

Developing phonological self-awareness to improve writing competence

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## **Acknowledge**

Life is full of chances, and we need to demonstrate how much we value each opportunity. I am grateful to the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional for giving me the opening to its wisdom. I am not the same person that nervously applied for an empty seat on its installations. I would like to include a special note of thanks to the language department and all its teachers for strengthening my wings, so that I could choose where to fly. Thanks also to the Centro de Lenguas for allowing me to enrich my practicum under their guidance. Finally, I would like to thank my assessor Nelson Mellizo whose valuable help and objective comments during my research process was undoubtedly priceless.

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<b>2. Descripción</b>	
<p>Tesis de grado en la cual el autor da cuenta de cómo potenciar la competencia escritural en los estudiantes a través del desarrollo de una consciencia fonológica. Este estudio se sustentó principalmente en los planteamientos de Brown (2001), Berhman (2002) y lo estipulado por el ministerio de educación (1998) en los lineamientos curriculares en lengua extranjera sobre la escritura y niveles de competencia escritural. A su vez, en los planteamientos de Adams (1990), Bowen (1998) y Bass (2012) sobre la consciencia fonológica y finalmente, los planteamientos de Richards, Schmidt, y Platt (2003) respecto al uso del aprendizaje por tareas como estrategia metodológica. Siendo una investigación-acción educativa se realizó con un grupo de 25 estudiantes del Centro de Lenguas en el cual se identificó una dificultad, y se diseñó y aplicó una intervención pedagógica que buscó solucionar dicha dificultad.</p>	

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#### **4. Contenidos**

La presente tesis de grado inicia con la presentación y contextualización de la dificultad identificada en los estudiantes del nivel básico 1 del Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Con base en lo anterior, se planteó una pregunta problema y unos objetivos para dar solución a la misma, todo esto seguido de su justificación. Tras establecer el problema se presentan los antecedentes con más relevancia para la investigación y se exponen los referentes teóricos con los que se sustenta. La elaboración del apartado anteriormente mencionado, marco teórico, se realizó con base en tres constructos, los cuales fueron: competencia escritural, consciencia fonológica y aprendizaje por tareas. Posterior a esto, se hace la presentación del diseño metodológico en el que ubica la investigación dentro de la investigación acción bajo el paradigma de la investigación cualitativa, además se presenta la matriz de análisis, las técnicas e instrumentos, una descripción de la población y el cronograma de actividades. En la parte final de la presente tesis, se hace la presentación de la propuesta de intervención, el análisis de resultados y conclusiones.

#### **5. Metodología**

La metodología empleada a lo largo de la investigación estuvo acorde con las fases de la investigación-acción, puesto que se identificó un problema en una población de 25 estudiantes, se diseñó una propuesta de intervención pedagógica, y se aplicó con el objetivo de dar solución al problema identificado. Dentro de los instrumentos de recolección de datos estuvieron los diarios de campo, las encuestas, y los talleres de clase. Con lo anterior, se realizó el análisis de datos a través de la triangulación de los datos.

#### **6. Conclusiones**

- La práctica constante en clase les permitió desarrollar una consciencia fonológica en inglés que se completó con el nivel de competencia autónomo que los estudiantes estaban desarrollando a lo largo del proceso.
- El uso de actividades basadas en tareas les proporcionó a los estudiantes la necesidad de escribir más que palabras aisladas para expresar el pensamiento real.
- Otra herramienta de aprendizaje provocó que el trabajo grupal y la corrección entre pares demostraran a lo largo del proceso ser un mecanismo de aprendizaje aún más poderoso que enfocarse en una consciencia fonológica individualmente.

- La autoconciencia fonológica se alcanzó en cierta medida y demostró ser una herramienta poderosa que llevó a los estudiantes a analizar la estructura y el mecanismo que involucra el inglés y el español como idiomas en sí mismos.

