Reading comprehension in seventh-grade students through Afro-Colombian literature

Lohorquis Esther Cuello Cuello[1]
Leonardo Enrique Martínez Arredondo[2]
Gustavo Adolfo González Roys[3]

Abstract

Reading comprehension means understanding what is read; involves the ability to extract explicit and implicit information from the text. It is an ability to order ideas and build relationships within what is written. The study was based on this epistemic conception, whose objective was to promote reading comprehension mediated by Mary Grueso's Afro-Colombian literature, as a didactic strategy with seventh-grade students. Methodologically, the study was framed in the post-positivist paradigm, under the pedagogical action research method. A written test and an observation log were used as instruments. The results indicated that, with the strategy, the students understood the texts read, and made inferences, and arguments on a topic, having consistency in the discourse. In the same way, they managed to increase their communication skills and their reading fluency, in addition to expanding their vocabulary through the use of the dictionary, when finding unknown terms.

*Keywords**:* reading comprehension; symbolism; Afro-Colombian literature; cultural identity.

Comprensión lectora en los estudiantes de séptimo grado mediante la literatura afrocolombiana

Resumen

La comprensión lectora es entender lo que se lee, involucra la capacidad para extraer la información explícita e implícita del texto; es una habilidad para ordenar las ideas y constituir relaciones dentro de lo escrito. Sobre esta concepción epistémica se fundamentó este estudio, cuyo objetivo fue fomentar la comprensión lectora mediada por la literatura afrocolombiana de Mary Grueso, como estrategia didáctica para la comprensión lectora de los estudiantes de séptimo grado. Metodológicamente se enmarca en el paradigma pospositivista, bajo el método investigación acción pedagógica. Se utilizó como instrumento una prueba escrita y una bitácora de observación. Los resultados indicaron que, con la estrategia, los estudiantes comprendieron los textos leídos, realizaron inferencias, argumentaciones sobre un tema, teniendo consistencia en el discurso; de igual forma, se logró aumentar las competencias comunicativas y la fluidez lectora en los estudiantes, además, ampliaron su vocabulario a través del uso del diccionario, al encontrar términos desconocidos.

Palabras clave: comprensión lectora; simbolismo; literatura afrocolombiana; identidad cultural.

Compreensão de leitura em alunos da sétima série através da literatura afro-colombiana

Resumo

A compreensão da leitura significa entender o que é lido; envolve a capacidade de extrair informações explícitas e implícitas do texto. É uma capacidade de ordenar ideias e construir relações dentro do que está escrito. O estudo partiu dessa concepção epistêmica, cujo objetivo foi promover a compreensão leitora mediada pela literatura afro-colombiana de Mary Grueso, como estratégia didática com alunos da sétima série. Metodologicamente, o estudo foi enquadrado no paradigma pospositivista, sob o método da pesquisa-ação pedagógica. Uma prova escrita e um diário de observação foram usados como instrumentos. Os resultados indicaram que, com a estratégia, os alunos compreenderam os textos lidos, fizeram inferências e argumentações sobre um tema, tendo coerência no discurso. Da mesma forma, conseguiram aumentar suas habilidades de comunicação e sua fluência de leitura, além de ampliar seu vocabulário por meio do uso do dicionário, ao encontrar termos desconhecidos.

Palavras-chave: compreensão da leitura; simbolismo; literatura afro-colombiana; identidade cultural.

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1. Introduction

Modern times and the fast pace of life of groups and today's society confront children and young people with different problems and challenges, like in no other time. One of them is the technological revolution, which allows access to information without any restrictions, therefore, processing it or passing it through a filter is increasingly complex (Villa, 2018):

> The current transformations are assisted by the medium that submerges them in a sea of symbols that creates a need for them, sometimes consumerist, of disinterest in academic life, and why not, a constant mediocrity about study, school, and in particular against reading, seen with disdain and contempt and not as an inexhaustible source of knowledge and social transformation. (p. 10)

Now, according to Moreno and Herrera (2017):

> In the Colombian education system, there are various problems; one of them is the low academic performance of students; one of the strongest causes is the difficulties they present in terms of reading since it is something that worries because [it reveals] that reading habits in Colombia are scarce at almost all levels of education: initial, basic, primary, and secondary, vocational media, even in college. (p. 14)

Hence the importance of wondering about this situation, as the act goes beyond the strictly academic since reading is a fundamental instrument for the personal and social growth of individuals, which allows them to imagine, think, and reflect critically about their environment, as Villa (2018) maintains.

Regarding the above, Mera (2012) states:

> The reading comprehension of primary and secondary students in Colombia is very poor. [He also pointed out] that the high illiteracy rates in [the country] were worrying a few decades ago, now the low reading comprehension rates of primary and secondary students are the ones that set off the alarms. A study by the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Higher Education, ICFES, based on an application made for grades 5 and 9 in three areas, including language, in the Saber 2009 tests, shows the deficiencies of Colombian students in the reading-writing process. (…). The results are poor throughout the country, (…). Of 7,451 fifth-grade students, belonging to 182 schools, only 39% reached a satisfactory or advanced level in language tests. And, of the 6,734 ninth-grade students, belonging to 157 institutions, only 44% reach the minimum level of reading comprehension. That is, the students recognize main ideas and establish some relationships, but very few are capable of understanding complex texts, analyzing, inferring, relating implicit and explicit information in different written texts, and even less, assuming a critical position and arguing about it. In other words, they read, but they don't understand and thus, it is very difficult to appropriate the knowledge and be generators of [their learning]. The consequences are even more serious, points out Isabel Fernándes (2012), deputy director of analysis and dissemination of the Icfes: "A person who does not have good skills to read and to understand what they read, will have many difficulties both to enter education superior to be successful in that scenario", she explains. These students, added the official, are going to have problems performing tasks that require innovation, technological development, and meeting the demands of a globalized and highly competitive society at an international level. Worse still, Fernándes points out, that this reading incapacity affects the exercise of citizenship, because "to the extent that you can read, you can understand the arguments of the other and can solve conflicts conversationally and not by force or violence, as it happens". (para. 1-2)

On the other hand, De la Cruz (2012) expresses:

> When comparing the results of the Saber Tests of the students of the capitals of the departments of the coast, it is found that Barranquilla is the city that has the best

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performance in language. In Barranquilla, 48% of fifth-grade students reach or exceed the minimum required language skills. They are followed by Valledupar, with 40%, Sincelejo with 39%, Cartagena with 38%, Santa Marta with 37%, Montería with 33%, and Riohacha with 29%. A similar pattern is seen in ninth grade. The results of the capitals of the Caribbean coast are below those of Bogotá and Bucaramanga. (para. 4)

Especially in the department of Cesar, the results of the ICFES tests are worrying, since 30% and 26% are low, respectively.

About the concerns of Mera (2012), it can be deduced that the percentages of the test results are opposite to what was indicated by Del Valle (2012), when he indicated that, in recent times, it has been verified that "reading [...] stimulates coexistence and integrated social behaviors, helps to increase vocabulary, encourages abstract reasoning, enhances creative thinking, stimulates critical awareness... furthermore, it is an inexhaustible source of pleasure" (p. 14).

