

Pedagogical practice, metacognition, and reading comprehension in a foreign language: a systematic review from a deductive approach

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Abstract

The education process has a complex nature that can be approached from a dual theoretical-practical perspective. For this reason, a teacher needs to configure her or his praxis and create their own theoretical constructs. This review article presents the results of an investigation on the new concepts that exist around pedagogical practice, metacognition and reading understanding in a foreign language. In order to respond to the research problem, we have made use of a systematic analysis of studies conducted in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, publicized in the databases *Google Scholar*, *Scielo*, *Redalyc*, *Eric*, *Dialnet*, and *Scopus*, between 1988 and 2018. These studies involve reflections on the previously mentioned categories and, through them, an analysis and an overview were conducted to define an emerging category call metacognitive pedagogical practice. The bibliographic review with a qualitative approach presented in this paper was done taking into account primary and secondary sources (in Spanish, Portuguese, and English) by utilizing the following descriptors: practice, pedagogical practice, metacognition, reading comprehension and reading comprehension in a foreign language. The results of the systematic analysis allow to conclude that it is necessary to develop a metacognitive pedagogical practice, where such practice is understood as a scenario which facilitates to re-link the several factors taking part in the teaching-learning process, such as: reflection, cooperative work, open dialogue, and the teacher's research within her/his own practice.

Keywords

Pedagogical practice – Metacognition – Reading comprehension – Foreign language.

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Introduction

Education is a complex process that has been understood as a science and a praxis. In both cases, processes such as reflection, critical analysis, creativity, openness to dialogue and research guide the permanent changes that are generated on the educational level. Teaching and learning foreign languages is one of the fields where the greatest transformations have taken place over the last years. The United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (UNESCO), involved in promoting linguistic diversity and the plurality, considers that fostering communication, the expression and the capacity to listen, dialogue, write, and read in any language should be the major objectives to be envisaged in a world with plural languages (UNESCO, 2003).

To meet what has been exposed, over the last years some type of investigative awareness has grown regarding the importance of being able to communicate in at least one foreign language or in a second language, if we hold the purpose of – as a society – to achieve significant advancements in terms of intercultural diversity and dialogue, international cooperation as well as conservation of culture and heritage.

Until the early 20th century, teaching languages other than the mother tongue was strongly influenced by different theories, approaches, methods, and strategies that focused on memorized learning, where priority was given to the traditional methods based on teaching grammar and translation (RICHARDS; RODGERS, 2001). However, in the mid-20th century, and as a response to the previous methods, investigation processes began to develop which gave rise to new theories, approaches, methods, and strategies now oriented towards teaching and learning languages, and despite their diversity, they have been scarcely welcome; consequently, the results obtained were too far from what was expected. Several researches, among which highlights include the ones conducted by Fernández and Kanashiro (2006), Macias and other authors (2009), Coraspe and Reyna (2016), and Caro (2018), corroborate this statement since those studies reveal there are discrepancies between the official guidelines issued by governmental and other bodies involving what should be promoted when teaching a foreign language and the knowledge students are supposed to master.

Over the last decade, the rise of innovating research bets related to teaching and learning foreign languages, especially in regard of reading comprehension, has declined. In this respect, it is important to point out that, due to the complex and non-static nature of education, the investigative processes that make its change possible cannot stand back; on the contrary, they must be permanent and emerge, in whatever is possible, from the teacher's doing.

A clear example of what was said above concerns the student's metacognition. There is a substantial number of studies dedicated to the development of metacognition in the students; however, there is only a few research backgrounds associated with the importance it has in developing a pedagogical practice towards foreign languages based on metacognition.

The bibliographical review has found several kinds that allow systematic research, either deductive or inductive, with the purpose of studying, analyzing and think over the scientific knowledge accumulated in writing in a specific area. According to Beltrán (2005), systematic reviews require a study that is “[...] integrative, observational, retrospective, secondary, in which there is combination of studies examining the same question” (p. 62).

In this perspective, this investigation is relevant as it presents a structured overview of the information collected in relation to pedagogical practice, metacognition, and reading comprehension in foreign languages, a trait that makes it superior to a narrative review since thorough standards were applied in handling the information gathered for the analysis.

