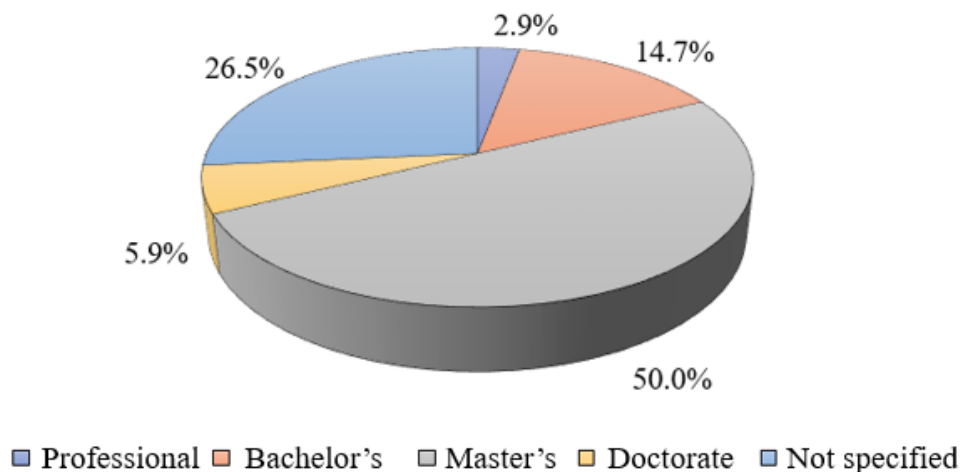


Figure 2: Distribution of Action Research Works Related to Reading Comprehension in English According to the Educational Level to Which They Belong.

Source: Own Work.

Specifically, as shown on Figure 2, in the 34 studies related to the topic of interest, the use of this research method predominates in the master's degree. This can be observed by the amount of action-research works to obtain the master's degree was 50% of the total amount of papers, among these are authors Mora and Montero (2011); Fayad (2015); Maldonado and Russi (2016); Yusti (2017); Rojas (2019); Touriz (2020); Ramos and Rivera (2021) and Sanchez and Ramirez (2021). While research to access the professional or undergraduate degree was only 2.9% (Fernandez, 2016). This trend could reflect a greater interest or available resources to apply action research in graduate studies.

It is important to mention two significant aspects in the group of documents treated. Firstly, it was possible to identify doctoral level research, as in the case of Battigelli (2015) and Cabaleiro (2017). Secondly, many of the documents traced did not make explicit the level of education at which they take place, among these the works of Dwiastuty et al. (2018); Hellystia (2018); Lucas (2020); Touriz (2020); Yong and Abdul (2020); Ateek (2021) and Gamboa (2017), therefore they are located in the category of name "not specified". Nevertheless, from the generality, it can be concluded that the use of action research for the reinforcement of reading comprehension in English permeates from research and properly professional or undergraduate work, to doctoral level theses. The lack of specifications in some studies suggests a possible inconsistency in the documentation of this aspect, which could complicate an accurate comparison.

The graph below shows the number of research and action research studies according to their year of publication, from 2007 to 2021.

