Learning to Read and Write at The Initial Level

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Abstract

The present study carried out the documentary relationship of analysis of several studies related to learning and writing at the initial level during the years 2015-2024. The main objective was to analyze the learning of reading and writing at the initial level. The methodology was based on a documentary review study, whose purpose was to collect and examine all information pertaining to the objective of the study. For this purpose, it was based on the PRISMA methodology. A systematic review analysis of information collected from multiple data sources, such as Scopus, Scielo, Web Of Science, EbscoHost, ProQuest and Latindex, was carried out. Twenty documents related to the subject of the study were considered for the analysis. The importance of adopting integrated and playful approaches that encourage the development of early language skills in a natural and motivating way was highlighted. It is evident that early exposure to texts, through stories, songs and games, together with the practice of fine motor skills, establishes a solid foundation for formal literacy learning. Likewise, the role of educators is crucial in this process, as they must provide a stimulating and adaptive environment that respects individual learning rhythms and promotes a positive attitude towards written and oral language.

Keywords: *Learning, Reading, Writing, Initial Level*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is more than simply confronting a text; it involves understanding the environment in which human beings operate. Reading opens doors to perceiving reality and interacting with others throughout our lives, playing a crucial role in our social interaction (Tinta, 2020). From birth, we are not isolated; we establish contact with others, creating bonds of friendship and love that define us through mutual interdependence. These relationships not only enrich our human experience, but also significantly distinguish us from other life forms (Lema et al., 2019).

Learning to read and write at the initial level is an essential field of study in education, as it marks the beginning of children's academic and cognitive development (Gonzaga, 2021). During this stage, students begin to acquire fundamental skills that will form the basis of their future education. The literature on this topic is vast and multidisciplinary, ranging from theories of child learning and development to innovative pedagogical practices. This article aims to review this literature to better understand the effective strategies and challenges prevalent in teaching these essential skills (González, 2022).

Therefore, people communicate for various reasons, including their lived experiences, which underlines that communication is intrinsic to human beings and arises through the use of language (Gonzaga, 2021). The latter is considered an exclusive capacity of human beings, understood as a system of symbols designed to express intentions and cultural content. In this system, a relationship is established between the signifier and the signified (Choquichanca and Inga, 2020).

Reading and writing are fundamental to a child's development, highlighting the need to facilitate their access to these skills in a natural, enjoyable and serene way. It is crucial that children can delight in their achievements and learn from their challenges. It is therefore essential to provide learning strategies appropriate to their

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context and age, allowing children to forge their own knowledge through interaction with their peers and environment, which in turn fosters the development of divergent thinking (Cuasapud and Maiguashca, 2023).

Various educational theories have addressed the process of how children learn to read and write, suggesting a variety of approaches and techniques. Recent research highlights the importance of a language-rich environment and the integration of play activities that encourage student interest and active participation. Through a comprehensive review of previous studies, a growing trend towards methods that combine phonics learning with the development of reading comprehension can be observed, showing a positive correlation with success in later stages of education (Salazar et al., 2023).

It is a fact that many students in the early grades face deficiencies in the acquisition of reading and writing skills, i.e. they have not developed the necessary abilities. Often, they are not provided with the right tools to overcome these daily challenges that prevent a correct understanding of the texts they read. Moreover, in most households, students do not receive the necessary support to complete the tasks assigned by teachers (Crisóstomo et al., 2024).

Reading and writing are tools that transform society, as they allow human beings to understand reality in a critical and reflective manner, thus facing the challenges that arise in their lives. For this reason, mastering these skills is the cornerstone for the development of other learning both at school and in many aspects of daily life (Gutiérrez and Pozo, 2022)

Today's children live in a highly literate environment with which they are already familiar, as they interact with a variety of texts in their daily lives. As a result, they already possess basic literacy skills before they begin their formal education. In other words, the environment in which they live offers multiple opportunities to explore written language. According to Quemé (2022), this literate environment acts as a bridge that facilitates the initial learning of reading and writing.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 40 per cent of first-grade students repeat every year, the highest repetition rate in the world. However, repeating a grade does not necessarily solve learning deficiencies. Both students who repeat and those who advance to the next grade face difficulties, and do not always succeed in learning to read and write adequately, despite the high expectations of teachers, parents and guardians (Chávez et al., 2022).