Authors such as Londoño, Maldonado, and Calderón (2014) establish that the state-of-the-art is one of the categories which allows to compile the accumulated written knowledge within a given area; in the particular case of this investigation, knowledge associated with the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is important to emphasize that this study goes beyond the descriptive and reflexive; this has to do with what exposed by Vargas and Calvo (1987), who said that in addition to systematizing and presenting results and conclusions, research processes must have the purpose of identifying investigation gaps or edges scarcely explored in relation to pedagogical practice in relation to foreign languages.

Reconceptualizing categories traditionally defined by researchers and the rise of emerging categories associated with education are key aspects clave in the constant process of transforming education. This review article presents the research results regarding the new conceptions that one can find around the pedagogical practice, metacognition, and reading comprehension in a foreign language. In order to address the research problem, a systematic analysis was done involving studies conducted in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, publicized in the databases *Google Scholar*, *Scielo*, *Redalyc*, *Eric*, *Dialnet*, and *Scopus*, between 1988 and 2018. These studies develop reflections on the previously mentioned categories and, through them, an analysis and an overview were undertaken, which eventually defined an emerging category called metacognitive pedagogical practice. The bibliographic resources found were interpreted and analyzed by means of MaxQDA, a software intended for qualitative analysis which allowed the researchers to focus on certain conceptual nodes with the purpose of taking their own standpoints in relation to the analytical categories previously mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

Method

In conducting this systematic review several criteria were used in order to select a variety of investigative works associated with the key analytical categories; some of those criteria are the following: a) in relation to the type of resource, the search included investigations and articles from different sources, which addressed from a critical and reflexive theoretical perspective, the following categories: pedagogy, pedagogical practice, metacognition, reading comprehension and foreign language; b) primary and secondary sources were used from authors and researchers who addressed the key categories mentioned in the previous item; c) for the bibliographic tracking, only qualitative studies were taken into consideration; d) the research was conducted in a deductive manner, starting with the studies in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and finally Colombia; e) the search was performed through different electronic databases such as *Google Scholar*, *Scielo*, *Redalyc*, *Eric*, *Dialnet* and *Scopus*; f) to search within the different databases the results taken into account were those in Spanish, Portuguese, and English and the following descriptors were considered: *practice*, *pedagogy*, *pedagogical practice*, *metacognition*,

Every document was analyzed by assigning codes and memos were created with the most important information from the different articles analyzed. Finally, by utilizing the menu *informes* (reports) in MaxQDA, the option selected was “exportar todos los documentos” (export all documents) which thus generated a complete report containing all the analysis conducted within an Excel document. The outcome of this analysis allowed to organize the information in a grid whose design we devised ourselves which is presented as follows in the results.

Results

The first search found a total of 42 electronic reference resources among the research works and article (31 out of them in Spanish and 11 in English); out of them, 19 were complete researches in doctoral theses and master’s works and 23 were articles resulting from investigative papers which had a direct relationship with the analytical categories. The electronic resources early selected are distributed as follows: a) in *Google Scholar* 14, in the *Scielo* database 8, in *Redalyc* 7, in *Eric* 2, in *Dialnet* 9, and in *Scopus* 2; then eventually a total of 42 reference resources were obtained, out of which 26 were selected for the analysis stage (see table 1 and table 2). Out of the selected resources, 16 were dismissed in the early stage and, for that, the following considerations were taken into account: a) nine articles were repeated in other databases; and b) seven research papers lacked epistemological, theoretical, and methodological accuracy in their foundations resembling more like personal constructions, with no kind of scientific support.

First, the 26 articles selected were sorted out in the reference manager *Mendeley* adsn then exported in a file with an exchange format *.Ris. Such file was afterwards imported to the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA with the purpose of conducting a detailed, systematic and thorough analysis of the information contained in the various reference resources selected. The outcome of the analysis made it easy to build a grid of our own design, which includes the following elements: 1) title; 2) author(s); 3) a summary of the most important aspects of the research or article; 4) conceptual set it belongs to; 5) integrating concepts, and 6) relational categories, as shown in table 1.