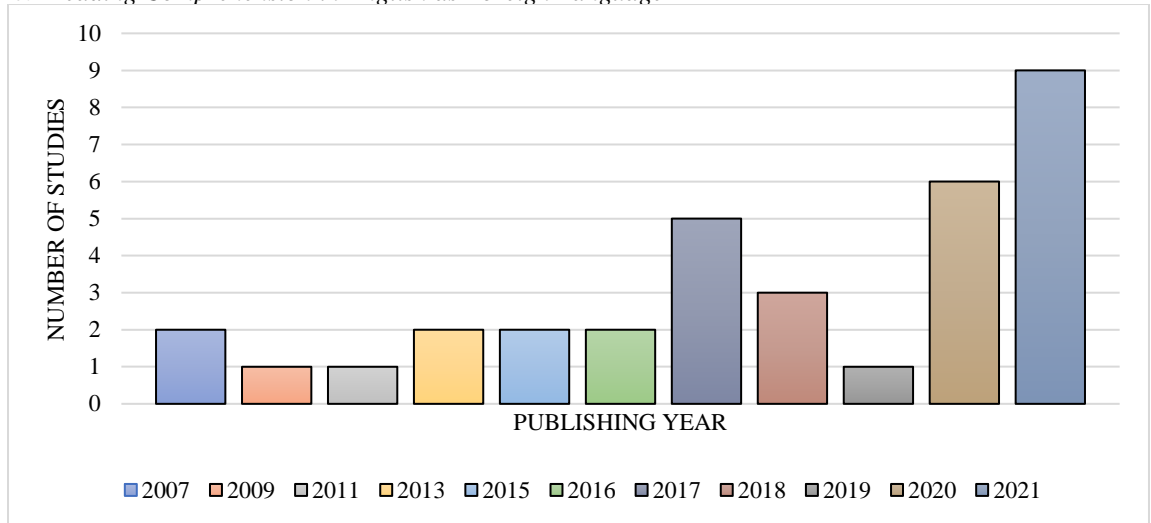


Figure 3: Dissemination of Action-Research Documentation Related To Reading Comprehension in English By Year Of Publication.

Source: Own Work.

As seen in Figure 3, the year 2021 stands out compared to the preceding years in respect to the number of investigations carried out and published in that period, among which are works such as those of Ardila et al. (2021); López and Novoa (2021) and Pinilla et al. (2021). Contrary to the case of the years 2009, 2011 and 2019 where only a single research on the topic of interest could be found (Osenjo, 2009; Mora and Montero, 2011; Rojas, 2019). Finally, it is worth noting that in the years 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, no research was found that met the inclusion criteria of the present bibliographic study, i.e., that they were action-research and had reading comprehension in English as a focus of attention. The peak in 2021 could indicate a growing recent interest in this topic, possibly driven by technological advances or emerging educational needs.

From another angle of analysis, the following table shows the number of investigations according to the country where the respective research was carried out.

Country	No. of Investigations
China	1
Colombia	20
Ecuador	3
Spain	2
Indonesia	3
Jordan	1
Malaysia	1
Mexico	1
Portugal	1
Slovakia	1

Total	34
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Table 1: Number of Investigations According to the Country of Origin

Source: Own Work.

Table 1 shows an inclination towards Colombian for their use of action research in educational processes related to the acquisition of English and the improvement of reading comprehension in this language; among these works, Bedoya et al. (2007); Castellanos and Garzón (2013); Yusti (2017); Molina (2018) and Aya et al. (2021). However, it is important to note that none of these were of doctoral degree. In parallel, this table allows detailing that the topic has been of research interest throughout the world. Consequently, works ranging from the old continent, such as Battigelli (2015); Cabaleiro (2017); Lucas (2020); Teoh Ci Xin (2020); Yanto et al. (2020) and Yong and Abdul (2020); to the new continent, such as Castro et al. (2007); Bedoya et al. (2007); Bejarano (2013); Fernández (2016) and Touriz (2020), are reflected. The Colombian predominance could be linked to an educational context that encourages this type of methodology, although the geographical diversity highlights the global relevance of the topic.

The analysis of the results continues with the following figure, which establishes the amount of research according to the level of education of the study population, in accordance with the CAB (2021) and the Colombian General Education Law, Law 115 of 1994, as a means to establish equivalences between educational stages internationally.

