

Playing I Learn Digital Classroom: Innovating the Teaching of English Communication Skills

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Abstract

The use of resources for digital education provides a favorable environment for students to practice and acquire a second language quickly and effectively. The objective of this educational study was to demonstrate that the implementation of digital educational resources improves English communicative skills in basic education students, Ecuador, 2023. A quasi-experimental methodology with a quantitative approach was used, using 80 students as the study population. The pretest results indicated slightly superior performance in the experimental group in all evaluated categories, highlighting a 10% increase in the Listening category. Subsequently, a 'Program for the use of digital educational resources' was introduced to enhance communicative skills in English. The results of the subsequent phase revealed that the majority of the students in the sixth grade 'A' had Listening (97.50%) and Reading (95.0%) skills at intermediate levels. However, a significant need for improvement in Writing skills was identified, since more than 50% of the students were at the low level. In response to these findings, a didactic guide focused on the development of English writing skills was developed, supporting the continuous need to adjust and perfect educational approaches to meet the changing demands of language learning.

Keywords: Digital Resources, Education, Communicative Skills, Listening, Reading, Writing.

Introduction

Proficiency in the English language has become a prerequisite in various fields, encompassing technology, finance, commerce, industry, and research globally. This language is considered essential in both the educational and professional spheres. Consequently, policies have been implemented to support the teaching of English in Latin American countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Honduras, Peru, Costa Rica and Paraguay, with the aim of training a workforce

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competent in a second language. However, unsatisfactory results in standardized tests and traditional teaching practices in Chile highlight the need to transform educational approaches, with a particular emphasis on the role of the educator as an agent of change in the classroom (Espinoza et al., 2019)

Several authors underline that the mastery of English not only opens up job opportunities, but is also essential in fundamental business areas, thus advocating for comprehensive learning that includes the understanding and production of socially appropriate messages. In addition, it is emphasized that education focused on the mastery of a second language contributes to equal opportunities and intercultural understanding, highlighting the importance of education in Ecuador being based on principles of respect for human rights and a democratic approach, ensuring the integral development of the individual in accordance with these values (ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC, ECLAC 2018)

A study conducted by Cevallos (2022) provides a more comprehensive view of English teaching in Ecuador, identifying both positives and challenges that need to be addressed. Increased investment in educational resources is suggested, as well as in programmes to improve and train teachers, supporting creative and efficient approaches. It also highlights the importance of encouraging English immersion and practice outside the classroom, through extracurricular activities and exchange programs.

According to Vera et al., (2020), in Ecuador, students in educational institutions often struggle with English proficiency. Their lack of interest exacerbates this problem, making learning even more challenging. This situation is not unique to Ecuador, but is a common reality in many countries where English is not the official language. Students are often demotivated due to the fact that English classes are taught in a traditional way, focusing on translation and grammar. Therefore, it is essential to implement an innovative methodology with a communicative approach.

Over time, language teaching in Ecuador's basic education has progressed significantly, providing benefits to students both in the classroom and in the workplace. Several authors highlight that the implementation of communicative and practical approaches aims to develop language skills for daily use and effective communication at a global level. The importance of teaching resources and materials, such as textbooks and online tools, to improve students' language skills is also emphasized. To address these challenges, it is necessary to invest more in educational resources and ensure the continuous training of educators. (Espinoza et al, 2023)

This research seeks to address the urgent need to adapt educational methodologies to the current digital environment and harness the benefits of digital educational resources to significantly improve English teaching and learning. Academic literature has shown that digital resources, such as interactive videos, can be particularly effective in developing communicative skills, providing models of pronunciation, intonation, and idiomatic expressions that enrich students' language competence. (Marín et al., 2022)

From a methodological perspective, the research will be based on an experimental design. Arias and Covinos, (2021) state that the experimental design will evaluate the effects of incorporating digital learning tools into the English teaching process. In this research, there will be two groups: an experimental group that will follow the standard curriculum without the use of these resources, and a control group that will use interactive films and other digital tools as pedagogical support. This study is carried out due to the need to improve the English communication skills of basic education students in the city of Babahoyo, Ecuador, through the use of digital educational resources as a tool for learning a second language (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2019).

In terms of its social relevance, this initiative focuses on educational inclusion, sustainable development and the improvement of academic performance in English

language teaching. In addition, it seeks to adjust to the needs of students with diverse learning styles and abilities through the integration of digital educational materials, thus facilitating their successful integration into the educational system (García & Gutierrez, 2023). By addressing issues related to the environment and sustainability in the English curriculum, environmental awareness is promoted among students, preparing them to meet current and future environmental challenges.