From this perspective, the promotion of reading is and should be a priority for any educational system. These two realities should lead teachers to reflect. In this regard, García (2014) assures:

> The mediating role that the teacher exercises in the school is essential to strengthening reading comprehension in students. Traditionally, it has been believed that the problems associated with reading comprehension particularly concern the student, since it is pointed out that he or she does not have reading habits or awareness of the importance of this communicative activity. However, very rarely the role and responsibility of the teacher are questioned in these difficulties evidenced in the students. (p. 253)

From this point of view, teachers should address reading comprehension as:

> A gradual process, built from the very moment the reader faces the text and even before, from the moment he decides to read it and begins to create expectations and formulate

hypotheses about its content. The process thus conceived, assumes an active reader, who is involved with the text in a specific context to process, and interpret it, to be able to elaborate a coherent mental representation of its content, and, in addition, to assume control and regulation of his own process, during its execution. (López & Arciniegas, 2004, as cited in García, 2014, p. 254)

About reading comprehension, it is worth mentioning Cassany (2004), when he states that, to read, three levels must be taken into account: literal, inferential, and critical, since, according to interest, it is easier to extract explicit and implicit information of a text; therefore, the Afro-Colombian reading can lead to self-recognition and the strengthening of cultural identity.

From this, it can be inferred that, by not strengthening reading comprehension, the student may present confusion about the tasks assigned to him/her, given insufficient prior knowledge to establish relationships between the contents of the knowledge areas, which could lead to scarce control of active understanding and, at the same time, not being able to guarantee the exercise of raising awareness of cultural identity.

The foregoing is presented as a great challenge for the teachers of the course 7-4 of the Bello Horizonte Educational Institution of Valledupar, Cesar, the context that the present work deals with which is evident in the students, difficulties in the comprehension of texts: low reading fluency, syllabication, little ability to solve implicit and explicit questions of a text, which prevents them from carrying out a critical analysis according to the level of study, a fact that directly affects their school performance since good reading comprehension is essential for all areas of study at the baccalaureate level.

It is observed that seventh-grade students do not know the meaning of most of the vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, paronyms, and homonyms, which indicates a great weakness that results in an impoverishment of the comprehension process. Without motivation for

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reading, it is very difficult for a subject to achieve a cognitive impact. The low motivation observed in them limits their ability to concentrate and, therefore, the desire to learn and to know more.

This lack of interest in reading will end up affecting the results of the students in the knowledge tests or, in their life projects. In the classroom, it is common to observe their lack of interest in reading, perhaps due to a lack of love or motivation from an early age or because they have not grown up in a community or family environment where there is a reading culture.

As a consequence of what has been said, the following research questions arise: How does Mary Grueso's Afro-Colombian literature contribute to the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students, fourth course of the Bello Horizonte Educational Institution in Valledupar, Cesar? What are the difficulties in specific reading comprehension situations? What will be the didactic strategies based on this kind of literature to achieve reading comprehension? How is Mary Grueso's Afro-Colombian literature used as a didactic strategy for reading comprehension? What are the achievements of the application of this class of literature in students?

To answer these questions, the general objective was: Promote reading comprehension through the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso as a didactic strategy for reading comprehension of seventh-grade students. And, as specific objectives: 1) Identify difficulties in specific situations of reading comprehension; 2) Design a didactic strategy for reading comprehension; 3) Implement the didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso for reading comprehension; and, finally, 4) Evaluate the achievements of the application of the didactic strategy.

In the teaching work, one is exposed to multiple situations that lead to investigating or inquiring about particular facts of the classroom, which allows us to identify, design, and implement new strategies to improve classroom practice and enrich the pedagogical and didactic processes with the students.

Therefore, with the mission of promoting reading comprehension from its levels, the literal level is assumed, first, since it is where "the subject must have the ability to identify and understand the information that the text explicitly delivers" (Actos en la escuela, n.d., para. 15); second, the inferential comprehension level because it is when the subject adds his/her "experience and intuition to the literal information of the text. It is the level where the reader values what is exposed in the text, manages to interpret what the author, without making it explicit, wants to communicate in writing" (para. 17); third, the level of critical comprehension, "which implies that the subject can make a judgment about the text he is facing. This reading level is based on the interaction of the subject and his prior knowledge with the text in question" (para. 18). To continue with these steps, the rich and diverse Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso will be taken as a basis, as a way to strengthen reading comprehension, but also, as a way to promote and publicize its importance in Colombian culture.

On the other hand, the research is pertinent in that it meets the guidelines of the Quality Directorate for preschool, basic and secondary education of the Ministry of National Education (MEN, 2014), where the profile of the teacher is configured as "a professional of the education with the capacity to understand, attend to and resolve the complexity of school situations as part of their pedagogical work" (p. 13). These indications give teachers a great responsibility that forces them to create relevant strategies to solve student problems.

Consequently, this project seeks to establish as one of its basic principles "Find meaning in what is read", promoting free, informal, spontaneous reading that awakens the sensitivity of students to transmit and make them discover their emotions and impressions. as readers. A second principle is to promote reading as a source of knowledge since reading is food for intelligence, a stimulus for the exercise of fantasy, an activity that makes a person grow in all their potential dimensions that not only help know the world

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but allows for better communication and to think critically and creatively. (Valencia & Osorio, 2011, p. 18)

This project will directly benefit the seventh-grade students of the Bello Horizonte Educational Institution (Cesar), oriented from the importance of reading comprehension as an essential mechanism for the acquisition of knowledge, understanding that the comprehension of a text is the product of a process regulated by the reader, in which an interaction occurs between the information stored in their memory, provided by the text.

According to what has been indicated, the research is also justified from the theoretical point of view, since it is carried out to contribute to the existing knowledge about reading comprehension and Afro-Colombian literature, whose results may be systematized in a proposal to be incorporated as knowledge to educational sciences. At the same time, in the practical field, the work stands out significantly because there is a need to develop concrete strategies to improve reading comprehension levels at the performance level of seventh-grade students. From the methodological perspective of the inquiry, to achieve the proposed objectives, typical research techniques of pedagogical action research were used.

To understand the behavior of the phenomenon under study, a review of previous research was carried out. In the international context, the work of Ojeda (2016) was found, who set out to determine the influence of the story as a didactic strategy in the process of reading comprehension in students; for this, he relied on the field and bibliographic research with qualitative and quantitative approach. The author used the survey and the interview as data collection instruments.

From this research, it was possible to show that the didactic process to strengthen the comprehension of written texts is not continuous and is one of the factors that influence students to have difficulty reading comprehension. In addition, it allowed the author to compare different investigations carried out on the subject,

from which he found sufficient arguments to consider the story as a tool that helps to solve the problem of reading comprehension.

For this reason, this background is pertinent because its theme and its methodology are closely related to the present study since the story is proposed as a strategy to improve reading comprehension, in addition to the fact of having used the qualitative methodological approach.

In the national context, the article presented by Rentería (2018), entitled: *The teaching of reading comprehension through Afro-Chocoano stories in fifth-grade students of elementary school*, was located. Its main objective was:

> To improve practical reading comprehension using Afro-Chocoano stories as a strategy in the fifth grade of primary school. This article presents the results of qualitative research that started from the participatory action approach. The results revealed student problems in terms of reading comprehension and the importance of using didactic strategies (workshops) to strengthen it. (p. 94)

The article contributed to the present investigation, the importance of understanding the intention and purposes of the explicit and implicit of a text, as well as the relevance of adapting the communicative contexts concerning everyday situations since the content of Afro-Colombian literature resembles the daily life of the students, which favors their understanding.

