Storytelling strategies for the development of fifth grade oral expression

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Revista Minerva

Cdla. Universitaria. Universidad de Guayaquil
Av. Delta S/N y Av. Kenndy
Guayaquil-Ecaudor

https://revistas.ug.edu.ec/index.php/minerva/index

ABSTRACT

This research study focuses on designing storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression in fifth-year elementary school students at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School, requiring the use of theoretical, empirical, and mathematical statistical methods, with a mixed methodology. To evaluate the evolution of academic achievement, a diagnosis was carried out at the school through a survey of teachers, content testing, and document analysis, which revealed deficiencies in oral expression and dialogue among students. Problems were detected in the management of voice pitch and tone, coherence issues, and poor vocabulary, as well as the decontextualized use of teaching strategies in the Language and Literature class. In view of the above, the implementation of a participatory methodology was proposed, including storytelling and incorporating strategies such as the narration and dramatization of stories through narrative techniques, role-playing and theatrical improvisation, and simulated interviews. These strategies were validated by specialist consultation and obtained a high-level evaluation. It was concluded that storytelling is a commendable alternative for promoting the development of oral expression within a dynamic and interactive teaching-learning process.

Keywords: *Oral expression; storytelling; language and literature; basic education.*

INTRODUCTION

The current educational reality establishes that the student must participate in the formation of their knowledge, which frames educational practice within an innovative line that allows for a modernized management process for teaching and learning. In the report presented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2025), it is stated that efforts for the preservation of the mother tongue highlight the urgent need to include multilingualism in educational systems, where currently 40% of the world's population lacks a language they speak and understand fluently. It is at this point that oral communication stands as a fundamental axis for education, as it is one of the primary competencies that must be developed from an early age and valued as a tool for continuous learning. It must be understood that the skill of oral expression does not only refer to learning to speak, mastering pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon, but it implies that pragmatic aspects are understood from a sociocultural environment, thereby generating a series of micro-skills that effectively address how to share information during conversation.

In the report presented by the World Bank-UNICEF, in collaboration with UNESCO, an urgent call is made to teachers because it is considered that four out of five sixth-year elementary school students in Latin America and the Caribbean [LAC] do not reach the minimum level of reading comprehension, this after participating in a pandemic that hindered learning due to the lack of adequate strategies for its development and the necessary asynchronous work, requiring the establishment of aid actions to redirect the new educational generation (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2022).

Under this context, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2021) stipulates in Article 347:

"that the Ecuadorian state seeks the incorporation of information and communication technologies in the educational process and promotes the link between teaching methodologies and productive and social activities" (p. 168).

The innovation of teaching methodology has forced teachers to train in the design of new strategies to achieve the academic goals of students. These goals, subscribed in the Ministry of Education (2023), establish that fifth-year basic education students must apply their linguistic knowledge (lexical, semantic, syntactic, and phonological) in the decoding and comprehension of texts, reading fluently and with proper intonation in various contexts (familiar, school, and social) and with different purposes (exposing, informing, narrating, sharing, etc.). This curricular objective is also defined within the learning standards in the area of Language and Literature E.LL.3.4.

For all the reasons outlined, it is agreed that oral expression represents a necessary tool in education for classroom work, helping to understand diverse educational texts, as well as to fluently decipher conceptualizations and learning theory. It is concluded that the achievement of reading comprehension stimulates individual and group development within the social, cultural, professional, and personal areas of individuals.

Corpas and Romero (2021) express that historically the teaching of skills for oral expression and comprehension has always represented a challenge for teachers, who explore various techniques and methodologies in the school environment to promote and motivate students to participate in the construction of these knowledge bases. Oral expression constitutes a fundamental capacity for personal development, which is why it is addressed from the beginning of schooling, and even before that, parents stimulate children to say their first words and relate objects by their names (Moreira and Guzmán, 2022).

Thus, within the socio-cultural approach proposed by Vygotsky, he refers to the importance of making oral expression a systematic pedagogical and didactic work, starting

from the infant's first steps in the teaching-learning process. This is because language is closely linked to thought; thus, it is fair to say that we think to speak and on many occasions we speak what we first think (García et al., 2023).

From what has been expressed, it can be concluded that oral expression is of utmost importance in language development and the communication process. Thus, the use of verbal and non-verbal resources for its exercise and improvement in terms of fluency, clarity, persuasion, and correct pronunciation of words is an unavoidable part of all teaching-learning processes, with emphasis on Language and Literature.