Given the importance of English as a key tool for accessing international information and resources related to sustainable development, participation in global projects and collaborations in this area is encouraged (García & Gutiérrez, 2023). Globally, although there are approximately six thousand to seven thousand languages, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and, especially, English stand out as the three most used, the latter being considered the universal language par excellence (Martel, et al., 2022).

Aware of this pre-eminence, there is an undeniable professional interest in investigating whether the implementation of digital educational resources improves the development of communicative skills in English, focusing on answering the question: "Does the implementation of digital educational resources significantly influence the improvement of English communication skills in basic education students?" In response to this question, the general objective is to demonstrate that the implementation of digital educational resources improves English communication skills in basic education students.

This goal is broken down into specific objectives, which include measuring English communication skills in basic education students in Ecuador in 2023 before implementing digital educational resources, designing and implementing a program with the use of these resources to improve English communication skills, and finally, measuring such skills after implementing digital resources. In addition, the comparison of communication skills before and after implementation is proposed.

Consequently, hypothesis 1 suggests that the implementation of digital educational resources improves English communication skills in basic education students in Ecuador in 2023. In contrast, hypothesis 0 raises the possibility that the implementation of digital educational resources does not improve English communication skills in these students.

METHODS

The research in question, according to its objectives, is classified as applied, as established by Concytec (2018). In this category, the primary focus is to employ scientific knowledge to address a specific, clearly defined need. It is used to apply research results or to develop alternative techniques for the purpose of achieving previously established goals. In this context, methodologies, protocols and technologies that can meet that specific need were identified. Applied research focuses on the practical application of scientific knowledge to solve problems or improve particular situations in the real world.

On the other hand, the research is framed in a quasi-experimental quantitative approach and for Hernández and Mendoza (2018), this approach is a research methodology that merges elements of experimental and non-experimental designs. Its main objective is to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables, but without resorting to the random assignment of participants to study groups, as in traditional experimental designs. Instead, pre-existing situations or groups are used to compare results.

Researchers use pre-formed situations or groups to compare the effects of an intervention or treatment. Although these designs do not provide the same level of control as traditional experiments, they are still useful for assessing causal relationships and gaining valuable insights into the impact of interventions in a specific context (Arturo et al., 2011).

As for quasi-experimental design, it generally involves the selection of groups that are comparable or similar in terms of relevant characteristics, such as age, gender, or socioeconomic status. According to Hernández and Mendoza (2018), one of the most widely used quasi-experimental designs is the "non-equivalent group design", in which an experimental group that receives the intervention is compared with a control group that does not receive it.

Considering the design of the study, it is crucial to define the variables used in the research. According to Reyez (2021), the dependent variable, which focuses on communicative skills in English, can be assessed through various indicators or subdimensions, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These subdimensions make it possible to measure and analyze the different communication skills in English of the participants. It is essential to remember that mastery of these skills can range from basic levels to more specialized or advanced levels, and their improvement can be achieved through formal study, practice, continuous exposure to the language, and participation in English educational programs.

The study population was selected from the Francisco Robles general basic education school, including 6th A and 6th B students, with a total of 40 individuals per section and a total population of 80 participants, according to Romero et al. (2021). Population, understood as the set of elements or people with a specific property, can be infinite or finite, and its size can vary.

Therefore, for the purposes of the research, students who attend regularly and who are between 10 and 11 years old were considered. The sample, selected in a practical and feasible way, comprises a meticulously chosen subset of the population and provides indicative data of the community at large, as noted by Hernández (2021, p.2). In this case, a sample of 40 students from the Francisco Robles School was chosen.

In relation to information collection techniques and instruments, Feria et al. (2020) highlight the need for study tools to collect data on a specific community or sample. In this study, the survey will be used, which involves asking structured questions beforehand to participants to elicit their opinions and answers on a specific topic. The evaluation rubric will be the tool and the survey will be the method used.

Regarding the processing of the information, experts in the field evaluated the content of the instrument as part of the validation process. To ensure the validity and quality of the instrument, a pilot test was used and permission was obtained from the educational institution before starting the research. The rubric was used as a tool to establish specific evaluation criteria and provide levels of achievement to assign a score to the work done.