Finally, at the local level, there is the study by Baquero (2018), entitled: *Didactic design to potentiate reading comprehension through dramatic play in grade 4-1 of the Rafael Valle Meza Educational Institution, mixed headquarters 3, Valledupar Cesar*; its objective was directed towards the transformation of teaching practices through the didactic strategy based on dramatic play:

> The research is directed under an action research design to transform teaching practices around the understanding of teaching practice from its actors, its reflection, and transformation, to identify problems in

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the classroom and intervene in them using didactic strategies that efficiently meet the needs found. (p. 12)

After completing the investigation, the author concluded:

Every academic process must be focused on improving educational practice, guided by constant reflection, which does not remain only theorized but transcends teachers and the institution. It is important to link didactic strategies in the classroom according to the needs, context, and learning styles of students, leaving aside linear practices that exclude [them] from their learning process. (p. 13)

The relevance and pertinence of this research revolve around the action research route, similar to the methodological route of the current work, together with a strategy to strengthen reading comprehension in basic education students. On the other hand, it manifests the need to address the teaching practice contextualized to daily life, so that students find meaning in learning.

For the configuration of the theoretical framework that supports this research, theories related to reading comprehension, didactic strategy, and Afro-Colombian literature were reviewed, described, and analyzed. Below is a scheme that systematizes the sequence of theoretical topics (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Relevant topics of the article
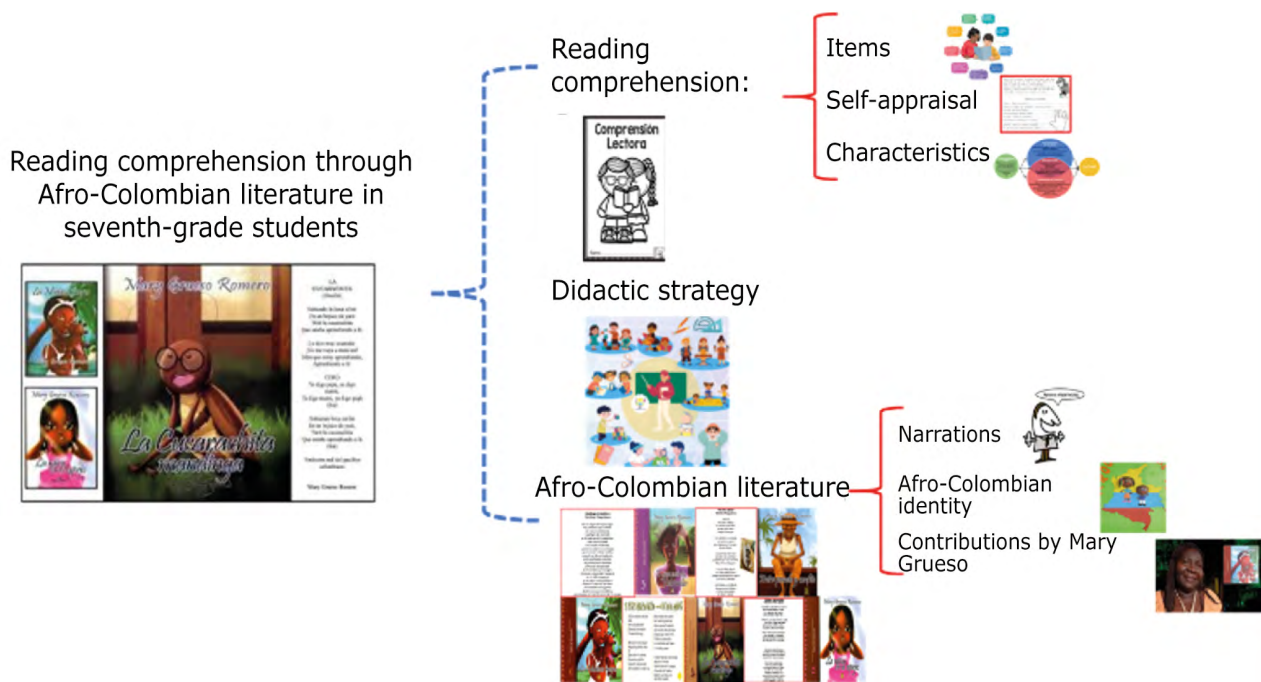
Reading comprehension was given thanks to the contributions of Santiesteban and Velázquez (2012), Vaello (2009), Mosquera (2006), and Pinzas (2012), who consider that this constitutes one of the main ways for the assimilation of the experience accumulated by the humanity. In the words of Santiesteban and Velázquez (2012), "their teaching contributes to the intellectual and affective development of the student" (p. 104); hence its importance, because reading is found everywhere where human beings carry out their activities and, in all areas of life, from the interpretation of a simple advertisement to a literary work.

In the educational field, for Gutiérrez-Braojos and Salmerón (2012), reading comprehension is formed through the participation of students in daily reading practices, to be able to understand

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and interpret appropriately. That is to say, they consider it a continuous teaching process that increasingly demands, with greater urgency, the design of effective didactic strategies that start from a model analogous to the complexity of reading as an activity, both in its typological diversification and in its peculiar structure.

In the same way, Cassany (2004) understands reading comprehension as something global that, in turn, is made up of other more specific elements that are called micro-skills, which, according to him, are: perception, memory, anticipation, quick and attentive reading, inference, main ideas, structure, and form. In addition, he comments that they must be worked on separately, to acquire good reading comprehension:

1. Perception [as an element of reading comprehension]. The objective is to train the ocular behavior of the reader to increase their reading efficiency. It intends to develop perceptual-motor skills to the point of asserting themselves and gaining speed and reading facility. This micro-skill is intended for readers to achieve an expansion of the visual field, a reduction in the number of fixations, and the development of visual discrimination.

2. Memory [as an element of reading comprehension]: this micro-skill can be divided into short-term memory and long-term memory. The first one provides very little information that retaining it, provides the meaning of some sentences. However, the second one collects all that information held in short-term memory to extract the general and most important content of a text read.

3. Anticipation [as an element of reading comprehension]: aims to work on the ability of readers when anticipating the content of a given text. If they are not able to anticipate that content, reading will become more difficult. This micro-ability plays a large role in the motivation of the readers and the predisposition they may have to read a certain text.

4. Speed reading and attentive reading [as elements of reading comprehension]: they constitute fundamental and complementary

micro-skills, to read effectively and quickly. Rarely is reading exclusively word for word; first, an overview is given, looking for any information that may seem relevant or interesting, before beginning a more detailed reading. Readers must be able to jump from one point to another in the text to find information, avoiding linear reading.

5. Inference [as an element of reading comprehension]: allows us to understand a certain aspect of a text, based on the meaning of the rest. This important micro-skill offers to discover information that is not explicitly found in the text; readers need to acquire autonomy and avoid turning to another person to clarify the meaning of what they read.

6. Main ideas [as an element of reading comprehension]: micro-skill that allows the expert reader to extract certain information from a specific text: most important ideas, order of these ideas, extraction of examples, points of view of the author of the text, etc. It can be global ideas of the entire text or specific ideas of certain parts of it.

7. Structure and form [as an element of reading comprehension]: through it, you can work on the formal aspects of a text (structure, presentation, style, linguistic forms, rhetorical resources, etc.). It is essential to work on this micro-skill since the structure and form of a text offer a second level of information that affects the content. It can be addressed from the most global aspects such as coherence, cohesion, and adequacy, to more specific aspects such as syntax and lexicon.

8. Reading between the lines: provides information that is not explicitly found in the text, but is partially present or hidden, or that the author takes for granted or assumed. This is one of the most important since it goes far beyond understanding the basic content or form of the text.