Oral expression, despite being one of the main means used to achieve effective communication, is not always easy to use when delivering a message. This fear is often unfounded in the classroom, where students become inhibited due to fear of making a mistake in pronunciation, lack of knowledge of terminology, or simply not knowing how to express themselves adequately, thus avoiding peer ridicule, which interferes with the learning and formation process (Sckut and Salazar, 2022).

The Organization of Ibero-American States (2022) expressed that currently the reading skills developed by students are at a low level, lacking a broad vocabulary, which affects communication abilities. It is therefore necessary to improve and innovate the strategies applied by teachers in the teaching process, thus overcoming educational deficiencies.

Jaramillo et. al. (2023) considers that the use of new educational strategies such as storytelling generates a dynamic process in students for the development of oral expression and reading comprehension, providing tools that dynamically favor the construction of knowledge in the classroom.

Likewise, Benavides and Mendoza (2020) consider that the hybrid modality for the teaching-learning process depends directly on the strategy used by the teacher to capture the

students' attention and motivate them in the search for knowledge, predisposing them to a process of experimentation, creation, and educational innovation.

Based on the description provided by the authors, storytelling can be conceptualized in the educational field as an innovative teaching tool with a positive impact on the learning processes that take place in the classroom. This technique seeks to foster understanding of educational content through the narration of stories, thus promoting a dynamic and effective approach for the transmission of knowledge in the educational environment.

Camargo and Contreras (2023) establish that the inclusion of new methodologies for the teaching-learning process, such as storytelling, generates a commitment in students to learn collectively, integrating them into the construction of knowledge. For this, the following guidelines for its incorporation must be considered:

- Coordinate learning needs with the resources to be implemented.

- Interpretation of contents by structuring an implementation scheme and periodic evaluation of the teaching-learning strategy.

- Elaboration of an activity schedule for the incorporation of techniques such as storytelling and gamification.

- Review of the literary script that will be interpreted by students for the development of their playful activities.

- Creation of an audiovisual, or the application of Web 2.0 tools for the presentation of their playful activity.

- Evaluation through the application of rubrics that allow considering not only cognitive aspects but also evaluating skills and abilities to achieve the academic goal.

The research context focuses on the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public Basic Education School, which has rural characteristics, with a total of 219 students and 10 teachers. The school

infrastructure, especially in the technological aspect, is regular, due to the lack of sufficient connectivity for the use of technological resources in the classroom.

In this case, 4 Language and Literature teachers from the last 5 years and the 25 students who make up the fifth-year group were considered for the research. **An exploratory study** was conducted at this school through a review of governing documents, observations of Language and Literature classes, interviews with teachers, and the experience of the researchers in Basic Education.

The fundamental **strengths** found are:

1. Inclusion of the Language and Literature area in the Competency-Based Curricular Framework for Learning, which seeks to promote oral expression and the development of inclusive work.

2. Development of a reading program with student participation, where dramatizations, public speaking contests, and other events are held within the Language and Literature area.

For their part, the **weaknesses** found were:

1. Low capacity for oral expression in students, problems with coherence and cohesion in oral textual production, poor active vocabulary, and limited originality and creativity in expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions.

2. Problems with active listening.

3. Limited use of narrative, expressive, and technical language in students.

4. Scarce reading habit as a source for developing oral expression.

5. Use of traditional and structuralist methods and techniques.

Once the problematic situation was determined, the need to contribute to the development of oral expression in fifth-year students at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School was defined as the **scientific problem**, determining the **object of the research** as the

development of oral expression. Consequently, the **objective of the article** is to: Design storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression in fifth-year students at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School. This research is part of the **research project** of the Bolivarian University of Ecuador, called Didactic management and educational quality in Basic Education, and contributes to the **research line** of Didactics of Basic Education curricular areas.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the development of the research titled *Storytelling strategies for the development of fifth grade oral expression* was based on a **mixed approach**, addressing quantitative and qualitative aspects for the analysis of the research. The research was supported by the following **scientific questions and specific objectives**.

Scientific Questions:

1. What are the theoretical references and research backgrounds that relate the teaching process to oral expression?

2. What is the current state of oral expression in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School?

3. What content and structure will the storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression have in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School?