After obtaining the results, the data were analyzed with the help of software such as Excel and SPSS. Statistical reports were generated through frequency tables to provide a descriptive analysis of the relevant data. These reports include the calculation of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and variability, as well as the use of statistics and coefficients to interpret the results.

RESULTS

This study aims to demonstrate that the Digital Educational Resources Program is beneficial for improving communicative skills in English. Before implementing the digital educational tools, in the first phase a pre-test will be administered to assess the English communication skills of primary school students. As part of the study's methodology, two groups were formed: the experimental group and the control group, which were evaluated at levels ranging from 1 to 4, with 1 being the low level; 2 is the medium level, 3 is high and 4 is very high.

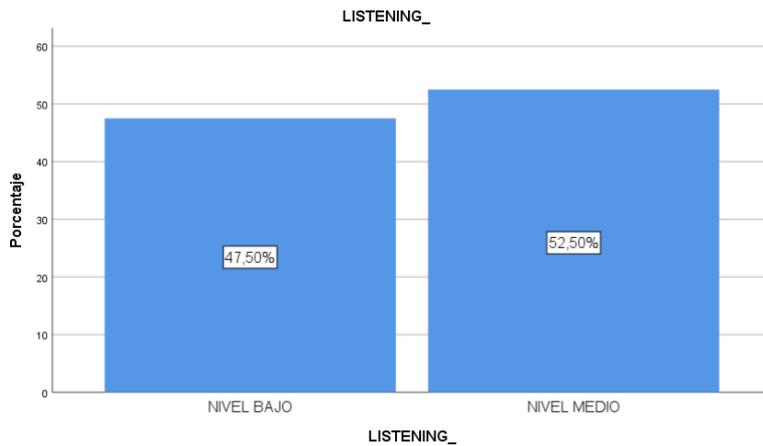
First Phase: Application of the Pretest to the experimental and control group

Table 2 Listening category of the experimental group

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	19	47,50%
MEDIUM LEVEL	21	52,50%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 1 Listening category of the experimental group



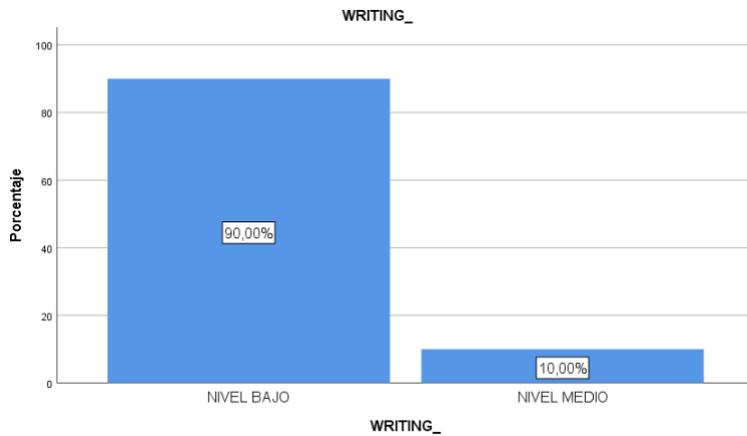
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 3 Reading category of the experimental group

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	28	70%
MEDIUM LEVEL	12	30%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 3 Category: Writing of the experimental group



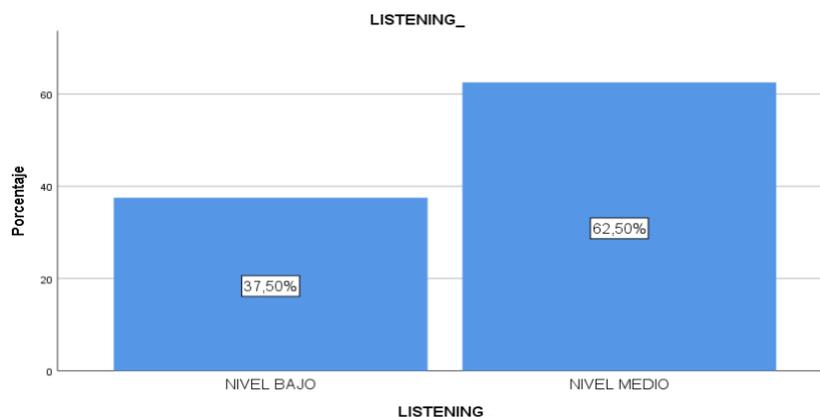
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 5 Control Group Listening Category