9. Self-assessment [of reading comprehension]: offers the reader the conscious or unconscious ability to control their comprehension process, even before starting the reading, until finishing it. (Cassany, 2001, as cited in Avilés, 2020, pp. 41-43)

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As soon as the anticipation micro-skill begins to work, it is possible to check if the assumptions about the content of the text are correct and if the content has been understood.

In this sense, considering what was proposed by Cassany (as cited in Avilés, 2020), after having acquired all the micro-skills described, it is assumed that the reader ceases to be a beginner and becomes an expert, a moment that allows him/her to understand any type of text.

Continuing with the characteristics of reading comprehension, Pinzas (as cited in Gamboa, 2017) states:

Reading comprehension is determined by the ability of each reader to understand the topic at hand, by the position that they manifest towards the content, as well as the value of what is read and according to the use they make of what is understood. In this way, the ease and precision with which it is understood will depend on three factors: the scheme or prior knowledge of the reader, which is relevant to the content of the text; the text with clear, coherent content and with a familiar and orderly structure and, inextricably related strategies or cognitive skills, which allow the reader to intensify the comprehension and memory of what they read. (p. 19)

From the diversity of didactic strategies to develop reading comprehension in students, the present study used the Afro-Colombian narratives of the Colombian writer Mary Grueso. For its approach, it is pertinent to mention what was referred to by Vaello (2009), who points out that, due to the flexible, adaptable, and contextualized nature of the didactic strategies, there is the possibility of using a didactic strategy in the three moments and/or phases of the class, either at startup, development, or end.

So then, to disaggregate the content, it began with the narration. According to Adam and Lorda (1999), it "is a form of expression that tells facts or stories that happened to subjects, real or literary characters, animals or any other anthropomorphous being; it presents a concurrence of events in a determined time and space" (p. 100). In the narratives, there are two basic elements: 1) action, aimed at a transformation, and 2) interest, which is produced

thanks to the presence of elements that generate intrigue. The narrations are characterized by presenting in an indispensable way several events integrated by one, whose execution is necessary to produce the following event; these events are performed chronologically.

As said by Acosta (2006), the narratives are made up of the following elements:

A frame (the space and time in which the action is situated). A narrator (the voice that tells what happened). The narrative sequence (the narrated story). The discourse (the order in which what is narrated is offered; the story will not always be offered to the reader chronologically). The participants (characters or subjects). (pp. 26-28)

Continuing with the breakdown, it is appropriate to carry out the study of Afro-Colombians. Vargas (2003) argues that the afro-genetic paradigm:

It is based on the fact that the history of Afro-Colombians begins from that of their African ancestors; it feeds on memory, moral parameters, life -and death-, family, and community relationships, which are based on memories and internalizations of the social schemes of the African peoples from where the ancestors come. […] The subject of this gaze is the Afro-Colombian, while the object to be studied is, identity. (p. 35)

Mosquera (2006, as cited in Velandia, 2010) defines Afro-Colombian essence as:

The set of contributions and material and spiritual contributions, developed by the African peoples and the Afro-Colombian population in the process of building the nation. These contributions involve the conjunction of realities, values, feelings, and visions of the world, which are integrated into the daily life of the Afro-Colombian.

If Afro-Colombian essence is understood as a concept that combines African heritage and the role of Afro-descendants as Colombian citizens, an interesting question arises. Identity, as will be seen later, is not a static entity; on the contrary, it is in constant transformation and feeds on various influences. (p. 37)

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Among the contributions to Afro-Colombian literature, there are the children's works of the writer Mary Grueso, who

was born in Guapi (Cauca); she has a degree in Spanish and Literature from the University of Quindío; she specialized in Literature Teaching at the same university; she is recognized as a writer, poet, and oral storyteller. Among her works, the following stand out: *El otro yo que sí soy yo* (1997), *The sea and you* (2003), *Tómame antes que la noche llegue* (2013), *Afro-Colombian poetry. When the ancestors call* (2015). In the field of children's literature, the following stand out: *From the trunk to school; an anthology of children's literature* (2003), *Negra soy* (2008), *La muñeca negra* (2012), and *The girl in the mirror* (2012). (Afrofemininas, 2019, para. 17)

2. Methodology

Current research is inscribed in the post-positivist paradigm. In this regard, Rojas (2015) states:

This paradigm has a decidedly humanist foundation to understand the social reality of the idealist position that highlights an evolutionary and negotiated conception of the social order. The qualitative paradigm perceives social life as the shared creativity of individuals. The fact that it is shared determines a reality perceived as objective, alive, and knowable for all the participants in the social interaction. (para. 25)

In this order of ideas, Fernández and Rivera (2009, as cited in Dios-Arrieta & Llamas-Rodríguez, 2020) explain:

'In the qualitative paradigm, there must be a specific correspondence between the researcher and the object of study'. The interaction of both parties involved must be dynamic and flexible. In this sense, it is accepted as reciprocity from the orality and performance, where dialogue is the ideal route for the demonstration of experiences and other information that pay tribute to the concretion of what is investigated. (p. 183)

In this regard, Badilla (2006) comments: "qualitative research in the field of education is a topic of current interest, which has allowed its expansion, but at the same time the deepening of the theories and methodologies that support it" (p. 42). It follows, then, that qualitative research recognizes more issues of educational-pedagogical interest because it is immersed in everyday professional educational practices. This investigative exchange allows us to reconstruct, articulate, and reflect on some issues that establish the qualitative research approach and that are related to the usual scenarios where educational work is carried out.

In the context of qualitative research, investigative work represents observing the classroom as a work context where reflection and analysis must be addressed integrally and look at the tasks as objectively as possible, to consider the elements that arise in the investigative moments in the daily life of the pedagogical fact. This prompted the researcher to carry out a systematic observation of the permanent reflection on the problem under study. For these reasons, the selection of this research approach was motivated by the opportunity to investigate a didactic strategy to strengthen reading comprehension in seventh-grade students.

For Hernandez et al. (2014):

The qualitative approach can be defined as a set of interpretative practices that make the world visible, transform it, and convert it into a series of representations in the form of observations, including a variety of conceptions, visions, and techniques; collects data expressed through written, verbal, and non-verbal language, as well as visual, which describe and analyze, and turns them into themes; this led the inquiry subjectively and recognized its personal tendencies. (pp. 8-9)

Due to this, the researcher's direct concern was focused on the experiences felt and experienced by the participants.

By the traced route, the research topic, and the paradigm, the method was located in pedagogical action research, to generate knowledge and solutions in realities whose contexts are complex. In this regard, Dugarte (2006) expresses that its orientation places the person and the event in

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their social fabric, to understand and modify it, taking into account all the elements that are part of it and identifying the relationships between a specific situation and the social fabric so that solutions to problem-events are produced under the complex thinking approach.

For the exact case of this research, it was taken into account what was expressed by Vargas (2009) in terms of assuming...