Table 1 – Electronic resources related to the pedagogical practice in foreign languages

| Title | Authors | Important aspects of the book or article | Conceptual Sets | Integrating concepts | Relational categories |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Análisis de las Prácticas Pedagógicas de los Docentes de Inglés del Programa Interlingua de la Universidad Surcolombiana* | Macias et alii (2009) | Characterization of pedagogical practices utilized by professors of English as foreign language in Colombia. It confirms the prevalence of traditional pedagogical practices in the teaching of foreign languages. | Pedagogical practice Foreign language | Emphasis on pedagogical practices focusing on grammar and text translation. | Pedagogical Practice Traditional teaching Foreign languages |

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|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Las prácticas pedagógicas en la formación de lectores eficientes en lengua inglesa** | Coraspe and Reyna (2016) | It reveals the development of pedagogical practices characterized by its focus on grammar, text translation, task assignments, short explanations of a topic, among other activities. | Pedagogical practice Foreign language | Emphasis on pedagogical practices focusing on grammar and text translation. | Pedagogical Practice Traditional teaching |
| Concepciones y prácticas pedagógicas de los docentes de inglés sobre la competencia intercultural en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras*** | Caro (2018) | Conceptions as assumed theories influence they way teachers of foreign languages organize, plan, and conduct their pedagogical practices. | Pedagogical practice | Theoretical conceptions of teachers and their influence on their su pedagogical practice | Theoretical conceptions assumed by teachers |

Source: prepared by the authors.

* Translation of the title: Analysis of Pedagogical Practices of English Teachers in Interlingual Program of the South Colombian University.

** Pedagogical practices in the training of efficient readers in English.

*** Pedagogical practices and conceptions of English teachers about intercultural competence in teaching foreign languages.

The previous analysis demonstrates that even though since the mid-20th century great efforts have been made on the investigative level to transform pedagogical practices aimed at developing communicative skills in foreign languages by introducing new teaching theories, approaches and methods (RICHARDS; RODGERS, 2001), several studies such as those conducted by Macias and other authors (2009), Coraspe and Reyna (2016), and Caro (2018), they demonstrate that the tendency toward the development of traditional pedagogical practices focusing on memorization of grammar rules, text translation and task assignments, continues to be very strong. Reflecting about this reality makes it appropriate to constantly de-construct, construct, and re-construct pedagogical practices since the educational processes are complex and, consequently, they have a dynamic nature and are full of uncertainties among which new emergences and needs are permanently generated.

Table 2, shown as follows, presents some of studies whose purpose was to lead pedagogical practices towards developing communicative skills in foreign languages, in a more reflexive and conscious process.

Table 2 – Investigations related to pedagogical practice and reading comprehension in foreign languages

| Title | Authors | Important aspects of the book or article | Conceptual Sets | Integrating concepts | Relational categories |
|--|--------------|--|----------------------|--|---|
| A Prática pedagógica do "bom professor" Influências na sua Educação* | Cunha (1988) | According to the study, a good teacher is the key player in the teaching process which has to do with the philosophical conception of the desired teaching in a politically protected society. | Pedagogical practice | Conceptions regarding the role and characteristics a good teacher should have. | Characteristics of a good teacher Teacher's role Student's role |

