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Generalization of the methodology for training students in reading comprehension in English (Original).

Generalización de la metodología para la preparación de los estudiantes en comprensión lectora en inglés (Original).

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Abstract

The present work aims to present the results of the generalization of a methodology for the preparation of university students in reading comprehension in English at the Universidad de Granma, applied for the first time in 2022. Through the generalization of the methodology in various careers, the students were able to obtain and demonstrate the communicative skills that express their ability to understand texts written in English at an A2 level. They were also able to use English as an instrument for academic, employment and research in their respective careers, in such a way that it allowed them to solve problems and situations from their specific educational contexts. In addition, the levels of development of skills for the search and management of information from different sources increased, as well as communication skills that contribute to their efficient academic training and as future professionals. Furthermore, the teachers involved contributed to the transformation of traditional didactic approaches in the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English, as well as to a dynamization of



the process to satisfy the needs and interests of the students. These transformations contributed to achieving a notable increase in the quality and promotion of the results obtained in the English proficiency test carried out in December 2022, which allows us to sustain that it contributes to the improvement of the process under investigation, according to current educational policies.

Keywords: reading comprehension; english, methodology; a2 level.

Resumen

El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo la exposición de los resultados de la generalización de una metodología para la preparación de los estudiantes universitarios en comprensión lectora en inglés en la Universidad de Granma, aplicada por vez primera en el año 2022. A través de la generalización de la metodología en varias carreras, los estudiantes fueron capaces de obtener y demostrar las competencias comunicativas que expresan sus capacidades para comprender textos escritos en inglés con eficiencia en un nivel A2 y utilizar el inglés como instrumento de formación académica, laboral e investigativa en sus respectivas carreras, de forma tal que les permitió resolver problemas y situaciones característicos de sus contextos formativos específicos. Se incrementaron, además, los niveles de desarrollo de habilidades para la búsqueda y manejo de la información proveniente de diferentes fuentes, así como de habilidades comunicativas que contribuyen a su eficiente formación académica y como futuros profesionales. Por su parte, los profesores implicados contribuyeron a la transformación de los enfoques didácticos tradicionales en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la comprensión lectora en inglés, así como a una dinamización de dicho proceso para satisfacer las necesidades e intereses de los estudiantes. Estas transformaciones contribuyeron a lograr un incremento notable en la calidad y promoción de los resultados obtenidos en los exámenes de certificación de inglés realizados en diciembre de 2022, lo que permite sustentar que se contribuye al perfeccionamiento



del proceso objeto de investigación, según las políticas educativas actuales.

Palabras claves: comprensión lectora; inglés; metodología, nivel A2.

Introduction

Currently, it is an urgent need in our country to have professionals who not only perform successfully in their specialty, but are also capable of communicating in more than one language, especially English. That is why, the Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of Cuba (MES) adopts the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2002), in 2016, as the common base that guides the national policy on the design of standards, foreign language courses, evaluation instruments, teaching methodologies and didactic materials.

University students, then, must obtain and demonstrate the communicative competencies that express their abilities to understand and express themselves orally and in writing in English with efficiency, initially at a basic level equivalent to an A2 and moving towards an intermediate level equivalent to a B1, following the structure by levels established for Cuban higher education. This allows them to use this language as an instrument of academic, labor and research training in their respective careers to expand their knowledge and general culture, and express their national identity.

Based on this goal, teachers of the Language Center, at the Universidad de Granma, have carried out important research dealing with the didactical treatment to the teaching-learning process of English (Aguilera et al, 2021; Carrazana et al, 2021; Domínguez et al, 2018 and 2022; Núñez et al, 2021; López et al, 2017 and 2021; Serrano et al, 2021; Sosa and Carrazana, 2021; Sutil et al, 2022; Tamayo et al, 2021; Vinajera et al, 2021). However, insufficiencies persist in the development of the four skills of verbal activity (reading comprehension, listening



comprehension, oral and written expression) by the students, and there is a lack of contextualized theoretical reference that limits the improvement of the process in question.

These deficiencies were evident in the results of the proficiency test applied to students in December 2021, at the Universidad de Granma, which shown that one of the most difficult skills was reading comprehension.