In Peru, various entities are implementing initiatives to establish more defined learning expectations. Through the census evaluations carried out by the Quality Measurement Unit (UMC) of the Ministry of Education, it has been clarified what is expected of students at the end of second grade in terms of reading comprehension. In addition, the Peruvian Institute for the Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of the Quality of Basic Education (IPEBA) together with the Directorate of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education have developed guiding documents that seek to address the shortcomings of the current curriculum (González, 2022).

Finally, it is crucial to analyse the impact of emerging technologies and their integration in the early childhood classroom. The digitisation of education offers new tools and methods for teaching literacy, but also raises questions about equity and effectiveness. The literature review will address how technological innovations are being implemented in different contexts and their effect on literacy learning, providing a comprehensive overview of current and future trends in this educational field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to characterise early literacy learning from an international and national perspective. The methodology was based on a desk review using the PRISMA method, with emphasis on the PRISMA 2020 statement. This method is considered a crucial instrumental tool for the planning and execution of systematic reviews, ensuring the inclusion of recommended information, especially in reviews of this type that cover syntheses that could be omitted without its application (Page et al., 2021).

In the first stage of the search, 253 documents were identified in databases such as WoS, Scielo, and Scopus. Of these, Scopus contributed 19, Web of Science 7, Scielo contributed 111, and Latindex 4. In addition, 104

articles were located in EbscoHost and 8 in ProQuest, all from the period 2020-2021. The search, launched in April 2023, incorporated key terms such as emerging technologies, reading, learning, writing, teaching-learning process. Articles were selected according to predefined criteria detailed in table 1.

Table 1 Inclusion and exclusion considerations

Considerations	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	Spanish, English and Portuguese	Other than the languages indicated
Type of study	Empirical studies	Non-empirical studies
Year of publication	Between 2015 and 2024	Out of range
Accessibility	Documents in *open access* format	With restricted access

Elaboration: The authors

The bibliography was systematically reviewed and selected, taking into account author, year and keywords. Figure 1 details the process of document exclusion.
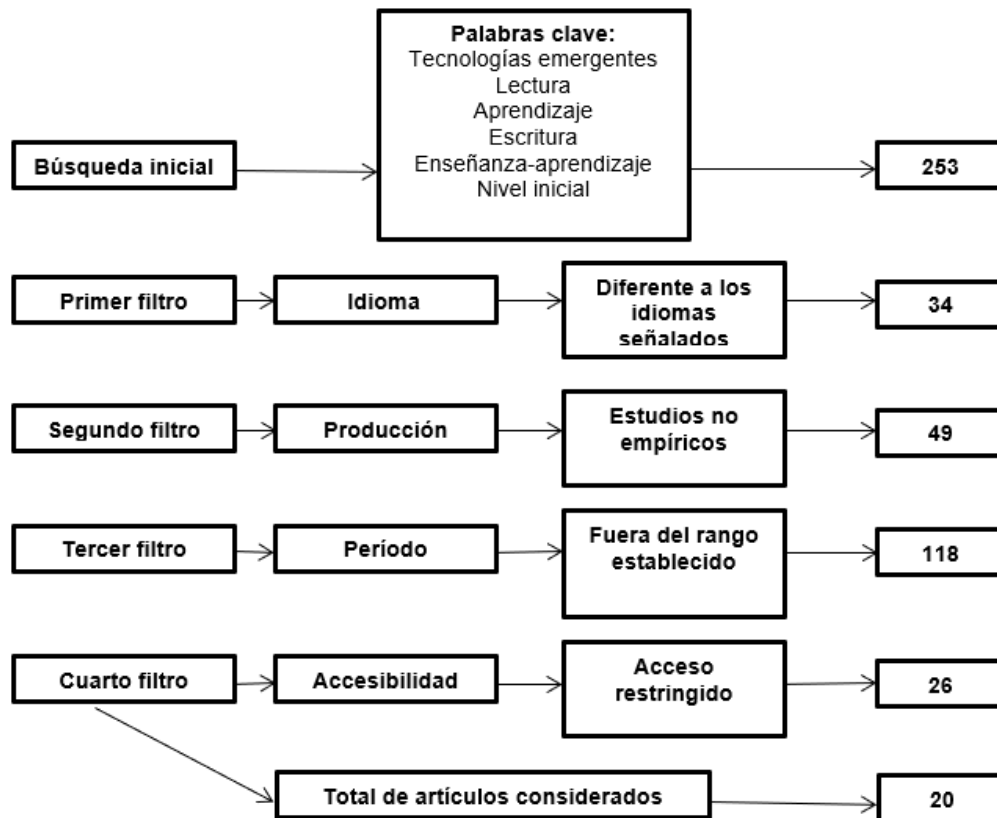
Figure 1 *Document exclusion process*