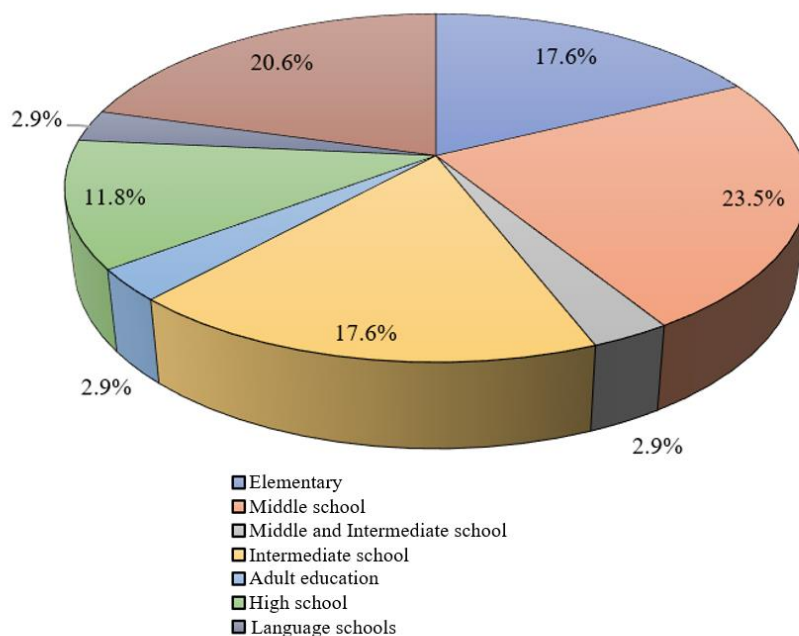


Figure 4: Percentage of Action Research According to the Educational Level of the Population in Which the Proposal Was Developed.

It is worth mentioning that in Figure 4 there is a visible reiteration of educational levels, marked by the fact that they are located both in isolation and as a group. For this reason, in this analysis they are related both globally and specifically. It can be identified by this figure that there is a tendency to study the topic of reading activity in English, from the action-research method, at the middle school level, which includes from the sixth to the ninth grade, according to the Colombian educational system (Law 115 of 1994); among these Osenjo (2009); Fayad (2015) and Gamboa (2017). A similarity is found between the percentage of investigations destined to elementary education, that is, from first to fifth grade of elementary school (Law 115 of 1994); and intermediate school, in other words, grades ten and eleven (Law 115 of 1994); An example of this is Bedoya et al. (2007) and Molina (2018). This distribution suggests that reading comprehension in English is a priority at key school levels where the foundations of language learning are laid.

On the other hand, it is necessary to clarify that there were investigations that could not be classified according to the CAB (2021) since their equality was not found in that document with the one proposed for the Colombian educational system or simply did not specify the educational level of their population, as is the case of Horvathova and Naďová (2021) and Dwiastuty et al. (2018). There were also works that took place in language schools (Ateek, 2021); in adult education (Castellanos and Garzón, 2013) and in high schools (Ramírez, 2017; Battigelli, 2015; Yanto, et al., 2020). The above suggests that the research topic has covered the different educational levels of the subject, in such a way that its study processes transcend school or college and even reach specialized and professional training spaces. This variety indicates that action research can adapt to diverse educational contexts, from initial training to professionalization.

The figure below shows the approach adopted by each action research processes.

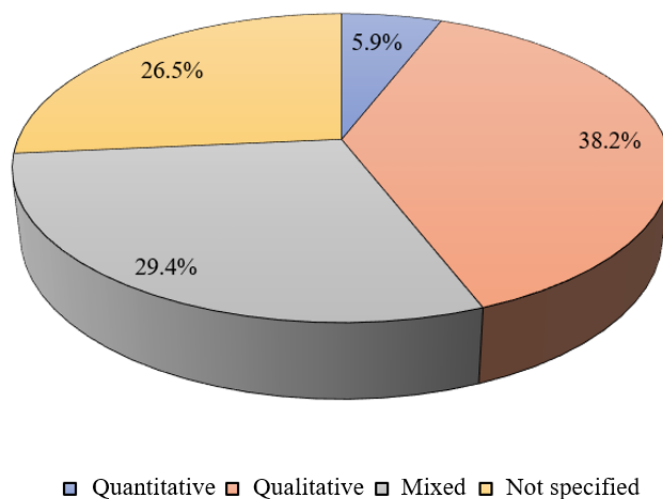


Figure 5: Percentage of Action Research According to the Research Methodology Adopted

Source: Own work

Thus, from the information in Figure 5 it can be seen that the qualitative approach predominates. However, quantitative research can also be identified (Yong and Abdul, 2020; Castro, 2020). Therefore, it is possible to detail a propensity for a mixed approach in the action research processes studied, examples of which are Mora and Montero (2011); Maldonado and Russi (2016); Hellystia (2018); Rojas (2019); Pinilla et al. (2021) and Sánchez and Ramírez (2021). Finally, it is noteworthy that several of the works processed despite having in their content the methodology section, in which the use of the action research method is specified, these do not specify the approach of the same, therefore they are placed under the “Not specified” category (Horvathova and Naďová, 2021; Teoh Ci Xin, 2020; Fernández, 2016; Fayad, 2015; Osenjo, 2009). The predominance of the qualitative approach could be due to the reflexive and contextual nature of action research, although the presence of mixed approaches suggests an attempt to combine quantitative rigor with qualitative depth.