4. How to validate the storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School?

Objetivos específicos:

1. Systematize the theoretical references and research backgrounds that relate the teaching process to oral expression.

2. Characterize the current state of oral expression in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School.

3. Design storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School.

4. Validate the storytelling strategies for the development of oral expression in fifth grade at the Sebastián de Benalcázar Public School.

In the present research, the **dependent variable**, development of oral expression, was operationalized as follows:

Table 1:

Operationalization of the Dependent Variable.

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators
Oral Expression Development	Pronunciation	1. Communicates relatively fluently to express ideas correctly. 2. The pronunciation of words is correct, clear, and eloquent. 3. Maintains a dialogue with ease.
	Interaction	4. Expresses themselves coherently during a conversation/presentation/debate. Modulates their voice according to the purpose of the lexical interaction or communication. 5. Respects peers when others are speaking. 6. Pays due attention while another peer is speaking.
	Tone	7. Uses audible words in the classroom. 8. Shares ideas with peers during class in an appropriate tone of voice. 9. Uses words in an appropriate context.
	Coherence	10. Their presentation is appropriate and coherent. 11. Maintains concentration during the presentation of their ideas.

Vocabulary	12.	Demonstrates confidence when presenting ideas in front of peers.
	13.	Makes appropriate use of the space designated for the presentation, discussion, or debate.
Resources	14.	Uses natural gestures for the visual interpretation of ideas.

Note. Developed by the authors.

The **theoretical methods** used were the historical-logical method, which was employed to understand the evolution and background of oral expression in fifth-year basic education students before and after the proposed solution. The analytical-synthetic method was used to analyze the components, as a whole and in parts, that integrate the dimensions of oral expression. The inductive-deductive method was used because the information was processed to reach conclusions and then determine the various aspects leading to the proposal. The systemic-structural method was used to design a solution proposal in accordance with the problem found regarding oral expression.

Likewise, **empirical methods** were used: **documentary analysis** allowed for a study of the governing documents in Ecuadorian education, mainly those on Basic Education in the area of Language and Literature. **Surveys** for teachers provided information on the methodological practices applied in the classroom, as well as the recognition of the strategies and resources executed in the teaching-learning process for the development of oral expression. The **content test** was a test that made it possible to measure the current state of students regarding oral expression. **Validation by specialist consultation** facilitated the theoretical validation of the scientific result.

The **mathematical statistical methods** used for the interpretation of the information collected through the various research means were descriptive and inferential statistics. This allowed the data to be established in the form of quantitative percentages, which were expressed in tables and graphs, leading to the conclusions.

In correspondence with the empirical methods, the following instruments were developed:

Document analysis guide: This allowed for the analysis of relevant documents for conceptualization, theorization, and the statement of scientific background based on the study variables, considering keywords such as: oral expression, storytelling, educational strategies, narration, dialectics, and vocabulary.

Teacher survey: An instrument that allowed for the collection of information on the strategies used to develop oral expression in students. It had an 11-question structure, using the Likert scale for valuation (1 to 3, where 1 is never, 2 is sometimes, and 3 is always)

The questionnaire included: Do you consider that students maintain fluency when communicating their ideas? Do students express themselves coherently during a presentation or debate in the classroom? Do students easily maintain a coherent dialogue during a conversation? Is the voice pitch used by students during a conversation soft and in unison, avoiding shouts or sounds that cause hearing damage? During a conversation, have you been able to observe whether students respect their peers while each participant is speaking? Do you consider that the vocabulary used in the classroom by your students is audible without falling into filler words or profanity? Do you consider that students maintain adequate concentration when presenting their ideas in a debate, brainstorming session, or other oral expression activity in the classroom? Do students demonstrate confidence when presenting their ideas in the classroom? During a presentation where scientific arguments are shared, do students make appropriate use of the space to elaborate their ideas? Is the gesticulation and mannerisms performed during the gestural interpretation of a dialogue, in a debate, or in a presentation adequate?

Content test (oral expression): A pedagogical test was given to students with a structure designed to identify whether students have knowledge of narration, description, the

use of antonyms and synonyms, identifying punctuation marks, pronunciation, articulation, intonation, among other topics that enable better oral expression.

The **population** consisted of 4 Language and Literature teachers and 35 students belonging to the fifth year of Elementary Education. Since the sample had a small number of participants, the total population was included for the purpose of the study (sample).