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents the design, implementation and evaluation of a project entitled *Developing phonological self-awareness to improve writing competence* which is based on the principles of Task Based Learning (TBL) approach and is piloted with 25 English students as a second language (From 8 to 10 years of age) at the Centro de Lenguas, since level basic 1 until intermediate 1. For the purpose of this project, it was designated a mini-syllabus, divided within three phases, with the phonological awareness and writing skill being the core of the design. Therefore, different task based activities were the key motivation for the students to start writing. The conclusions draw a process where students lay on the phonological self-awareness they acquired to prevent misspelling errors at writing. Hence, students reflected about the structural form of the English system, and such reflection grasped their mother tongue as well.

**Keywords:** Task Based Learning, writing, phonological awareness.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

This project takes place at the Centro de Lenguas of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional with 25 students with a basic A1 English level. Followed by information about the local context of the institution and a detailed description of the institutional context, also there is a description of the students' cognitive, socio-affective, cultural and linguistic characteristics.

### **1.1 Local and Institutional Context**

The Centro de Lenguas is a private language institute mainly located in Calle 79 # 16 – 32 from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. It uses different facilities as the one at Calle 72 # 11-86 that corresponds to the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional on Saturdays. It is an institute that focuses its teaching methods on students from seven years old and up to 35. The Centro de Lenguas offers classes in English, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, and Spanish. Each language is taught within 8 different levels; Basic I, Basic II, Basic II, Intermediate I, Intermediate II, Advanced, and conversational. The basic level is mainly focused on learning grammar structures, the intermediate level is focused on getting to use the language and a higher grammar aspect, and the advance level is more oral production. Each level can be coursed within two, four, and six months, depending on if it is an intensive, semi-intensive, or semester course.

From their web page it can be found that the Centro de Lenguas uses the communicative approach as a base, which means that the classes are given using the target language. This is the reason why teachers focus their attention on creating different kinds of activities for the students to develop their speaking skills. The institute emphasizes its Mission and Vision on getting an effective speaker of the language. In order to get students to learn a new language, the institute uses the editorial Pearson and books such *Big*

*English*, *Speak Out*, and *Beat* for basic, intermediate and advance level respectively. The level of the book depends on the level of the class, and it must be used in each class as the topics are stated for it.

## **1.2 Participants**

The participants are 25 children that share an English class every Saturday in the Centro de Lenguas headquarter in the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, from 8am to 12pm. They are classified as level A1 through the Common European Framework, although some of them have a better English level according to the observations and the results in the different exams within the year. Besides, they live in a monolingual country where Spanish is the native language, and few spaces are available to learn and practice a foreign language.

In order to characterize the course a survey was applied to the students (Annex 1). To begin, with regards to the students' socio-affective context, most of them live with their mother and father, while some live with at least one of their parents, but it is highly remarkable to commonly find most of them living with their grandparents in both cases (families consisting of mother and father or only one of them). The parents meeting shows a high compromise and support to the students' learning process.

Considering the observations and the survey (Annex 1), the students belong to an age range from seven to nine years old. The predominant social strata of the students are three and four but there is not a great difference between both. As for the school, it is a complementary class as they also receive English classes at school during the week, even some of them go to bilingual schools where English is used all day long.

Most of the students are keen to learn English and that is the main reason why they are studying it. Some of them dream with traveling around the world, and even there are some children that have already visited some countries where English is the native language reinforcing the economical factor that benefits them (Annex 1). Besides, from the observations it can be stated that students have a normal cognitive development where no personal problems seem to affect their typical learning process or behavior.

In regard to the class' linguistic characteristics, the class does not have an advance English proficiency but it is not a disadvantage in the new foreign language learning process. They adapt well thanks to the bases that help them in the new process. Because of the pedagogical and research process, this context allows the execution of the proposal. Their early age plays an important role in their active participation and interest in learning. It is convenient to consider this population as a community with the same dynamics that can be found in a normal school (relations in a classroom, contact with parents and impact of the mission and vision of the immediate context where it is placed).

Having contemplated the previous aspects, it is essential to consider class Basic 1 from the Centro de Lenguas as a community that was inside a suitable context where the student's English skills can be developed. Aspects such as the interest on the language, parents' support and context adaptation are important facts that allow a proper implementation of the English project proposal below.