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	15	37,50%
MEDIUM LEVEL	25	62,50%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 4 Control Group Listening Category



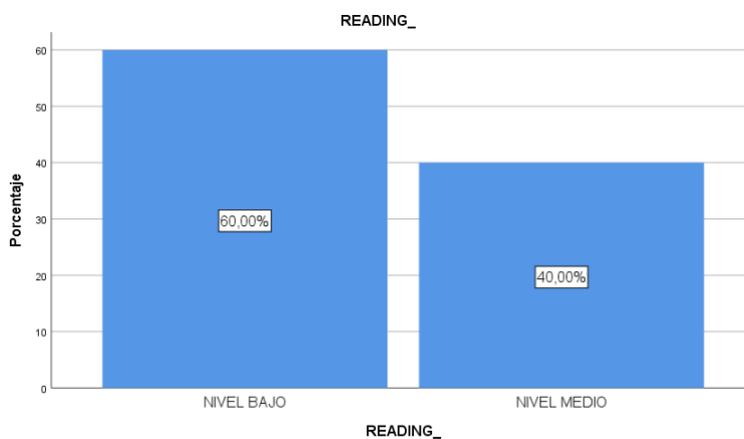
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 6 Reading category of the control group

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	24	60%
MEDIUM LEVEL	16	40%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 5 Reading category of the control group



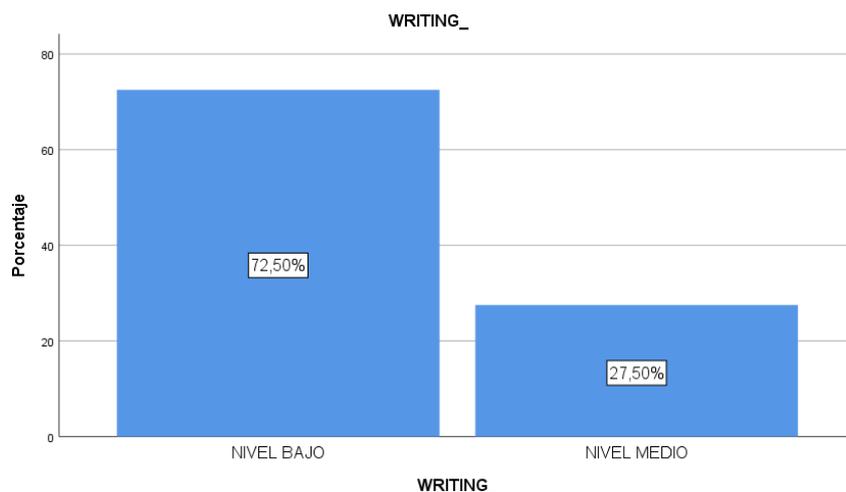
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 7 Control Group Writing Category

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	29	72,50%
MEDIUM LEVEL	11	27,50%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 6 Control Group Writing Category



Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Through this first part of the results it can be observed that the experimental group performs slightly better in all categories compared to the control group. For example, in the Listening category, the experimental group has 10% more students at the middle level compared to the control group. Both groups have a majority of students at the low level in all categories, indicating that there is an area of significant improvement in the English communication skills of elementary school students in Ecuador.

After the implementation of the "Program for the Use of Digital Educational Resources to Improve Communicative Skills in English in Basic Education Students, Ecuador, 2023", the second phase of the research was carried out. After the application of this program to the sixth grade "A" students, who constituted the control group, the following results were observed:

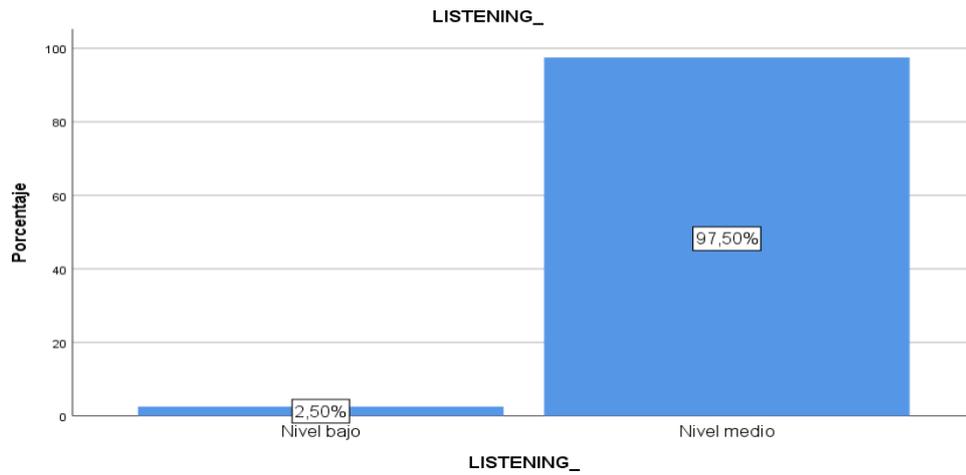
Second Phase: Application of the post-test to the post-program control group