The material resources used were the Excel tool for generating the database, which allowed for the tabulation of information and obtaining percentages that were later analyzed for interpretation in their drafting and writing in Word. Additionally, scientific journals published on platforms such as SciELO and Dialnet were used as a source of consultation, as they are reliable research sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the Documentary Review

In the search engine of the SciElo.org website, "storytelling" was considered as a key word. The results obtained were 402, and when delimited by the year between "2021 to 2025," 49 results were obtained, of which 43 were in Spanish and 6 in Portuguese. When the keyword "oral expression" was introduced, there was only one similarity, which was the article published by Regina and Ferraz on "effects of the implementation of digital stories on the oral pronunciation of English learners: a stage-based study".

In the same SciELO.org search engine, "oral expression" was used as a keyword, yielding 380 articles. When delimited by year (2021-2025), 31 articles remained, but when related to storytelling, no results were obtained.

For its part, in the Dialnet search engine ("Dialnet.unirioja.es"), the keywords "storytelling and oral expression" were used, resulting in 31 documents found. Of these, three documents were found between 2021 and 2025, two of which were duplicates, leaving two documents for information analysis. These correspond to Yucra (2022), with the development

of the article on discursive ability through storytelling in students of the oral expression workshop, and Nieves and Conde (2022), who present the experience of how activities such as telling stories foster creativity and imagination in children, in addition to the fact that linking them with events associated with their environment streamlines the association process. The results obtained from the study showed that during the narration period, children pay more attention, especially if narrative, vocalization, and interpretation skills are involved, improving learning and motivation for reading.

The Competency-Based Curricular Framework for Learning (2023) was reviewed, and the presence of the linguistic communicative competence, which places a marked emphasis on the development of oral expression, was confirmed. However, the methodological treatment given is not particularized, nor are didactic strategies such as storytelling proposed to develop these aspects of communication.

Results of the Teacher Survey

The tabulation of the survey applied to the teachers provided the following information described in Table 2, which corresponds to a summary of the study dimensions through the application of 15 questions about oral expression. These results were also represented in Figure 1.

Table 2.

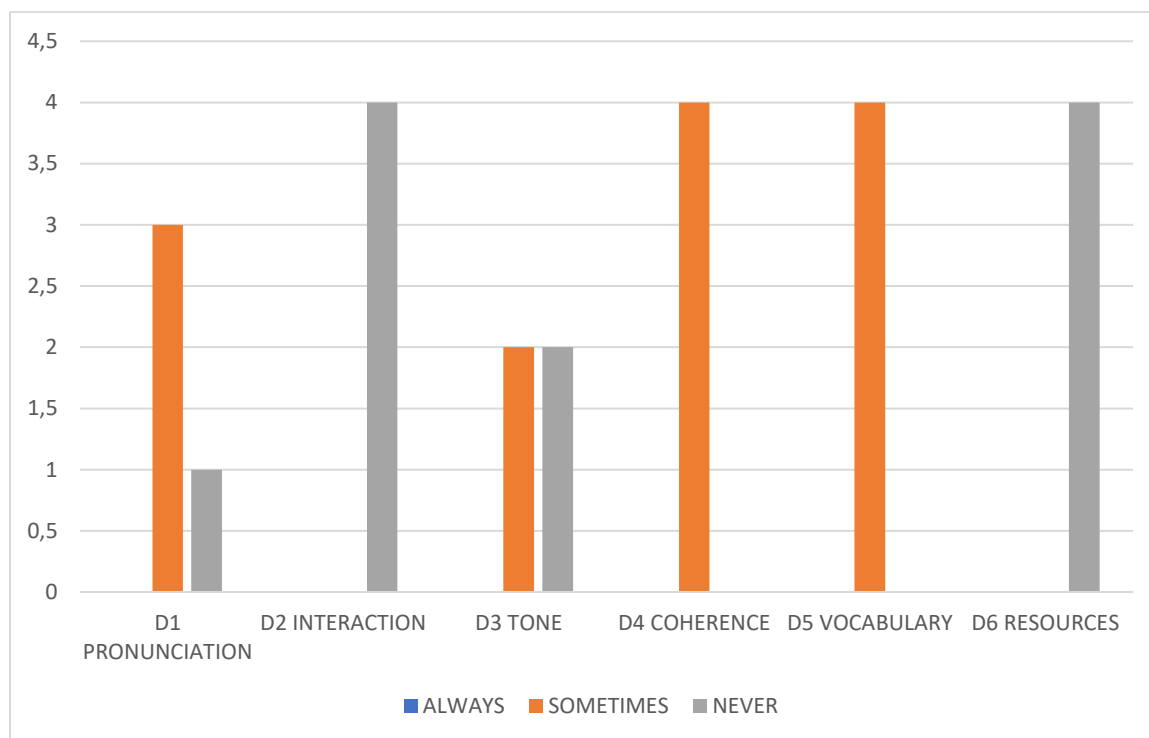*Results of the Survey Applied to Teachers on Oral Expression*