> The practice, as an object of study in itself, object of analysis, reflection, and intervention, with ethical and professional responsibility. It is important to develop processes of this nature because they favor the rigorous analysis of what has been produced and involve a bibliographic search to extract from a theory, the applicable aspects to the problem situation in a contextual reality. Choosing the scenario that serves as a source of information and observation is key to the application of models, strategies, and instruments, as they are used in the guiding practice and in the area of interest, to improve the quality of care that, as professionals, they provide to populations in their different environments. (p. 164)

As indicated by this author, the teacher, in the process of didacticizing the pedagogical practice,

took care of delving into the theoretical roots of the themes, to organize them rationally; made a critique, to improve them intentionally, according to its purposes, thinking about the Bello Horizonte institution, which was the institution that intervened, where selected the observed problem with complex reality and planned its transformation through specific tools, techniques, methods, and necessary instruments that helped to change the reality addressed.
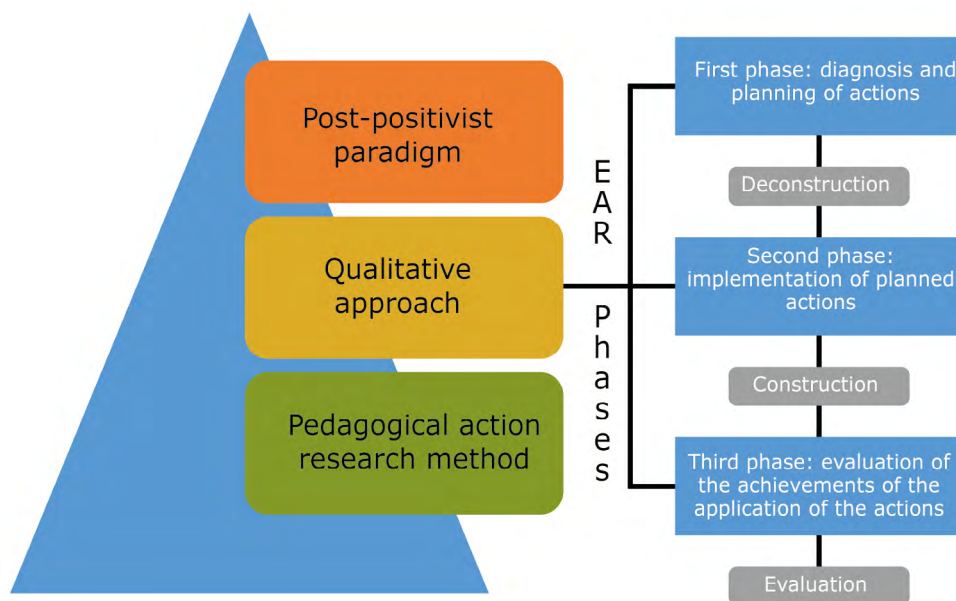
Thus, Restrepo (2006) states:

> In the pedagogical field, on the other hand, know-how is investigated and built, to achieve appropriation of disciplinary knowledge by students (didacticize), as well as know-how for them to internalize attitudes and values (know-form, know-show ways, know-convince). (p. 94)

The foregoing motivated the researcher to make a self-reflection on her pedagogical practice, recognizing her weaknesses and strengths, transforming and modifying her pedagogical work, adapting to the reality that is prevailing, and achieving that seventh-grade students strengthen reading comprehension through Afro-Colombian literature.

Figure 2

Graphic representation of the methodological design

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For the research, 54 seventh-grade students of the educational institution under study were selected as the unit of analysis, intervening in educational activities and implementing strategies that stimulate reading comprehension through Afro-Colombian literature and thus transforming the reality that worried the researcher. The work unit was made up of 20 of them, as they had the required technological resources to implement the reading comprehension workshops through the Google Meet platform since at that time, social confinement had been decreed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The instruments applied were the following: a written test that, according to the Ministry of Education (2008), has the purpose of diagnosing the level of reading comprehension of seventh-grade students. Rojas (2008) defines this test as a "measuring instrument whose purpose is for the student to demonstrate the acquisition of cognitive learning or the progressive development of a skill or ability. Due to its characteristics, it requires a written response from the student" (p. 14). The test started with the reading of the story *Tramontana*, belonging to the collection *Doce cuentos peregrinos* by Gabriel García Márquez. To verify their comprehension, seven questions were raised that allowed knowing the shortcomings of the students in terms of reading comprehension.

Likewise, a general observation log was used in which all the experiences lived in the application of the didactic strategy through Afro-Colombian literature were recorded, to promote reading comprehension in students. This tool is part of the observation technique that, according to Martínez (2007), "is the written record of what is observed […] to produce quality descriptions" (p. 74). It is worth mentioning that the log was filled out once a week in each of the planned workshops, so as not to interrupt class schedules during the teaching and learning process.

It is pertinent to note that the investigation had the informed consent of the parents and guardians, who gave the respective permission to take and publish photographs and videos of the work unit students. In addition, the instruments used to collect the information met the quality and credibility criteria, which were subjected to expert judgment, whose purpose was to demonstrate relevance, guaranteeing the validation of the topic.

3. Results

This section collects the results derived from the implementation of a didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso for the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students.

Phase I. Deconstruction of the practice. The objective was to identify difficulties in specific situations of reading comprehension. A diagnostic test, with seven selection questions and one explanation about an image, was applied where *Tramontana*, a story by Gabriel García Márquez was presented. The work unit was made up of 20 students who had the technological and connectivity resources to participate in the workshops.

The results of the diagnosis through the written test indicated that the students have micro-skills, differentiated as follows: 100% have perception; 60%, have memory; 40%, have anticipation; 40% a quick and careful reading; 25% make inferences; 25% extract the main ideas; however, no one has acquired the micro-skill of structure and form. This indicated the shortcomings to anticipate the reading of a text; they do not have fast and attentive reading; it is difficult for them to relate the narrated events and extrapolate them to their lives or other aspects; they still show weakness to extract the main and secondary ideas of a text and, with this, their reading comprehension is fleeting. These results were obtained through descriptive statistics and the analysis of each of the responses issued by the students.

To conclude with this phase, the didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso was planned, for having been one of the most outstanding Afro-Colombian writers of the 21st century. In her literary creation, in which she goes through the characteristic songs of the Colombian Pacific, sonorous and expressive poetry, and reflective narrative, she finds everything that identifies her as a woman.

Phase II. Reconstruction of the practice. The specific objective was: To implement a didactic

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strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso for reading comprehension. The stories and poems of Mary Grueso were developed, namely: *La muñeca negra, El gran susto de Petronila, La cucarachita Mandinga, La niña en el espejo, Del baúl a la escuela, Si Dios hubiese nacido aquí, Naufragio de tambores, Niño Dios bendito* y, *Hombre, hacé caridad*.

This activity gave rise to nine workshops, containing five stories and four poems, lasting 60 minutes each, for nine weeks, planned in such a way that students could achieve reading comprehension and improve their academic performance. They were evaluated with the assigned activities through descriptive statistics and the analysis of the responses issued.

The workshops began with the story *La muñeca negra*, from which the students had to infer the theme. The results indicate that 90% of them reached the ocular behavior and 10% did not; regarding the perceptual-motor ability, 85% reached it and 15% did not; in the enlargement of the visual field, 95 achieved it, but 5% did not. With the development of this micro-skill, the students achieved an expansion of the visual field, a reduction in the number of fixations, and the development of visual discrimination.

In the second workshop, the story *El gran susto de Petronila* was addressed. The day began with the strategy of a tongue twister, to strengthen the memory of the students. Results indicated that 90% of them managed to consolidate short-term memory and 10% could not; regarding long-term memory, 80% achieved it, but 20% did not, which shows that more exercise is required.