Finally, the analysis of the results culminates with the characterization of the type of strategy for the improvement of the educational reality used by the research studies presented in the following table.

Type of improvement strategy	No. of studies
Constructivist strategies	1
Didactic strategy	1
Learning strategy	2
Metacognitive strategies	1
Cognitive and metacognitive strategies	1
Accelerated learning and reciprocal teaching	1
Sociocultural theory	1
Readutainment as e-learning	1
Multisensory-based reading program based on Barton Reading Spelling System (BRSS)	1
Assisted Repeated Reading Using Graded Readers	1
Skimming and scanning	1
Learning log	1
Extensive reading	1
Reading comprehension strategies at all levels of Bloom’s taxonomy	1
Summarization of Narrative Stories	1
Artistic techniques	1
Closed Caption	1
Interactive reading approach	1
Moodle	1
Strategy-based workshops	1
Metacognition	1
2.0 Tools	1
British Council Learn English Teens	1
Pear Deck gamification	1
Interactive platform	1
ExeLearning	2

Virtual classroom	1
Shakespearean Comedy	1
Methodologiccal proposal	1
CLIL methodology	2
Self-assessment cycle strategy	1
Total	34

Table 2: Relation Between the Amount of Research and the Type of Improvement Strategy Used in the Study Process.

Source: Own Work

Table 2 shows the name of each proposal with its respective number. In general, it is identified that there is a great variety of methodological initiatives regarding the reinforcement of reading comprehension in English. For such reason, there were only three types of proposals in which some researches coincided, as is the case of learning strategy (Castro et al., 2007; Castellanos and Garzón, 2013), ExeLearning (Ramos and Rivera, 2021; López and Novoa, 2021) and CLIL methodology (Yusti, 2017; Lucas, 2020). While, the rest of them, are characterized by a single work that encompasses them, as is the case of the use of didactic strategy (Fayad, 2015), Skimming and scanning Touriz (2020); artistic techniques (Bedoya et al., 2007) and metacognition (Rojas, 2019); among others. This diversity reflects the creativity and flexibility of teachers in approaching reading comprehension through action research.

However, despite the multiplicity of strategies and methodologies proposed, there is a point of convergence in some of them, which is the use of information and communication technologies [ICT]. The above, when considering that of the 34 researches read, 14 of them use these resources as a means and methodological proposal to improve the problems encountered, among them those proposed by Osenjo (2009); Ramírez (2017); Ardila et al. (2021); Aya et al. (2021); Ramos and Rivera (2021). In summary, it is possible to abstract from the information found so far the great wealth existing in the field of language didactics in relation to reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, studied from the reality of action research and the benefits it allows. The prominent use of ICT underlines the influence of technology in modern education, offering educators practical tools to innovate in their classrooms based on these findings.

Discussion

In the first place, from the aforementioned results, it is observed that the implementation of action research in the classroom is reflected in the large volume of studies to which access was obtained. Which means that in harmony with what was argued by Saltos et al. (2018) who recognize that this method has managed to open substantial performance field in the area of education. This volume of studies suggests that action research responds to a real need of educators to address practical problems in their specific contexts. In particular by identifying that this investigative path has been translated into a way for the evolution of formative activity (Díaz, 2017). In other words, action research has made it possible to reflect, rethink and modify educational practices, becoming a great source of pedagogical knowledge and didactic knowledge, as well as a way to generate critical-constructive positions in relation to the reality of the school, college, university or educational space. This implies that it is not only a research method, but also a transforming tool that empowers teachers to question and improve their teaching environments.