DIMENSION	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
D1 PRONUNCIATION	0	3	1
D2 INTERACTION	0	0	4
D3 TONE	0	2	2
D4 COHERENCE	0	4	0
D5 VOCABULARY	0	4	0
D6 RESOURCES	0	0	4

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Graph 1.

Results of the Survey Applied to Teachers on Oral Expression

Source: Prepared by the authors**.**

In the graph, the following could be determined:

In dimension #1, 55% of teachers believe that students **sometimes** maintain correct pronunciation, and 45% believe that they **never** do so correctly. In dimension #2, 100% of teachers state that there is **no correct interaction** when students engage in dialogue. Students do not respect others when they are speaking, try to impose their opinions, or evade topics to avoid dialogue. In dimension #3, there is a 50-50 split regarding the management of voice pitch and tone when maintaining a dialogue. Students occasionally shout when presenting their ideas and even when interacting with classmates, despite being close.

In dimensions #4 and #5, 85% of teachers agreed that the coherence and vocabulary used by students during academic activities is usually **acceptable**. However, they lack the use of technical words or a scientific vocabulary that would allow for an academically feasible

presentation appropriate to the educational environment. Finally, in dimension #6, 97% of teachers agreed that one of the areas where better implementation is needed is in the **resources** used for the development of students' oral expression.

Results of the Content Test (Oral Expression)

The results obtained from the oral expression test determined that the current general average of the course is **7.0 points**. The highest score obtained was 6.5 points in 8 of the 35 cases. Furthermore, 58% of the students are at a mean **below 6.5 points**, and 42% are at a mean above 6.5 points, which would mean that the current level of student knowledge is at a 50-50 ratio.

The test results also determined that the content to be reinforced was related to writing, interpretation, observation, and the identification of acute, grave, and esdrújula words. The general average for these types of questions was 1.7 out of a possible 2.5 points.

Graph 2.

Results of the Survey Applied to Teachers on Oral Expression
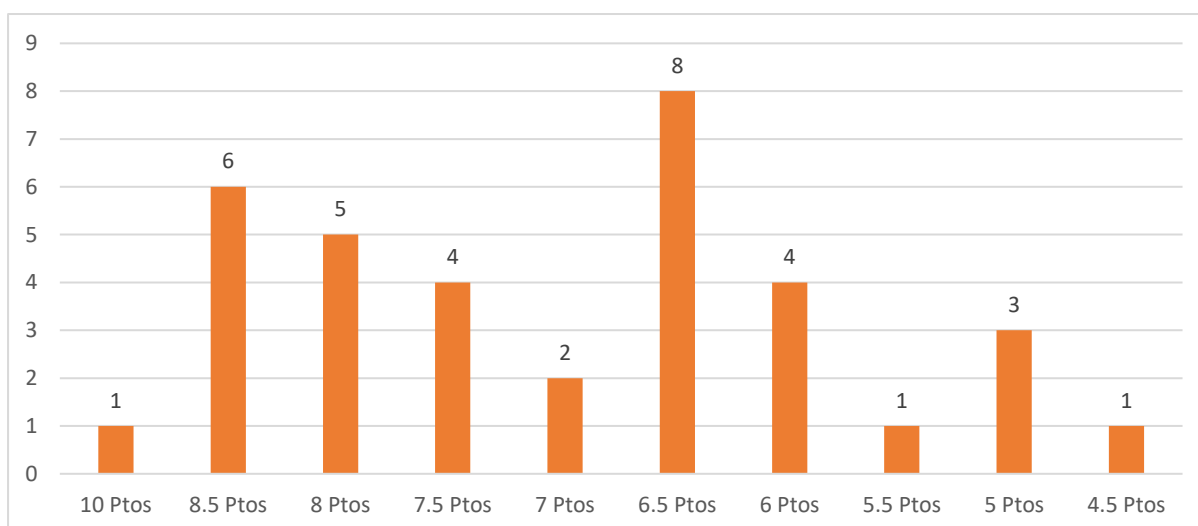
Source: Prepared by the authors**.**

Inventory of Difficulties

In accordance with the results found, the following difficulties were noted:

1. Scarce active vocabulary appropriate to the grade and age.

2. Errors in sentence structure, coherence, and cohesion, representing a difficulty in constructing grammatical sentences, considering their structure and the identification of primary and secondary ideas.