### **1.3 Diagnosis**

This segment refers to two different exams carried out to the students to get an overview regarding their knowledge about English. Those two exams are experienced in two different dates, the 03/09/2016 and 17/09/2016, showing two weeks of difference between each other. The first examination corresponds to a test made by the Centro de

Lenguas evaluating the four skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. For this action-research project the test is denominated diagnosis N°1. As the diagnosis N°1 does not show a clear estimation of the writing skill, by contrast it only focuses on transcription of words, the diagnosis N°2 was created. It refers to a short class activity that is settled to emphasis primarily on just one skill; writing. The objective of the diagnosis section is to provide an outline about the students' level in correspondence with all the skills (diagnosis N°1), but specifically with the writing skill (diagnosis N°2).

### **Diagnosis N°1**

From the first examination the majority of the students obtained a good score which affirms they are on the right learning level, just three out of 25 failed the test, besides those who overcome the exam did it with a high performance. The exam is considered as a relevant part of the diagnosis due to the way the paper was designed. In order to have a standardized evaluation of the performance in a linguistic competence situation of the students, the requirements proposed by the MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional 2006) and the Common European Framework of reference for languages (CEFR) were taken into consideration as it was necessary to establish a contextualized standard, with the minimum required by those institutions that took into account the Colombian context and the communicative abilities they are supposed to have by that time.

The exam was fragmented in four parts:

- a.) Writing: The students were shown an image of three objects that can be found in a scholar setting daily. The items they were seeing corresponded to the topic *school supplies* they worked in class. Besides each object appeared the name of the object, they were required to rewrite those words in front of the

corresponding image. Apart from this, in terms of score nobody failed this section.

According to the MEN the writing part requires to show a basic comprehension around what the students is reading or seeing. This section shows a failure in the way is projected as students are transcribing and not writing by themselves due to the fact the words were already provided in a written format. It is evident students need to be familiar with the topic and the printed form of the word to be able to properly select the written correspondence of the image. Nevertheless, it is not fully demonstrated that students can recall by themselves how the word is written unless it is already given to them.

b.) Reading: The reading section was a matching exercise. The test showed three images and they circled the image that was closer to the description. On top of that, referring to grades, some students got confused by the reading part ending up as 20% failing the reading part.

The way this section is evaluated makes reference to the fact the student is able to understand expressions and sentences he/she is reading, furthermore the student can connect the sentence with an image fulfilling the minimum requirement stated by the MEN in their stage of the learning process. It shows some complexity due to the students were forced to develop a deeper linguistic competence where number, genre and the knowledge of basic vocabulary was tested. The fact 80% of the students could overcome this section allows to blame a distraction generator more than a learning factor.

c.) Listening: This part is guided by the mentor teacher; she is the one in charge of playing the recordings. Students were given three options, and they were required to choose the one that corresponded to what the speaker was

describing. In terms of results, nobody failed the listening section. What is more, ninety percent of the students got a high score rating.

This section of the exam was abundantly with oral description. The MEN makes reference by stating a student can be cataloged in a basic level if at listening he/she can identify the person/object the speaker is referring to oriented by the physical description. Saying that, this section showed a good listening skill as about 90% of the student could overcome the exercise and got a high grade.

d.) Speaking: Students were asked to bring playdough as a homework since the previous class. They had to use the dough to create an original monster, and the exam corresponded to do a short description about the physical characteristics of the monster. The students were passing one by one to describe individually the creature they created. The score product was qualified from 1 to 10, being 1 the lowest score possible, and 10 the highest one. Students got from 7 (the lowest [just one student]) to 10 (the highest [three students]) (Annex 3)

The Ministerio de Educación establishes a speaking skill can be evaluated through monologues or peer conversations. In this case, the speaking skill was tested through a monologue at describing someone by using short sentences keeping in mind the physical characteristics as it is done when describing the creature, they invented. Students did not have time to memorize what they were saying, which shows a basic knowledge of vocabulary, further the ability to use the target language in a real context to express their ideas.