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|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Estrategias de Comprensión Lectora en Inglés y su Transversalidad en el Currículum** | Lanzi, Grodek and D'Andrea. (2006). | Teachers must include reading in a permanent reflection space and they should see that this is not a neutral activity, but rather a skill that is constantly changing. | Pedagogical practice Reading comprehension | Teacher as an active player who takes a leading role in the educational processes | Reflection Teacher's role Reading comprehension in foreign languages |
| Scholarship epistemology: an exploratory study of teacher metacognition within the context of successful learning communities. | Prytula (2008) | Need to look at pedagogical formation based on processes and actions that are consistent with theories, procedures, and didactics that are meet the social needs, realities, and demands that come up with an approach to complexity. | Pedagogical practice | Intentionality to pedagogically educate teachers. | Pedagogy Pedagogical training Social needs, realities and demands |
| Enseñanza de la comprensión lectora del inglés en la educación universitaria: Una visión crítica.*** | Rivas and Cuellar (2013) | Mistakes have been made that are conceptual and methodological by those who participate in the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English. | Reading comprehension Foreign language Pedagogical practice | Mistakes in the teaching-learning process | Teaching-learning process. Methodological approach. Teaching learning |
| Práctica pedagógica investigativa en las Escuelas Normales Superiores: contexto y pertinencia de la calidad educativa.**** | Saker (2014) | Certain epistemological and methodological premises have been intended to be taken as references with the purpose of identifying the inputs teachers being trained deliver according to the instruction they have received in the theoretical-practical framework associated with the pedagogical practices | Pedagogical practice | Inputs from the teacher being trained | Quality as a formative and objective process Epistemological and methodological premises of teachers |
| A relação entre compreensão leitora, conhecimento e integração léxico-semântica***** | Sousa (2015) | Semantic and lexical deficit stems from a significantly inferior integration of vocabulary knowledge by those students who showed little comprehension when they were compared to those with higher level of reading comprehension. | Reading comprehension Foreign language | Causes of low level of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Reading comprehension in a foreign language Semantic and lexical deficit Reading comprehension level |
| Formação de professores e prática pedagógica: uma análise sobre a natureza dos saberes docentes ^f | Macenhan, Tozetto, and Brandt (2016) | Results reveal that teaching knowledge originate both from teacher training courses as well as from their personal and professional experiences. | Pedagogical practice | Genesis of a teacher's knowledge | Teaching training processes |
| Pedagogical Practices in Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Case Study of Three EFL Teachers in a Secondary School in Ethiopia | Nurie (2017) | There are research gaps concerning the study of categories of psychological and linguistic analyses associated with reading comprehension processes | Pedagogical practice Reading comprehension Foreign language | Purpose of investigations intended to study pedagogical practices in foreign languages | Practice Pedagogy Critical analysis Reflection Investigation |

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|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Componente Pragmático y Prácticas Pedagógicas## | Rangel, Ramos and Reyes (2017) | Failures have been identified regarding the lack of methodological comprehension by teachers who orientate the formative processes in students of foreign languages (English-French) | Pedagogical practice Foreign languages | Conceptual and methodological errors found in the teaching-learning process of reading in a foreign language | Methodological comprehension Teacher training processes |
|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|

* *The pedagogical practice of a “good teacher” influences on their Education.*

** *Strategies of Reading Comprehension in English and their Transversality in the Curriculum*

*** *Teaching reading comprehension in English in higher education: A critical view.*

**** *Investigative pedagogical practice in Higher Normal Schools: context and appropriateness of educational quality.*

***** *Relationship between reading comprehension, knowledge, and lexical-semantic integration*

Teacher education and pedagogical practice: an analysis of the nature of teaching knowledge

Pragmatic Component and Pedagogical Practices

Source: prepared by the authors.

According to the information presented in table 2, the studies conducted by Cunha (1988), Lanzi, Grodek, and D’Andrea (2006), Prytula (2008), Rivas and Cuellar (2013), Saker (2014), Sousa (2015), Macenhan, Tozetto, and Brandt (2016), Rangel, Ramos, and Reyes (2017), and Nurie (2017), share the purpose of identifying the potentials, successes, limitations, gaps, and opportunities of improvement that teachers may have in order to transform and improve pedagogical practices related to the teaching of foreign languages, especially in connection with the development of reading comprehension. In this case, it is not sufficient to carry out actions limited to characterizing the issue; it is necessary to go beyond by taking tangible actions which can be experienced in practice, for the purpose of bringing forth genuine changes. For this reason, a teacher is requested not only to reflect and research but also to dare experience new challenges from a critical perspective aimed at achieving an improvement in all levels of reading comprehension in foreign languages among students from different learning stages.