3. Difficulty in understanding the meaning of certain words and the appropriate use of technical words for writing development.

4. Problems in identifying punctuation marks and their appropriate use, which would provide better meaning and coordination of ideas.

5. Problems with fluency, intonation, and articulation: Verbal fluency is also one of the problems found in students, who sometimes exhibit fear associated with stage fright, which prevents them from expressing their ideas clearly.

6. Deficiencies in multidisciplinary attention: It is also important to consider that an adequate examination for oral expression should contemplate not only the students but also require a psycho-pedagogue and interviews with parents, as there may be other problems associated with speech disorders that are not detectable without specialized testing.

DISCUSSION

Cotrado et al. (2023) consider that oral expression should be regarded as an important point for the development of the human being, being one of the fundamental axes for communication. For this reason, greater emphasis is currently required on the educational strategies used to promote learning. This is where storytelling enters as an innovative pedagogical strategy, including a set of tools that motivate students to construct their knowledge and make them participants in the teaching-learning process, in addition to the inclusion of prior knowledge as part of experimentation.

The authors, in their research development, expressed that the relationship between the development of oral expression and storytelling is positive and that the adaptation of this methodology to the curriculum promotes active student participation. The Pearson correlation of the research variables had a value of 0.965, which is close to one and demonstrates the positive relationship between the variables, as well as a bilateral significance of 0.001.

Based on the data found, it was determined that oral expression, with the inclusion of narrative strategies such as storytelling where the student is involved in the construction of knowledge, is motivating, making the educational experience a positive factor for meaningful learning.

For their part, in the study developed by Magallanes et al. (2021), they expressed that language is a fundamental tool for the development of the individual and society. For this reason, oral expression provides the possibility for the comprehension of information, its narration, and the logical representation of events or facts related to social interaction. Based on this, establishing adequate strategies for its development in the teaching-learning process must be a priority for teachers, who need to propose better strategies to potentialize learning in curricular programming.

For Zhapa and Toledo (2022), oral expression is important in terms of what it allows in society; interaction through communication is an inflexible point of development. Therefore, the inclusion of new educational strategies and methodologies must be a fundamental part of the teaching-learning process, understanding that storytelling is one of them. In their analytical study on how the use of storytelling contributes to reading comprehension and communication, they establish that the use of this innovative strategy encourages students to actively participate in the construction of their knowledge. Furthermore, its use helps create a dynamic and participatory educational environment, resulting in an educational setting that favors the learning process.

Each of the mentioned authors agrees, from their point of view, that oral expression is a starting point for the development of society. Strategies for its improvement should focus on students being participants in the construction of knowledge. This is highly acceptable within the research framework, where the theories presented by Piaget and Vygotsky indicate that the best way to learn is through experimentation and that prior knowledge should be considered as a socio-cultural approach in which the student develops, resulting in different ways of interacting.

Storytelling is an educational strategy that has provided positive results for the integration of students into the construction of knowledge. Its interaction has improved academic performance, oral expression, and motivation to learn, making it a complete strategy for inclusion in the formation of new knowledge. And this is precisely where its novelty lies.

For its part, the practical contribution focuses on storytelling as a strategy for the development of oral expression, founded on the comprehensive reading of a story, the use of narration within a framework of collaborative work, interaction, narrative improvisation, and the creation of simulated interview spaces. This also promotes the development of creativity and imagination.

CONCLUSIONS

Oral expression is a fundamental part of the integral development of the human being as part of a society. For this reason, the curriculum design needs to contemplate educational and pedagogical strategies based on the construction of knowledge, using technological didactic resources, which allow for active student participation through storytelling.

The need to include storytelling as a didactic strategy to improve oral expression is based on the theories, concepts, and practical contributions of a linguistic and didactic nature

that demonstrate its validity and relevance in boosting students' motivation to develop their oral expression in the area of Language and Literature.

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