That is why, based on the inadequacies detected in students' reading comprehension, expressed through: inaccuracies in selecting relevant specific information from written texts; limited interpretative process of the implicit textual information, from the disciplinary demands; meager process of determining the general, main and secondary ideas; as well as insufficiency in the interpretative synthesis of the processed texts, based on the requirements of the specific training processes, a methodology for the preparation of students in reading comprehension in English at an A2 level, according to CEFR requirements, was designed and implemented in Physical Culture major, since February to July, 2022.

After achieving satisfactory results, this methodology was then generalized for students of the A2 English course groups of Agricultural Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Forestry Engineering and Veterinary Medicine and Zootecnia, since September to December 2022.

The objective of this article is to present the most relevant results of the generalization of the methodology to develop reading comprehension in English in students at an A2 level, at the Universidad de Granma.

Materials and methods

The methodology was applied for the first time in 2022 to a sample of 22 students of the A2 English course, belonging to the Physical Culture major, at the University of Granma. After achieving satisfactory results in the proficiency test in July 2022, in which a 92.8% promotion



was obtained, it was decided to generalize this methodology to other A2 English courses, made up of 224 students of the first and second year of Agricultural Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Forest Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics.

Theoretical methods were used, such as documentary analysis, to collect written information on the subject; analysis-synthesis, which went through the entire research process; inductive-deductive, to derive conclusions and establish generalizations. Similarly, empirical methods and techniques were used, which allowed characterizing the current state of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at the Universidad de Granma and determining the existing shortcomings. The research was based on the communicative approach, task based work and student centered.

Results and Discussion

From the socio-cultural point of view, with the methodology, the value system is strengthened with communication and even more, the interaction that occurs between students and between them and their teachers, allow mutual influences, enables full development of personality, and a critical and transformative attitude, not only of the student, but also of the surrounding world. This supports the fact that the essence of each individual, his personality, is the system of relationships that he establishes with those around him. Therefore, students acquire a scientific conception of the world based on knowledge of science, develop their intellectual capacities and acquire an aesthetic, moral and labor education as well as a political-ideological one in accordance with social principles.

This methodology not only contributes to the preparation of the student in the theoretical and practical order to perform in a certain profession, but also offers a training that comprehensively covers the development of their personality. When we speak of integral



formation we understand that whose dimensions are spiritual (being), cognitive (knowing), socio-affective (feeling), technical-professional (knowing how to do) and communicative (knowing how to express oneself). An integration between knowing, doing and being is pursued, thus attending to the multidimensional development of personality. Along with their own cultural knowledge and knowing how to operate with them in practice, this procedure has paid attention to humanistic-cultural training that allows students to cultivate their spirituality, their development as men and their moral preparation for the exercise of the profession.

This practical contribution suggests tasks that promote reflection, creativity, the desire to participate by expressing opinions and ideas, respecting individual criteria and, above all, stimulating student leadership. It allows facing the teaching of reading from the understanding and interpretation of socio-cultural contexts in contact, focused on the ability of the student-reader to expand their reading skills as they explore new cultural contexts.

In the treatment of comprehension at this level, the students were able to acquire an independence in the analysis that allowed them, while appropriating the content of the text, to perceive the ideological, ethical, moral and artistic values of the work, that is to say, being able to interpret and express the work read externally.

Therefore, it contributes to guarantee the development of abilities and skills of these students whose defined purpose is oriented towards the achievement of goals; that is, a means to achieve an end and not the end itself.

The methodology places the student at the center of the process, giving him an active participation. It also contributes to developing an ideological political education based on a scientific, materialist, dialectical and humanist conception of the surrounding world, since students assimilate language as a means of communication between men and as an instrument to



know the world that surrounds them, developing in them feelings of solidarity towards other peoples. In this way, it contributes to the elimination of communication barriers related to socio-linguistic-cultural aspects.

Students not only systematize knowledge in a productive way, but also discover their own possibilities to search for valid information, determine their socio-cultural potential, and in an original and creative way, seek solutions to the contradictions exposed. In this case, they will be able to distinguish between their expectations, interests, values, assumptions, about reality and the data, and will be able to carry out a valid analysis of them.