To develop the third workshop, the story *La cucarachita Mandinga* was used. The activity also began with a tongue twister, whose results, through the Anticipation micro skill, denote that free motivation and predisposition of the students are required: 90% of them are motivated and predisposed and 10% are not. The students could anticipate the story, make reading faster and more fluent, use the dictionary to learn new terms, strengthen communication and argumentative skills, speed up their memory, as well as start making inferences; they were able to express their opinion without fear and strengthened the values of respect and solidarity.

The fourth workshop allowed us to study the story *La niña en el espejo*, using as a strategy, the onomatopoeia song: Dance, dance my chandé forwards and backward. The results of the activity indicate that in the micro-skill Quick and attentive reading, whose complementary skills are efficiency and speed, 80% of the students succeeded in efficiency, while 20% did not; in speed, 90% succeeded and the remaining 10% did not.

With this activity, the students were able to discover the hidden message of the story, anticipate, speed up reading, pay more attention, reinforce communicative and argumentative skills, express themselves more freely, expand their vocabulary, be able to discover the implicit values in the story, in addition to, consolidating the memory and the visual field with the message that the writer intends to give.

The fifth activity corresponded to the last story entitled *Del baúl a la escuela*, with the directed discussion strategy. For this, the title of the story was initially shown with its respective image, so that the students could anticipate and infer the theme. The results indicate that, in the Inference micro skill, through the indicators, 80% discovered the non-explicit information in the text and 20% did not. Regarding autonomy, 95% acquired it and 5% did not. Among the achievements achieved are: the strengthening of fast and attentive reading, the expansion of the visual field, the speeding up of memory, and the ability to make anticipations, inferences, and synthesis. The autonomy of learning was also achieved, because, without induction, they searched for unknown terms, which allowed them to increase their lexicon, reinforce social values, and recognize their mistakes in the past tense, in addition to strengthening their communicative and argumentative ability.

In the sixth workshop, we proceeded to study the poetry titled *Si Dios hubiese nacido aquí*. The directed reading strategy was used, for students to learn the correct intonation of this genre; then, they analyzed the poetry, searched for the unknown terms, made pertinent inferences, investigated the theme, and inferred what the writer wanted to reveal with that poetry.

The results indicate that in the 'Main Ideas' micro skill, in the 'Determine the information of

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a specific text' component, 70% of the students reached it, and 30% did not; regarding the 'Extract and order the most important ideas' component, 60% did it correctly and 40% did not; about the component 'Issue the author's point of view', 50% succeeded and the other 50% did not.

The most outstanding achievements were: the expansion of the visual field, the reduction in the number of fixations, the development of visual discrimination, the reinforcement of short memory, the ability to: make anticipations and inferences and to extract the main ideas for achieving a quick and attentive reading. In the same way, students understood the text from the meaning, discovered the information that is not found explicitly, acquired autonomy to clarify the meaning of what they read, extracted the most important ideas, discovered the global ideas of the entire text, added new terms to their vocabulary, increased their communication and argumentative skills, and strengthened their cultural identity.

In the seventh workshop, the poetry *Naufragio de tambores* was studied; Guided reading was used as a strategy to achieve perfect intonation. The results in the 'Main ideas' micro-skill show that 50% of the students managed to achieve this skill and the remaining 50% did not; 50% could identify the presentation, style, linguistic forms, and rhetorical resources; the other 50% did not. With this poem, they strengthened their autonomy, which led them to search for unknown terms; they expanded their cognitive structure because they included other linguistic forms. In addition, they developed coherence, cohesion, and adequacy, syntax and lexicon; therefore, they increased their communicative and argumentative skills, achieved better intonation in reading poetry with strength and good vocalization, sharpened their memory and perception, understood the text quickly, made inferences and anticipations and were able to read between the lines, to find what they needed, acquiring a better reading comprehension.

With the eighth workshop, the poetry *Niño Dios bendito* was addressed, using guided reading as a strategy. The results show that, in the 'Read between the lines' micro skill, in the 'Identify what the author understands' component, 50% of the students reached it and the remaining

50% did not, since this micro skill goes well beyond the comprehension of the basic content or form of the text.

The achievements accomplished: vocabulary expansion, correct intonation, visual sharpening, strengthening of short memory and compilation of all that information retained in short-term memory to extract the general and most important content of a text read, consolidation of verbal fluency, communication skills, ability to make arguments, pose positions and develop the structure of a text. In the same way, the students made syntax, improved their vocabulary, extracted specific ideas from the text, were able to anticipate the content of a text, and strengthened their motivation and willingness to read. In addition, they managed to jump from one point to another in the text to search for information, avoiding linear reading; they acquired autonomy and developed reading habits.

The ninth activity, the poetry *Hombre, hacé caridad*, was addressed through the strategy 'Vertical and horizontal underlining', with which students learned to extract the main ideas of the verse, expand their visual field, reinforce short memory, make anticipations and inferences, draw the main ideas to achieve a quick and careful reading, apply the writing structure of texts, identify the ideas described in each stanza to determine the main ideas of the poem, understand what has been read and find the hidden message of the writer, checking whether the content assumptions were true. They also strengthened their communication skills, handled arguments with greater precision, strengthened listening and their cultural identity, learned to handle metaphors, and correctly intoned poetry.

The 'Self-assessment' micro skill involved all the studied micro skills; the achievements were: 80% in perception; 95% for memory; 85% in anticipation, 80% for fast and careful reading; 80% for inferences; 70% for main ideas; 60% for structure and shape; 50% to read between the lines and do the self-assessment. These results express that reading comprehension is a global process, which requires acquiring all the micro-skills. In this sense, it can be affirmed that, when all the indicated micro-skills are achieved, one goes from being a beginner reader to an expert reader and it is at that moment

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when one can understand any type of text. This makes it possible to argue that students do not yet possess the necessary skills to become proficient or expert readers; however, they have reached a higher level than they had; it can be asserted that the majority got seven micro-skills; that is, they lacked two micro-skills to become proficient readers.

Phase III, the Evaluation of the reconstructed practice, had the objective of evaluating the achievements of the application of a didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso, to achieve reading comprehension. Among the results, it stands out that the students acquired the necessary skills to understand a text, developed autonomy and critical sense through a reflective and continuous process, achieved the skills of capturing the meaning of words, sentences, and paragraphs, identified actions that are narrated in the text, recognized the characters that participated in the actions, specified space and time, maintained a sequence of actions, and described the characters.

In addition, they were able to recall explicit information and developed the skills of oral reproduction of situations, recall passages of the text and specific details, fixed the fundamental aspects of the text, and grasped the main idea. Also, they managed to order the elements and explained the relationships that exist between them, developed the skills of capturing and establishing relationships between characters, actions, places, and time, differentiated facts and opinions of the characters, summarized the different stories and poems studied, discovered the cause and effect of events, compared characters and physical locations, and identified major and minor characters.

In this activity, students discovered the implicit messages of the text, complemented the details that appear in it, made conjectures about other events that occurred, made deductions of different possible titles for the text, rearranged the information in it, made predictions about the most probable outcomes of the actions, and argued their opinion according to the topic studied. In the end, they elaborated a synthesis of the story or poem studied.

Students managed to formulate judgments based on experience and values, captured the implicit message of the text, issued value judgments about it in terms of quality and aesthetics, transferred the ideas incorporated into the characters and other similar situations, developed the skills of associating the ideas of the text with personal ideas, reaffirmed the changes in the reader's behavior, exposed new approaches based on the ideas suggested in it, applied the ideas exposed to similar or new situations and, solved problems.