Note: own elaboration.

In order to improve the efficiency of the procedure, the advanced search function of Google Scholar was used, allowing a more precise filtering of terms throughout the document. Boolean operators were used, such as "AND" to ensure the inclusion of all terms and "OR" to obtain results that included any of the specified terms. Combinations such as (emerging technologies OR reading OR learning) AND (writing OR beginning level) were considered. This search resulted in the identification of 20 manuscripts, detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Body of documents reviewed

Item	Author(s)	Year	Key words

1	Chancha-Supe et al.	2019	Reading habits; teaching reading; teaching spelling; teaching spelling; written language.
2	Maquera et al.	2021	Service-learning; cooperative learning; pedagogical beliefs; teaching writing; family influence; psychomotor skills.
3	Ink	2020	Teaching and learning; skills, abilities, writing, reading reality
4	Lema et al.	2019	Initial education; Preparation; School education
5	González	2022	Motor skills; Cognitive development; Motor skills; Motor skills; Coordination; Motricity; Cognitive development
6	Gonzaga	2021	Neurofunctions; reading and writing; school readiness; skills; abilities
7	Choquichanca and Inca	2020	Teaching strategies; reading comprehension; academic achievement; 5 year olds
8	Rodriguez	2023	primary school, writing, reading, phonological awareness, teaching practices
9	Silva et al.	2016	Teaching writing, Teaching conceptions, Psychogenesis of language, constructivism, Chile.
10	Cuasapud and Maiguashca	2023	teaching method; literacy; learning; learning; text; skill; socio-cognitive.
11	Pascual et al.	2018	early childhood education; reading acquisition; literacy; factor analysis; literacy; reading acquisition
12	Gutiérrez and Pozo	2022	literacy; learning to read; neuroscience; neuroeducation; neuroeducation
13	I burned	2022	teaching method; reading; pandemic; e-learning; online learning
14	Salazar et al.	2023	Alternative education; intelligence; teaching
15	Crisóstomo et al.	2024	Reading; habit of reading; reading habit; teaching and learning
16	Morales and Pulido	2023	literacy, emergent writing, reading, writing, teacher, early education, early childhood education
17	Céspedes and Andrade	2022	literacy, writing, reading, e-learning, virtual education
18	Aguilar et al.	2016	implicit theories, basic pedagogy, writing, teacher training.
19	Ardila and Fernández	2022	reading; writing; educational play; educational strategies; parent-child relationship
20	Medina and Nagamine	2019	Autonomous learning strategies; Reading comprehension; Secondary school students.

Note: own elaboration.
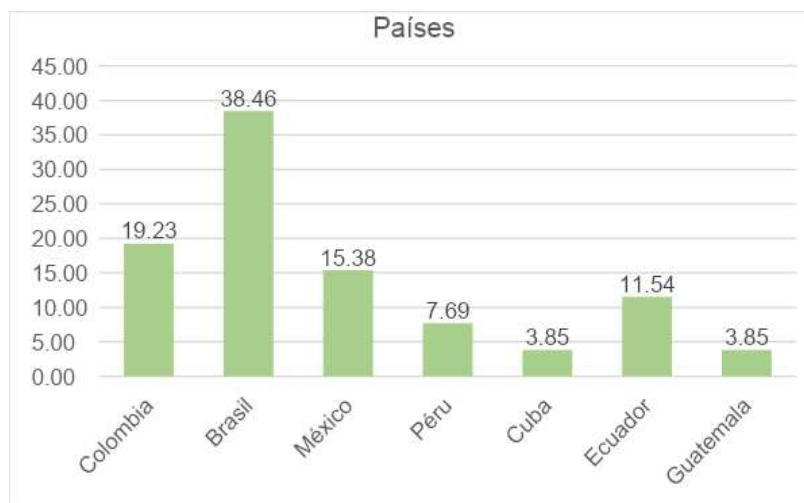
RESULTS

Publications by Country of Origin

Figure 2 *Geographical distribution of publications*

Note: own elaboration.