Likewise, Elliot (2005) points out that the use of action research in the area of teaching and learning has offered diverse possibilities of transition in the design and creation of pedagogical strategies. That is to say, it has given way to the creation of spaces in which processes of combat against repetitive aspects of education are established. In addition to being a way to react to the difficulties that occur in the educational environment (Martínez, 2014). For example, it allows teachers to identify obsolete practices and replace them with innovative approaches adapted to the current needs of students. In other words, action research arises as a consequence of the need to improve, perfect or act upon training practices in the face of the different challenges that can be experienced in the educational system, which makes it a device for innovation and strengthening of the system and of each of the aspects, people and levels that comprise it.

Also, according to the information processing developed, the contextual and flexible character of action research can be abstracted. This, when thinking about the fact that 34 research works were located, characterized by being carried out in different places, levels, approaches and types of population. This diversity shows that action research is not limited to a single rigid model, but is molded according to the cultural, social and educational particularities of each region. Thus, it is possible to reaffirm the theorizing of Rodriguez (2005) who exposes the quality of adaptability to different spaces, media and forms of research that action research possesses. As well as that detailed by Aya et al. (2021) who mention that this method favors the contextualization of the research act. In summary, the authors recognize that this type of research is born from and for the environment where the research act is developed, in addition to enabling the use of various forms, methods and elements for its development.

On the other hand, from the large amount of information collected and the diversity of strategies proposed by the research found, it can be reiterated that through the use of action research a curricular revolution can be achieved. This means that not only can individual practices be adjusted, but entire curricula can be transformed to reflect more effective and contemporary approaches. Consequently, it harmonizes with what is stated by Gamboa (2017) who specifies that this investigative method promotes modifications in the educational system. That is, it is assumed that the use of action research generates the construction of new ways of acting in the educational landscape. Similarly, we agree with Doria and Castro (2012), who express that this form of research is a mechanism for the study and construction of tactics and plans for the reinforcement of educational action. It is recognized that through reflection and analysis of reality and theory, action research becomes an implement for the design, testing and evaluation of didactic strategies according to educational needs. For example, educators who teach English as a foreign language can experiment with new techniques and evaluate their direct impact in the classroom, generating a continuous cycle of improvement.

Similarly, it can be pointed out that action research is a significant source of professional training, taking into account that according to the processing of information given in the development of this documentary analysis, one of the most striking results lies in the use of this method in studies ranging from undergraduate to doctoral theses. This broad application suggests that action research not only benefits students, but also enriches the research and pedagogical competencies of future education professionals. Hence, Saltos et al. (2018) propose that its use provides the professional with both theoretical and practical knowledge for the performance of their work. In different terms, it is detailed that the use of action research by teachers allows them to broaden their range of knowledge related to teaching and learning processes. The aforementioned takes on greater importance in the teaching of English if we consider that according to Maldonado and Russi (2016) the implementation of action research in the area of

languages allows the promotion of language skills. Reason for which, the amount of research developed with the purpose of enhancing reading comprehension in English to which access was gained is supported. In this sense, professional training is directly linked to the improvement of specific skills, such as reading in English, which are essential in a globalized world.

Based on the study of the documentation found in the various databases, it is possible to locate the need to promote the use of English at a global level. The above mentioned, because it is recognized that the research processes analyzed were not only focused on a continent or a country, but evidence of this concern could be found at an intercontinental level. Thus, it reinforces Guerrero and Valderrama (2021) who identify that the teaching of English in formative contexts is essential. This global need is explained by the role of English as a *lingua franca* in international communication, which drives its study in various regions. For this reason, the need arises for the study, design and evaluation of practices and means to promote the acquisition of this language. The above argued under the premise that the management of English is one of the conditions for entry and survival in various fields of human action (Villalobos, 2011; Herrera, 2016; Castro and Jessup, 2022). That is to say, the issue of teaching and learning English is located as one of the priority aspects in educational and research issues in this area due to its importance for the subject and his or her training.

In particular, from the number and variety of researches found, it is possible to recognize the use of action research for the promotion of the reading act in English. It harmonizes with Ramírez (2017) who sustains that this research method is a significant source of knowledge for the strengthening of reading. Likewise, the importance given to the encouragement of reading comprehension in English is detected, since it is assumed that the reading act in this language opens diverse paths of knowledge and encounter with the data of the current era for the subject (Seclén, 2015; Ramos and Rivera, 2021), who propose reading in English as a tool of great relevance in the processes of encounter with the data of the current era. In summary, the role of reading activity in English in the search, assimilation and production of knowledge is highlighted. For this reason, we seek to promote its development from the perspective of action research. This emphasis on reading reflects its value as a key skill for accessing global information and participating in a knowledge society.