Another category that is worth analyzing in this systematic review is metacognition. The most important results associated with this category are shown in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3 – Studies associated with metacognition

| Title | Authors | Important aspects of the book or article | Conceptual Sets | Integrating concepts | Relational categories |
|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| The Relation among Metacognitive Awareness, Self-Efficacy Towards Teaching Profession and Problem Solving Skills of Teacher Candidates. | Bars and Oral (2017) | Metacognition has been acknowledged as important in pedagogical practice as a critical/essential background to develop metacognition in the student | Complexity Metacognition | Relevance of and inputs by metacognition for pedagogical practice | Metacognitive consciousness Metacognition and pedagogical practice |
| La Práctica Pedagógica Investigativa en las Escuelas Normales Superiores del Norte del Departamento de Nariño.* | Muñoz (2018) | It is important for the teacher to develop a metacognitive consciousness as a predicting element of self-effectiveness in their pedagogical practice. | Metacognition | Relevance of and inputs by metacognition for pedagogical practice | Metacognition and pedagogical practice Metacognitive consciousness |

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|--|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| O uso da Metacognição na atividade docente: uma trilha fértil na formação de professores para o ensino a diversidade** | Bavaresco (2010) | It is possible to improve teachers' performance by creating spaces and conditions to realize a great deal of possibilities in planning and monitoring the students' activities. | Metacognition Pedagogical practice | Relevance of and inputs by metacognition for pedagogical practice Conceptions about the role and characteristics a good teacher should have. | The teacher's role Pedagogical practice and metacognition Teacher's performance |
|--|------------------|---|---|---|---|

* *Investigative Pedagogical Practice in Higher Normal School in the North of the Province of Nariño.*

** *The use of Metacognition in teaching: a fertile path in teacher education towards teaching diversity.*

Source: prepared by the authors.

Considering the results displayed in the table above, it is remarkable that the research trends almost always point to developing the students' metacognition, therefore, it is urgent to accurately define which route shall be followed in order to achieve a significant development of metacognition among the various participants in the educational process. The first step to be taken to foster metacognition in the students is to have metacognitive teachers. If the teacher does not transform their pedagogical practice based on their own thinking, on their strengths, and improvement opportunities, they will hardly be able to lead a process intended to teach students how to learn in a significant manner and, as a result, it will not be possible to enhance metacognition in the students. In this regard, Gardner (2009) contends that, along the educational process, a teacher must be a change agent drawing from the self-reflexive process, from the learning and changes they achieve in their pedagogical practice.

The teacher plays an important role in developing knowledge and metacognitive control; for this reason, the pedagogical practice must contribute to develop metacognition in the students in order to enhance what Lin (2001) has called adaptive metacognition, which can be understood as an individual's own capacity of adaptation that makes metacognition instruction more appropriate with the aim of responding to the particularities of the formative environment.

When studying the processes of reading comprehension in a foreign language, it is worthwhile to also analyze the researches that have been conducted in relation to didactics. Table 4 presents a compilation of some studies associated with didactics and reading comprehension in a foreign language on a global level.

Table 4 – Studies associated with didactics

| Title | Authors | Important aspects of the book or article | Conceptual Sets | Integrating concepts | Relational categories |
|---|---------------|--|-----------------|---|---|
| Hacia el desarrollo de una práctica pedagógica reflexiva mediante la actualización de los docentes de inglés de la tercera etapa de educación básica: evaluación de una experiencia.* | Chacón (2003) | The theoretical foundation underpinning the pedagogical practice and teacher training has focused on the use of didactic materials which allows to develop an effective process of teaching-learning the reading in English. | Didactics | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Teacher training Pedagogical practice Didactic materials Teaching-Learning Process |