Table 8 Control Group Listening Category

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	1	2,50%
MEDIUM LEVEL	39	97,50%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 7 Control Group Listening Category



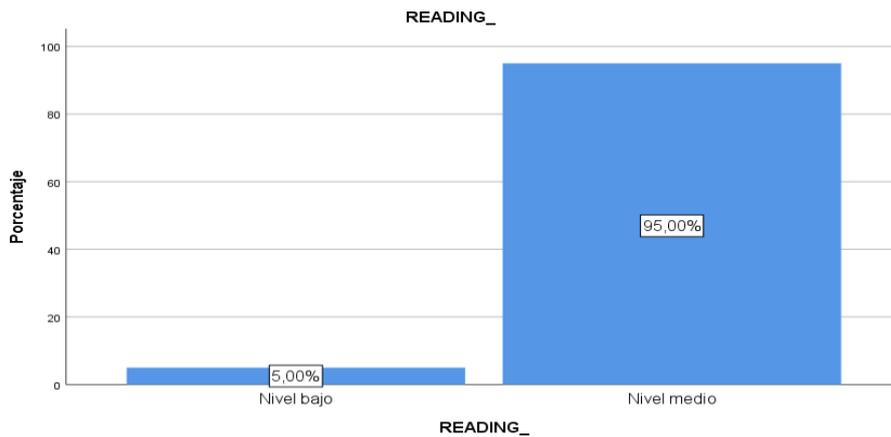
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 9 Reading category of the control group

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	2	5,0%
MEDIUM LEVEL	38	95,0%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 8 Reading category of the control group



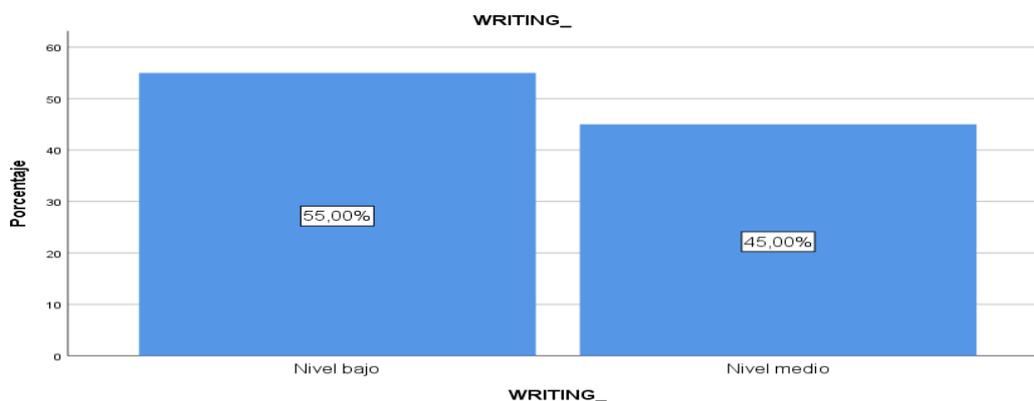
Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Table 10 Control Group Writing Category

Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
LOW LEVEL	22	55%
MEDIUM LEVEL	18	45%
Total	40	100

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

Figure 9 Control Group Writing Category



Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

In this second phase, after applying the program, it was evident that the evaluation of communicative skills in students of sixth grade "A", of basic education, revealed that most of them had Listening (97.50%) and Reading (95.0%) skills at medium levels, suggesting a moderate and solid base in these areas respectively. However, more than 50% of students had inadequate writing skills, underscoring the need for improvement in this particular area. These results imply that, despite the specific strengths of English communication, the use of digital educational tools should focus primarily on improving writing skills in order to achieve more balanced growth across communicative domains.