4. Discussion

Next, the interpretation and discussion of the results obtained through the investigative process that answer the research questions, are presented. In this sense, for Hernández et al. (2014), the results constitute "the product of data analysis" (p. 343).

Considering the results of the systematization and analysis of the data and, having as its guiding principle the research question: What are the difficulties in the specific situations of reading comprehension of the students of 7-4 class of the Bello Horizonte Educational Institution of Valledupar, Cesar? the answer arose from the diagnostic test applied to the students, which allowed us to see their shortcomings in the comprehension of texts since they incorrectly answered the raised items; so, the researcher analyzed several ideas to try to solve the situation.

The diagnostic test was framed within the Deconstruction Phase of the practice of the pedagogical action research method. The investigative process was approached with a diagnosis made to seventh-grade students, to determine which micro-skills have slowed down their reading comprehension. The results indicate that students have difficulty in literal interpretation related to paraphrasing, superstructure, lexicon, global idea, lexicon by context and cohesion of the text, in encyclopedic indicators, in perspective before what is read, in the intention and, in the questions that the text raises. These results allowed guiding the researcher to respond to the first objective

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related to identifying difficulties in specific situations of reading comprehension.

These findings led to know more about reading comprehension, its conceptualization, definitions, characteristics, and development micro-skills, together with the review of previous research on the subject, which shed light on didactic strategies that could be applied, as well as the use of literary genres such as the short story and poetry, as enhancing elements of learning to achieve reading comprehension. This literature review was part of the deconstruction phase of the pedagogical practice of the IAP method, which allowed the elaboration of a referential theoretical framework, to achieve the second specific objective, regarding designing a didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso.

In the aforementioned review, the research of Ojeda (2016) was highlighted, who managed to show that the didactic process to strengthen the comprehension of written texts at school is not continuous and is one of the factors that most influence the difficulty of students to achieve reading comprehension. By comparing different investigations carried out on the subject, the researcher was able to find sufficient arguments to consider the story as a useful tool for this purpose. Ojeda's research, which also used the qualitative approach, was pertinent because its theme and methodology are related to the present study since the story is proposed as a strategy to improve reading comprehension.

Rentería (2018) presented qualitative research that started from the participatory action approach. The results revealed the student's problems in terms of reading comprehension and the importance of using didactic strategies (workshops) to strengthen it. The article contributed to the present study, the relevance of understanding the intention and purposes of the explicit and implicit of a text, as well as the relevance of adapting the communicative contexts to everyday situations and, in this sense, the content of Afro-Colombian literature resembles the daily life of the students, which favors their understanding.

In the local context of this research, the work of Baquero (2018), whose objective was to transform teaching practices through the didactic

strategy based on dramatic play, was a valuable contribution for the researchers, especially because it is a work close to the geographical, social, and cultural context. The research, which was developed in a classroom project as a contribution to the Spanish Language subject, sought to favor the inferential level of reading comprehension.

From the background review, it is worth highlighting the use of action research as a tool to transform learning from the improvement of teaching practice, to identify problems in the classroom and intervene, using didactic strategies that efficiently meet those needs. Results indicate that every academic process should be focused on improving educational practice, guided by constant reflection, which transcends teachers and the institution, being significant to design and develop in the classroom, didactic strategies according to the needs, the context, and the learning styles of the students, leaving aside the linear practices that exclude them from their learning process.

The results of the search for investigative references led to support the observations and assumptions of the researchers, showing them the weaknesses in other contexts related to reading comprehension, the use of the short story and poetry as a literary genre that, due to its peculiar characteristics, can be a highly valuable tool for the development of the topic, the action research route as a methodological path, as well as the use of motivating and contextualized strategies to strengthen reading comprehension.

In the same way, the results of the review of specialized authors in the fields of reading comprehension, the short story and poetry as a literary genre, and the use of didactic strategies to enhance learning constituted other valuable props to understand both the problematic situation addressed as to continue from each area, the search for answers to the research question.

The revision of the postulates of the teaching of reading and its comprehension occupies a preponderant place within the study plans, as it is the basis of the rest of the subjects. Therefore, reading processes deserve special attention within school activities and also in

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society. In this way, reading comprehension constitutes one of the main ways for the assimilation of the experience accumulated by humanity. Cassany et al. (2001) understand reading comprehension as something global that is made up of more specific elements named micro-skills; they are perception, memory, anticipation, fast and attentive reading, inference, main ideas, structure, and form, and must be worked on separately to acquire good reading comprehension.

Similarly, the results of the theoretical review led the researcher to rely on the work of authors such as Santiesteban and Velásquez (2012), Gutiérrez-Braojos and Salmerón (2012), Cassany et al. (2001), and Pinzas (2012), who consider that for achieving reading comprehension in students, they must be able to discriminate information, establish cause-effect or whole-part relationships, organize information and make inferences, among other skills. This was an undoubted support to understanding Afro-Colombian narratives as didactic strategies adapted to the needs of the learning context and how to apply them to develop skills, among which reading comprehension stands out.

Finally, authors such as Adam and Lorda (1999), Acosta (2006), Vargas (2009), and Mosquera (20006), allowed knowing the potential of Afro-Colombian narratives as a form of expression that tells facts or stories that happened to subjects, real or literary characters, animals or any other anthropomorphic being, who present a concurrence of events in a certain time and space. There are two basic elements in them: action, aimed at transformation, and interest, which is produced thanks to the existence of elements that generate intrigue. These narrations are distinguished by presenting in an indispensable way several events integrated by one, whose execution is necessary to produce the following event, which is executed chronologically.

Once the general theme of the research was understood, through the review of theoretical references and, continuing with the Phase 'Reconstruction of the practice of the pedagogical action research method' selected for its transformative characteristics of teaching actions through work in space of study and the implementation of strategies contextualized to the reality of the educational actors, the researcher set out to design a didactic strategy based on the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso, for reading comprehension; to do this, she created and applied a set of nine widely reviewed reading workshops, whose results are presented below.

The workshops managed to motivate the seventh-grade students impacting the learning of reading, making it possible to generate spaces for socialization and application of knowledge through the understanding of the texts worked on in the stories: *La muñeca negra*, *El gran susto de Petronila*, *La cucarachita Mandinga*, *La niña en el espejo*, and the poetries *Si Dios hubiese nacido aquí*, *Naufragio de tambores*, *Niño Dios bendito*, *Hombre, hacé caridad*, *Del Baúl a la Escuela*, readings that aroused their interest since it is a pleasant, fun, and instructive literary genre that has implicit messages, lessons that students were able to infer, understand, and apply in their daily life contexts.

In the development of each reading workshop, through the activities designed with the criterion *in crescendo* in complexity, according to the micro-skills of reading comprehension, the strengthening of this reading process was evidenced, not only in terms of the cognitive skills evidenced by the indicators, but by the procedural and attitudinal competencies that reflect the learning acquired from prior knowledge, which agrees with what was expressed by Gutiérrez-Braojos and Salmerón (2012), who consider that a continuous teaching process requires progressively greater urgency, the design of effective didactic strategies that start from an analogous modeling, to the complexity of reading as an activity, both in its typological diversification and in its peculiar structure; they conclude that, to develop a good reading comprehension, teachers must design learning strategies to raise the reading level of students, which confirms the importance of planning strategies that support and strengthen reading processes.