According to Figure 2, Brazil leads in frequency of publications on the variables under study, representing 38.46%. It is followed by Colombia (19.23%), Mexico (15.38%), Ecuador (11.54%) and Peru (7.09%). Cuba and Guatemala close the list, each with 7.7%.

Publications By Methodology Used

In Figure 3, 7 research studies highlight individual elements linked to learning to read. Recurrent indicators include background information on structural elements of education, tools, and writing processes at the initial level from an early learning perspective. Furthermore, in terms of the analysis of learning, it is established that there are tools such as learning rubrics with which students are assessed.

Metodología empleada

50.00 · 38.46 · 11.54

■ Cualitativa ■ Cuantitativa ■ Mixta
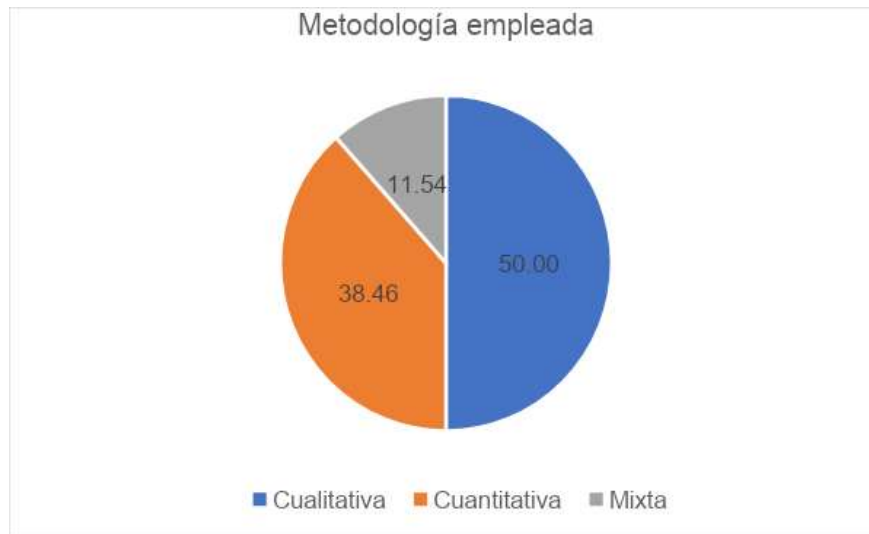
Figure 3 *Type of methodology used in the reviewed studies*

Note: own elaboration.

Based on the above, it is useful to group the studies according to similar themes or approaches, and thus highlight trends and divergences in findings and methodologies. The following is described below:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning to read and write in the early years is a fundamental process that lays the foundations for children's future educational development. During this stage, which generally spans from 3 to 6 years of age, children begin to develop the preliminary skills necessary for reading and writing through play activities that stimulate their interest and curiosity. This phase is crucial because it focuses not only on academic skills, but also on the child's cognitive, emotional and social development.

At the early level, learning to read and write is not approached directly as at more advanced levels, but is introduced gradually through the recognition of letters, sounds and simple words. Educators use stories, songs, rhymes and games that encourage familiarisation with the alphabet and basic language sounds. These activities are designed to be fun and engaging, helping children to associate learning with a positive experience.

Another important aspect of early literacy teaching is the development of fine motor skills, which are essential for writing skills. Activities such as colouring, cutting with scissors and manipulating small objects are common in the classroom and help strengthen hand and finger muscles, preparing children for writing. This motor development is complemented by exercises in hand-eye coordination and visual perception, which are essential for reading and writing correctly.

The involvement of parents and the home environment also plays a crucial role in this process. Support at home can reinforce what is learned in the classroom and foster an environment rich in linguistic stimulation. Parents can contribute by reading stories to their children, practising the alphabet and showing the practical use of reading and writing in everyday activities. This active participation helps children understand the importance and usefulness of these skills in their daily lives.