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|--|-------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| A blended-learning approach to strategy training for improving second-language reading comprehension in South Africa. | Klapwijk (2008) | By implementing a blended learning or a combined approach to teach students how to use different reading strategies, it is possible to improve the levels of comprehension in a foreign language. | Didactics Reading comprehension Foreign language | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Combined learning Reading comprehension in a foreign language Reading strategies. |
| Ferramenta de autoria multimídia para ensino de língua estrangeira em ambiente multiagente** | Rossetti (2009) | Introducing a multimedia tool allows an access for learning foreign languages in an effective way. | Didactics Foreign language | Didactical solutions in the learning of a foreign language | Multimedia tool |
| Reading Strategy Use, Self-Efficacy and EFL Reading Comprehension. | Shang (2010) | A research was conducted about the use of reading strategies in cognitive, metacognitive and compensation types among Taiwan students. It was found that reading strategies mostly used by the students are the metacognitive ones. | Didactics Reading comprehension Foreign language Metacognition | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Didactical solutions Metacognitive strategies Reading strategies |
| The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skills with students of I-II intensive courses. | Llumiuinga (2012) | The use of graphic organizers has a positive effect on improving the reading comprehension in a foreign language. | Didactics Reading comprehension Foreign language | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Didactical solutions Comprehension levels Graphic Organizers |
| Corrección de errores en comprensión lectora en inglés. Una instrucción teóricamente fundamentada basada en estrategias macro-estructurales*** | Gómez, Devís y Sanjosé (2013) | By means of an instruction theoretically founded on macro-structural strategies, students participating in the study managed to improve their reading comprehension level in English. | Didactics Reading comprehension | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Didactic solutions Reading comprehension in a foreign language Macro-structural strategies |
| Desarrollo de la Comprensión Lectora de Textos Multimediales en una Lengua Extranjera mediante la Enseñanza de Estrategias de lectura**** | Jiménez (2013) | It demonstrated that online translator and dictionary were the help most utilized by participants in the study. On the other hand, it demonstrated that over half participants preferred to mix the use of multimedia texts with the se of printed texts, highlighting the good aspects of both. | Reading comprehension Foreign language Didactics | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language Types of resources and materials commonly utilized | Didactic solutions Reading comprehension in a foreign language Multimedia texts Teaching and learning resources |
| Enseñanza de la lectura en inglés desde una perspectiva curricular basada en la integralidad.# | Ballester y Batista (2014) | According to the study, only when the student interacts permanently with what he/she reads by means of other media and materials, he or she begins to find relationships between the contents they read and the contents of other school subjects. | Curriculum Foreign language | Curricular adjustments required to improve the levels of reading comprehension in foreign languages | Curricular integrity Teaching and learning resources |

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|--|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Impacto de la multimodalidad en la comprensión lectora de textos narrativos en inglés como lengua extranjera (L2) en estudiantes universitarios.## | Vera (2015) | Students achieve higher levels of reading comprehension when the format of readings they work with is multimodal. | Reading comprehension Foreign language | Types of resources and materials commonly utilized to enhance reading comprehension in a foreign language | Didactic solutions Reading comprehension in a foreign language Multimodal work |
| Development of reading comprehension with graphic organizers for students with dyslexia. | López and Campoverde (2018) | With a manual of stories constructed through graphic organizers it was possible to increment the receptive skills in foreign language in the learning process especially for students with special needs. | Didactics Reading comprehension Foreign language | Didactical solutions to problems of reading comprehension in a foreign language | Didactical solutions Teaching and learning resources Special educational needs |

* *Towards developing a reflexive pedagogical practice by updating English teachers in the third-stage of basic education: evaluation of an experience.*

** *Multimedia authorship tools to teach a foreign language in a multi-agent environment.*

*** *Error correction in reading comprehension in English. A theoretically founded instruction based on macro-structural strategies.*

**** *Developing Reading Comprehension in Multimedia Texts in a Foreign Language by Teaching Reading Strategies.*

Teaching reading in English from a curricular perspective based on integrality.

The impact of multimodal work in reading comprehension of narrative texts in English as a foreign language (L2) in university students.

Source: prepared by the authors.

The results presented in the table above demonstrate that there is a global tendency towards developing qualitative researches focusing on improving the development of reading skills in a foreign language using a clearly didactical approach, setting aside the study of other aspects related to the learning process, such as the curriculum or the pedagogical practice. The latter, for example, is a category that cannot remain unknown when investigating aspects associated with formation of the human being, such as when teaching reading comprehension in foreign languages. As highlighted by Manga (2008), there are several factors that complexify the learning process of a language; consequently, developing skills in a language that is not the mother tongue does not depend exclusively on implementing certain didactical strategies, but it does depend on the inter-relation and the complementarity of various elements with the same or greater importance in the educational process.

The analysis presented as follows in table 5 shows that learning a foreign language and developing reading comprehension may and should be researched and addressed from angles other than didactics.