Regarding the impact on the pedagogical order, this methodology provides important results. It allows to a better preparation on the part of the teachers, which results in the quality of the lessons, which, in turn, influences the improvement of promotion results. In such conditions, the work in the classroom becomes more pleasant, and active.

To do this, the teacher promotes the development of referential knowledge, facilitating the material and mental conditions that allow the student to learn, share, and integrate the cognitive aspects inherent to the sociocultural context of origin.

This process, from the student's point of view, leads to a constant self-assessment of their understanding, which allows them to generate new meanings and senses by assuming a hermeneutic position. The teacher's activity, then, will be aimed at guiding and verifying the flexibility of the student's linguistic and cultural patterns towards a consequent transformation that implies a new approach to the text.

Therefore, from didactics, the student-reader assumes, relationally, the concepts of language, society, and culture, manifested in textual linguistics. In this way, they will be in a position to recognize the functional threads that reciprocally transcend them: that is, language as



a dynamizer of culture, carrier of meanings, and instrument, at the same time, of the communication of the spiritual values of a given society, and culture, in turn, creator of languages and channeled by them. In this framework, therefore, the student configures the elements that give identity to the textual information, characterized by the flexibility of its procedures given the variable nature of language and communication.

Regarding the scientific and technological aspect, the implementation of this proposal has a marked impact, since students, by obtaining better results in their learning, are more efficient in their studies and will be more productive in their future profession, having greater capacity and ability, especially in the search and processing of technical scientific materials that contribute to perfecting their work.

It was verified, therefore, through the evaluation process of the generalization of this methodology, in order to improve the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English for an A2 level that the most relevant transformations were:

In students:

- Increase in intrinsic motivation when facing a new didactic alternative in the dynamics of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at an A2 level, as this process reveals their academic and professional needs.

-Development of an efficient reading from a dynamic centered on the student as self-manager of his own textual processing.

-Increased levels of development of both information search and management skills as well as communication skills that contribute to their efficient academic training and as future professionals.



-Development of communicative competence in English to solve problems and situations characteristic of their specific training contexts using this foreign language as a working tool.

Among the fundamental aspects are:

- Infer the textual information from the use of their prior knowledge and the prediction and anticipation of the information with visual support.
- Identify the basic procedures required for the development of the reading comprehension process.
- Recognize the textual structure, capturing the coherence between the ideas.
- Understand the main ideas of texts of medium complexity, generally short, as long as the subject is familiar.
- Identify the intentionality of the text.
- Hierarchize the information in such a way that it allows them to recognize the original textual meanings.
- Understand short and simple texts that contain very frequent vocabulary.
- Create, albeit with effort, a simple and elemental intertextual model of the basic aspects of the text, where the intention of reading is evidenced.
- Understand the meaning of informative written material, as well as conversations, simple descriptions of rules and instructions, signs, announcements, signs, brochures and letters, identifying the general and specific information they contain.
- Consult texts of medium complexity of their specialty in order to find the desired information and know how to collect information from the different parts of a text, or from different texts, in order to carry out a specific task



- Recognize the line of argument in the treatment of the matter presented, although not necessarily in full detail.

- Recognize significant ideas from simple newspaper articles that deal with everyday topics.

In the teachers involved in the process:

-Contribution to the transformation of traditional didactic approaches in the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at an A2 level, based on a new logic of academic reading based on its intertextual quality in order to develop holistic learning-comprehensive.

-Invigoration of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at an A2 level to meet the needs and interests of students.

-Contribution to the improvement of the teaching-learning process object of the investigation.

-Increase in professional improvement. In this sense, the requirements of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at the university level are fulfilled, according to the current requirements supported by the CEFR, since the students managed to certify the A2 level of English in the proficiency test, in December 2022. From this derives the need to achieve efficient communicative competence in students, in such a way that English better fulfills its function of being an instrument of study, work and culture.



Conclusions

1. The logical-dialectical correlation that is developed through the qualitative interpretation of the results achieved with the generalization of the methodology made it possible to corroborate its feasibility.

2. The transformations achieved in students and teachers, derived from the generalization of the methodology, allow us to sustain that it contributes to the improvement of the teaching-learning process of reading comprehension in English at an A2 level.

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