Finally, despite identifying a great variety of strategies proposed for the promotion of reading comprehension, it was possible to detail, according to the type of strategies used for this purpose, that there is a propensity to use ICTs in educational action. This trend is not accidental, since ICTs offer interactive and accessible tools that can personalize learning and increase students' motivation. Consequently, it is brought to mention what was exposed by Dwiastuty et al. (2018) who admit that ICTs every day take an increasing role in people's lives. For this reason, Espinoza (2021) mentions that these tools have permeated the pedagogical and didactic action in such a way that they have transformed it. In other words, the use of information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process is supported, especially when it comes to reading comprehension in English. In this context, ICTs not only facilitate the implementation of strategies, but also broaden the scope of education by connecting students to global digital resources, which reinforces the practical usefulness of the findings of this study for modern educators.

Conclusions

Action research is thought of as a source of knowledge and knowledge for social transition. For this reason, since its beginnings it has been used in various fields of knowledge as a means to

establish relationships between theory and practice, which have led to proposals for improvement that have allowed professional evolution. This link between theory and practice not only enriches knowledge, but also promotes concrete changes in the professions by offering solutions based on direct experience. It is also evident that this research method facilitates contextualized and flexible knowledge. This is due to the fact that among its characteristics is the fact that it arises from the reflection and questioning of the lived reality for the sake of its improvement, it starts from the context and ends in it. This circularity ensures that the solutions are relevant and applicable to the environment where the problems originate. As a consequence, it becomes one of the most significant devices for various researchers. Its value lies in its ability to transform reality from within, rather than imposing external models.

In fact, action research has had a great acceptance, as well as a wide area of action, in the field of education to the extent that its use has been contemplated as a means for the modification of the educational fact and everything related to it. The aforementioned, when thinking that it allows questioning, characterizing, meditating, criticizing, analyzing, rethinking and inquiring about what happens during teaching and learning. This reflective process enables educators to identify specific failures and design interventions adjusted to their classrooms. Similarly, this method favors the construction of ways and means to promote the educational act and enhance the transformation of the teacher's formative work.

For this reason, there is an increasing number of studies in the educational area that point to an improvement proposal under the action-research method. In particular, this type of research stands out in the area of improving reading comprehension in English. The above, taking into consideration that according to the information found, on the one hand, the importance that the use of this language has reached in globalized contexts, in which, its use has been considered as a requirement to have the advantages of each context of human action. The relevance of English derives from its role as a key tool for international communication and access to educational and professional opportunities. Specifically, when reference is made to reading in English, it is seen as a gateway to multidisciplinary and international knowledge. Reading comprehension, in particular, becomes an essential skill for navigating the vast amount of information available in an interconnected world.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded that action research has been universally used in educational institutions ranging from undergraduate to masters and doctoral levels, in order to remedy the shortcomings presented by various study populations through the design of methodological strategies. Therefore, its responsiveness and adaptability to different contexts and levels of education is demonstrated. Consequently, it is detailed that action-research has been of great benefit to the area of language teaching to the extent that it has allowed the study and expansion of knowledge regarding the didactic processes of English and the skills related to the use of this language, including reading.

To conclude with this work, it is important to mention that the flexible characteristic of action research in the area of education has provided teachers with a variety of tools, knowledge, materials and instruments for the advancement of their training as educators and their pedagogical practice. Likewise, this method has allowed the inclusion of diverse methodologies to the educational system, among them the use of ICT; an aspect of great transcendence in the postmodern context, since globalization has generated that its use and exploitation is a goal in the formative processes of the citizen. Therefore, the need to continue studying from a look at the methods and forms of action-research is sustained, especially with respect to the topic of

strengthening reading comprehension in English, since it allows both to expand the educational didactic thought, as well as to transcend traditional teaching and learning methods. Such continuity in study ensures that education keeps evolving with the changing needs of students and the world today, offering a dynamic and relevant approach for the future.

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