Educators must also be attentive to the diversity of learning paces and adapt their methods to the individual needs of each child. Not all children learn at the same pace or in the same way, so it is essential that teaching is

flexible and adaptive. Using a variety of teaching resources and pedagogical strategies can ensure that all children have an equal chance of success in early literacy learning, laying a solid foundation for their academic future.

From a **focus on literacy and its teaching:** The studies by Chancha-Supe et al. (2019), Rodríguez (2023), and Céspedes and Andrade (2022) explore different aspects of the teaching of reading and writing. While Chancha-Supe et al. focus on spelling and reading habits, Rodríguez addresses phonological awareness and teaching practices in primary school. These studies underline the importance of explicit and systematic instruction in basic literacy skills, especially in the early years of education.

On the other hand, regarding the **integration of cognitive and motor skills:** Research such as that of Gonzalez (2022) and Gonzaga (2021) highlights the connection between motor, neurofunctional and cognitive development and literacy. These studies emphasise how the development of fine motor skills can positively influence the learning of writing and reading, suggesting a more holistic approach in early education.

Also, the **role of teaching strategies and reading comprehension:** Choquichanca and Inca (2020) and Medina and Nagamine (2019) discuss the impact of teaching strategies on reading comprehension. Both studies highlight the effectiveness of active strategies adapted to the students' context to improve their academic performance and autonomy in learning.

Notably, the **Impact of the pandemic on education:** Quemé (2022) analyses how the pandemic has altered teaching methods and online learning. This study is crucial to understanding how crises can accelerate the adoption of new technologies and methodologies in education, redefining the traditional educational process.

In addition, **Alternative education and intelligence development:** Salazar et al. (2023) explore alternative education approaches and their relationship to intelligence development. This approach highlights the need to diversify pedagogical methods to better adapt to the different needs and potentials of learners.

Influence of pedagogical conceptions and beliefs: Maquera et al. (2021) and Silva et al. (2016) investigate how teachers' beliefs and conceptions affect the teaching of writing. These studies suggest that pedagogical beliefs significantly influence the teaching strategies adopted, directly affecting student learning.

Likewise, **Virtual Education and its effectiveness:** Céspedes and Andrade's (2022) research provides insight into the effectiveness of virtual education in teaching literacy. This study underlines the importance of adapting pedagogical methods to online formats in order to maintain educational effectiveness.

Also, **Early Childhood Literacy Development:** Morales and Pulido (2023) together with Lema et al. (2019) discuss strategies for early literacy and school readiness. These studies focus on the importance of building strong foundations from early education to ensure better future academic development.

The **Neuroeducational Approach and its application:** Gutiérrez and Pozo (2022) address the relationship between neuroscience and learning to read. This approach highlights how a better understanding of brain functioning can optimise teaching and learning methods.

In addition, **Inclusive and adaptive education:** Finally, Cuasapud and Maiguashca (2023) and Pascual et al. (2018) highlight the importance of adapting teaching methods to cater for diversity in the classroom. These studies promote a more inclusive and adaptive approach, which considers the socio-cognitive skills and individual needs of students.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature review on early literacy learning highlights the importance of adopting integrated, play-based approaches that encourage the development of early language skills in a natural and motivating way. It is evident that early exposure to texts, through stories, songs and games, together with the practice of fine motor skills, establishes a solid foundation for formal literacy learning. The role of educators is also crucial in this process, as they must provide a stimulating and adaptive environment that respects individual learning rhythms and promotes a positive attitude towards written and oral language.

On the other hand, cooperation between school and home emerges as a determining factor in the success of literacy development in early learners. Parents who actively participate in their children's educational process,

reinforcing the skills learned in the classroom and providing an environment rich in linguistic stimuli, significantly expand children's learning opportunities and improve their academic performance. In short, a holistic and collaborative approach to teaching reading and writing from the earliest years is essential for cultivating key competencies that will serve as a foundation for future academic learning and life skills.

This analysis focused on 2015-2024, highlighting the need for future research to better understand the evolution of the issue. Addressing social factors is essential to transform attitudes and foster appropriate cognitive development.

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