Table 5 – Gender differences in the process of reading comprehension in foreign languages

| Title | Authors | Important aspects of the book or article | Conceptual Sets | Integrating concepts | Relational categories |
|---|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| Gender differences in reading comprehension achievement in English as a foreign language in Compulsory Secondary Education. | Corpas (2013) | Women utilize more global strategies to resolve reading-related problems when compared to men. Additionally women get better achievements in specific objectives. | Reading comprehension Foreign language | Relationship between gender differences and reading comprehension in a foreign language | Reading comprehension in a foreign language Gender differences |

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|---|---------------|--|---|---|---|
| The effects of reading strategies instruction on reading comprehension of students of legal English | Lukica (2017) | Women obtain better global results in terms of reading comprehension when compared to men. Additionally, women show higher levels of motivation towards reading. | Foreign language Reading comprehension | Relationship between gender differences and reading comprehension in a foreign language | Gender differences Learning Reading comprehension in a foreign language |
|---|---------------|--|---|---|---|

Source: prepared by the authors

The results presented in table 5 allow to demonstrate that the process of reading comprehension can be studied and understood from a perspective of multidimensional angles (including pedagogical practice, gender differences, curriculum) and not just from the viewpoint of didactics. The studies previously listed suggest, for example, that there are remarkable differences on the gender level in learning a foreign language, specifically in the processes of reading comprehension.

Out of the whole analysis presented in this section, it is also important to emphasize that on the global level there are few studies concerning the pedagogical practice based on metacognition. For this reason, it is appropriate to put forward research processes whose objective is to enhance the development of this type of practices in teachers that are in service and those who are under basic training. The essence of being a teacher involves an ongoing process of formation and transformation of oneself, and the metacognitive pedagogical practice is a possible road to consolidate the development of process of reflection, investigation, and collaborative work.

Closing remarks

The investigative processes associated with the pedagogical practice intended to develop communicative skills in foreign languages demonstrate that there is still a powerful trend towards developing practices framed in traditional teaching focusing on grammar rules, text translation, and task assignments. This reality needs to be re-signified and, for that, the teacher has to become an architect of his/her own practice, capable of changing it based on reflexive processes that allow them to de-construct, construct, and re-construct the pedagogical practice on a permanent basis, streamlining both teaching and learning, placing uncertainty as the central pivot that fosters new emergences, needs, and experiences.

Educational processes are complex by nature and the multiplicity of intervening elements require bets that are essentially multidimensional. In this regard, it is paramount to take researching actions intended to change this trend that exists on a global level; the prevalence of qualitative studies whose aim is to improve the levels of reading comprehension in a foreign language, which focus the field of action exclusively on didactics. This is a good moment for educational researchers, especially teachers, to set sail and explore other angles as important as didactics, among which the pedagogical practice stands out.

Scientific research processes conducted around the pedagogical practice, metacognition and reading comprehension in a foreign language such the one carried out

in this systematic review, contribute to transform and improve the educative processes on both the theoretical and practical level and, also, to formulate emerging and theoretically founded categories as, for instance, *the metacognitive pedagogical practice*. This complex category can be understood as a scenario that eases up the process to reconnecting the different factors intervening in the teaching-learning process such as: constant reflection, cooperative work, openness to dialogue, the teacher's awareness and research within his/her own practice. These actions are the ones required by the current educational system taking into account the characteristics of the present world, its dynamic and complex nature, permeated by new emergences and uncertainties.

Obviously, the categories addressed in this systematic review are multidimensional. However, it has been possible to identify some of the focal points existing in some researches and in the discourse delivered by some authors. The same exercise is expected to be performed by the teachers of foreign languages based on a metacognitive pedagogical practice, that is, through individual or collective reflexive and investigative processes they can generate their own theoretical and practical conceptions.

The complex nature permeating this cyclical spiral, moving about multiple directions, that is called education, will shortly and probably give rise to new conceptions in relation to the pedagogical practice, the metacognition, and the reading comprehension in foreign languages. In fact, the good educational processes demand an ongoing structural re-signification that drives away from the linearity and where dialectics is prioritized as well as the interaction and the multiplicity of connections that is the hallmark of the present world. In this regard, the metacognitive pedagogical practice becomes an emerging category on the investigative level, through which it would be possible to enhance the development of the reading comprehension in foreign languages.

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