Reading comprehension was revealed throughout the work carried out, highlighting the students' interest in understanding and communicating the main idea in each of the stories, evidencing the scope of each micro-skill according to the complexity of the reading competence, which demonstrated advances in

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the process, managing to capture their interest in the story and poetry as a literary genre; thus, they were able to understand the story (semantic component), distinguish its parts and relationships (syntactic component), and understand the purpose in the context of their daily life (pragmatic component), as expressed by Cassany et al. (2001); this demonstrates the applicability of this genre as a didactic strategy for the development of reading comprehension in general and, of the level of critical reading in particular, which covers the other two levels.

Under this scenario, they were able to know the story, distinguish its parts, and understand the purpose in the context of their daily life; this demonstrates its applicability as a didactic strategy for the development of reading comprehension at the literal level, then inferentially and, finally, at the critical analytical level. The foregoing finds an echo in the explanations of Santiesteban and Velázquez (2011) when they express that reading comprehension contributes not only to intellectual development but also to the effective order of the student since reading surrounds and is immersed in the activities of the human being, in all spheres of life.

Similarly, the results are linked to what Gutiérrez-Braojos and Salmerón (2012) expressed by highlighting the need for student participation in daily reading practices that enable them to understand and properly interpret a text. That is, it is considered a continuous teaching process that merits the design of effective and motivating teaching strategies that arouse interest and attention. In this sense, another motivating element within the fable strategy that aroused great interest in the students was the characters, mainly the animals described, a fact that generated expectations when reading the titles and when delving into the reading of each story. These elements of interest promote the approach to reading and permit the development of reading comprehension.

Through the development of the reading comprehension workshops, it was observed that the Afro-Colombian literature of Mary Grueso constitutes a didactic strategy that allows the teacher to promote in their students the development of higher order levels: reflective, critical, emotional, communicative, participatory, creative, and imaginative. These results validate

what was stated by Mosquera (2006), who considers that Afro-Colombian literature has a set of material and spiritual contributions, developed by the African peoples and the Afro-Colombian population in the process of building the nation, contributions that involve the conjunction of realities, values, feelings, and visions of the world that are integrated into the daily life of the Afro-Colombian.

When designing the reading comprehension workshops through Mary Grueso's Afro-Colombian children's literature, the researcher went through a reflective process of understanding the theme, analysis, and organization of resources, management of activities and time, as well as the scope based on previously established objectives, which allowed stimulating the students' taste for reading, improving micro-skills to achieve reading comprehension when reading and interpreting stories and poems, promoting training in values within the framework of school work such as respect and a collaborative spirit, fostering dialogue and listening, along with strengthening the creative and critical spirit of students.

In the context of the application of the workshops, a daily evaluation process of the activities carried out was done. The phase is contemplated in the IAP method, as an evaluation of the pedagogical practice through which the achievement of the proposed objective was evidenced. In this way, it was possible to observe the impact generated by the use of stories and poetry as a mediating strategy for learning reading comprehension. The students discovered an application resource when relating the teaching of stories or poetry with daily situations in their life contexts; their learning began with the understanding of the literary genre, with its elements and objective.

Likewise, the progressive design in the complexity of the strategy led to reinforced, constant, and flexible learning, in a fun, pleasant, and contextualized environment, which allowed students to demonstrate the learning they were achieving by sharing what they learned every day. In the beginning, they knew the story and poetry, and they understood and identified their main concepts and elements. From there, in the next level, they were able to make inferences about the situations and relate them to their previous knowledge to finally be able to question

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the behavior of the characters and the implicit message. This process occurred in a natural, fun, progressive, and flexible way, without ever straying from the objective proposed for the achievement of reading comprehension competence.

Regarding the last of the objectives, aimed at evaluating the achievements of the application of the didactic strategy, the results recorded in the logs go hand in hand with what was explained by Vaello (2009), who points towards the design and use of didactic strategies of flexible, adaptable and contextualized nature, which can be used in the three moments and/or phases of the class: beginning, development or closing. In this particular case, the reading workshops, based on the story and poetry, were designed to cover these three moments: the initial phase with the reading of the story; the development phase with the demonstration of reading comprehension through the socialization of ideas and, the closing phase with reflection and extrapolation to contexts of daily life, which demonstrates its applicability, supported by the aforementioned achievements.

5. Conclusions

At this point, the researcher proceeds to share the findings obtained in the development of the study, about the specific objectives proposed.

For the first objective, through the diagnostic test, the difficulty in understanding the text read was appreciated, which limited the acquisition of communicative skills to obtain significant learning and, therefore, improve academic performance.

Regarding the second specific objective, it was necessary to go to the experts to guide the process, visualizing the importance of Afro-Colombian literature to achieve reading comprehension; for this reason, the stories and poems of Mary Grueso were used, who has been concerned with student learning, so that they understand the texts from their roots and achieve significant learning from the reality of their environment.

Regarding the implementation of the strategy, a proposal was made based on workshops, where

the students, through the stories and poetry of Mary Grueso, managed to gradually acquire micro-skills: perception, memory, anticipation, fast and attentive reading, inference, main ideas, structure, and form, reading between the lines and self-assessment, skills that enabled them to achieve reading comprehension.

Finally, when evaluating the achievements of the application of the strategy, the results indicate that it was successful. The students valued various aspects, among them: the importance of understanding the texts read and the ability to make inferences and arguments about a topic. In addition, by having consistency in the discourse, it was possible to increase communicative skills and reading fluency, and the relevance of using the dictionary to understand unknown terms, which is essential to acquire autonomous learning and comprehend a text.

6. Recommendations

Considering the actors and authors of the educational process, the following recommendations are formulated:

To the rectors:

- Motivate teachers to carry out curricular activities with readings based on Afro-Colombian writers to develop reading comprehension and strengthen cultural identity.

- Promote the coordinators of the 'Todos a Aprender' program to strengthen the pedagogical practice, taking into account elements to define pertinent strategies that allow students to assess and provide feedback through pedagogical activities based on the results.

- Stimulate the curiosity of the teachers for them to reflect on the weak and strong points of their pedagogical activity, for students to achieve reading comprehension through Afro-Colombian literature as a strategy to acquire significant learning.

To the teachers:

- Understand the learning characteristics of the group of students and ensure that the activity is marked according to age, competence,

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level of involvement in the activities, and the functioning of the group.

- Evaluate the learning process of students to confirm that they have achieved reading competence with good academic performance.

- Implement a system of classes or more pedagogical and methodological curricular activities, where the interest of the children, their motivation, and the desire to read daily are seen, to grow in their educational dimension.

- Motivate children in the reading process through strategies where innovative, didactic, and creative pedagogies are evidenced, which strengthen the reading comprehension process.

- Link parents through a reading plan and school for parents, where collaboration, interaction, and integration are enhanced, to promote reading comprehension from an early age.

- Make visits to the school library with students, to initiate the reading habit.

To students:

- Practice reading daily to create the habit and achieve reading comprehension.

- Go to the library and request books to achieve reading comprehension.

- Insert into their technological equipment (computer, tablet, phone) the audiobook application to learn stories and thus deepen the understanding of texts.

7. Conflict de interest

The authors of this article declare not to have any conflict of interest regarding the work presented.

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Leonardo Enrique Martínez Arredondo: a review of bibliographic references, conclusions, recommendations, and application of the citation rules.

Gustavo Adolfo González Roys: a review of the methodological aspects, conclusions, and application of the citation rules.

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Lohorquis Esther Cuello Cuello
Leonardo Enrique Martínez Arredondo
Gustavo Adolfo González Roys