Differences in the control group's processes before and after the program was implemented

Table 11 Shapiro-Wilk normality test of the Listening category in the control groups before and after the application of the Program

Category	Shapiro - Wilk		
	Statistical	Gl	Gis.
Pres test_ Listening	0,954	40	0,107
Post test_ Listening	0,839	40	0,000

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

The p-value of 0.107 in the Listening pretest suggests that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. In other words, the data in the Listening pretest for the control group can be considered approximately normal. On the other hand, the very low p-value (0.000) in the Listening post test indicates that there is sufficient evidence to

reject the null hypothesis of normality. The data in the Listening posttest does not conform to a normal distribution.

Table 12 Shapiro-Wilk normality test of the Reading category in the control groups before and after the application of the Program

Category	Shapiro - Wilk		
	Statistical	Gl	Gis.
Pres test_ Reading	0,883	40	0,001
Post test_ Reading	0,777	40	0,000

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

The p-value of 0.001 on the Reading pretest indicates that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. In other words, the data in the Reading pretest for the control group do not follow a normal distribution. Similar to the pretest, the very low p-value (0.000) in the Reading posttest indicates that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. The data in the Reading posttest also do not follow a normal distribution.

Table 13 Shapiro-Wilk normality test of the Writing category in the control groups before and after the application of the Program

Category	Shapiro - Wilk		
	Statistical	Gl	Gis.
Pres Writing	0,824	40	0,000
Post test_ Writing	0,927	40	0,013

Source: General Basic Education of the Francisco Robles School

The very low p-value (0.000) in the Writing pretest indicates that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. In other words, the data in the Writing pretest for the control group do not follow a normal distribution. Although the p-value is significant (0.013) in the Writing posttest, it is higher compared to the pretest. However, it remains low, indicating that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality.

The data in the Writing posttest also do not follow a normal distribution. Since writing skills showed a greater need for improvement and the current program generated an increase, but does not yet follow a normal distribution, the proposal will be focused on educational resources that focus on the development of Writing skills.

DISCUSSION

With respect to the findings of the initial pretest phase, the study carried out by Bances and Castillo (2020) on the Divertilee program, designed to enhance reading processes in second-grade students in a public school, demonstrated a positive impact on the improvement of these processes in the experimental group of these students. Although both studies addressed the implementation of educational programs, they focused on distinct skill areas. In contrast to the results obtained in this research, the study by Bances and Castillo (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of the Divertilee program in the experimental group and concluded, based on its results, that the program managed to significantly improve reading processes.

Cumba and Cruz, (2022), implemented a Comprehensive Reading Program that included experimental and control groups, similar to this study. In the aforementioned research, the

program was carried out over a span of fourteen weeks. In both experiments, before- and post-evaluations were conducted to determine the effectiveness of the program. This is a crucial feature, as it allows you to compare pre- and post-intervention performance.

On the other hand, Gonzalez, (2020), argues that it is essential that all three categories reach a high level, as these skills are fundamental for success in daily life and in school. The ability to understand and communicate ideas clearly and accurately, as well as reading comprehension and written expression, are key cognitive skills that facilitate children's assimilation and processing of information, data analysis and synthesis, and the development of critical thinking and creativity. These skills are imperative for effective communication in any language.

Communicative skills in English serve as a gateway to various opportunities and resources. Children who excel in these skills will be better prepared to take advantage of their educational experience, access relevant information, and participate in extracurricular activities that promote their personal growth (Rodas, 2019). The development of skills in Listening, Reading and Writing at advanced levels is essential for the holistic growth of children in basic education, as it provides them with the necessary tools to succeed in education, communication and life in general.

It has been shown that the incorporation of technology, especially through online platforms and Open Educational Resources, improves the process of teaching and learning English (Arias, 2023). Both support the idea that technology can play a crucial role in the development of language skills, as raised in the present study. In line with Ramírez and Peña's (2022) proposal on a blended learning model (blearning), there is a correspondence with their approaches, since this model impacts both students' academic performance and mutual satisfaction between teachers and students.

Hernández's (2021) research focuses on specific English learning skills, addressing lexical, discursive, and reading competencies (literal, textual, inferential, and functional). It is relevant to note that, according to Uneme (2016), writing skills are essential for effective communication. In this study, it is observed that writing skills in the post-test group are limited, which could affect the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently. This limitation can have an impact on the quality of communication in academic, professional and personal contexts. According to Gonzalez (2020), in academia, writing skills are critical for writing essays, reports, and written assignments. Poor writing performance could result in the delivery of substandard work, affecting grades and overall performance in studies (Martinez, 2020).

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