The results from the diagnosis N°1 were significant not only because of the grades they were obtaining but also because of the time they were using to answer the exam – 20

minutes out of 1 hour that was established to do it-. Despite the fact all the skills were tested, there was a notorious gap on the way the writing skill was evaluated on the Diagnosis N°1 as it did not show a self-writing production done by the students. Reason why a second diagnosis was necessary to complement the results from the first one, focusing only on the writing production.

### **Diagnosis N°2**

The diagnosis N°2 was created aiming to complement what was tested on the diagnosis N°1. According to the MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional) students should be able to recognize and write the name of familiar objects presented in an illustration. Considering their linguistic competence by the moment of the present exam, the second diagnosis was created aiming to test their ability to express ideas in a writing code.

This second diagnosis corresponds to a short activity done in a 10-minute class. The pre-service teacher showed some flashcards that corresponded to vocabulary they have worked in class: school supplies, family members, animals, and body parts. That was a total of ten flashcards. The students were seeing the image, and naming the word that corresponded to the image in a blank paper. As students were having problems to recall the name of the word, the researcher teacher was reinforcing the activity by repeating aloud the spoken form of the word. The words were: brother, mouth, ear, hair, daughter, lion, elephant, turtle, bear and grandmother.

The diagnosis N°2 showed native language interference clearly demonstrated with the word “lion”. The students were writing the word as it is pronounced *laion*, also there were found several cases in which they also put an accent over the last vowel like *ó* assimilating the word in Spanish *León* with its correspondence in English *Lion* (Annex 4).

The results from the diagnosis N°2 were as far different from those given by diagnosis N°1. The students made a lot of mistakes writing the words, especially because they wrote some words as they sound. It must be reminded that students were familiar with the words as they worked the same vocabulary in class, and have written the same words several times along the classes.

#### **1.4 Problem statement**

In class Basic 1 of the Centro de Lenguas of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional a problem was identified which is related to writing. To be more specific, it refers to the exact moment in which students need to materialize the words they visualized in their heads into the writing code. The fact the students are so young makes it possible to conclude that writing in their mother tongue could also be complicated while still in the learning stage. Their negativism towards writing could tie the lack of vocabulary, grammar, and confidence factors under the same spot (Annex N°5).

When learning a new language, it is very difficult to go through life totally avoiding the use of paper and pencil, and consequently, it is very important for each student to develop at least some basic handwriting skills. There are many reasons students are not fond of writing, the primary of which is that writing is a slow and laborious process. Behrman (2002) affirms in that matter that is an important problem as consistency and frequency of practice are very important in developing automaticity. The traditional educational system from their own experiences could have denotated a bad experience towards writing as repetitions, and meaningless work.

Besides. many students who struggle with writing also have difficulties with spelling (Behrman, 2002). Even if they are able to spell correctly on a weekly spelling test, when

they are thinking of content it may be very difficult to also think on the correct spelling of the words they want. The coping mechanism differs from one student to another; some students simplify their word usage; other students just include the incorrectly spelled word. It is such a recurrent procedure, that sometimes the spell checker on a computer does not help the student because the misspelled word is not close enough to correct. In such situations, Behrman affirms the student should be taught to develop strong phonetic analysis skills so that she can learn to spell words phonetically, the way they sound.

Moreover, when each student does not develop self-awareness, they struggle to complete different tasks by their own specially at writing. Phonetic awareness is fundamental for mapping speech to print. If a child cannot hear that *man* and *moon* begin with the same word or cannot blend the sounds /rrunn/ into the word *run*, he/she may have great difficulty connecting sounds with their written symbol or blending sounds to make a word. This problem prevents students from reading and writing correctly (Smith S. B., 1998).

Furthermore, the lack of phonemic awareness can prevent students from grouping words. This ability can allow students to recognize words with similar and dissimilar sounds, leading them to write them in an appropriate way. If students can get to group words, it is easier for them to be conscious regarding the way a spoken word is writing (Kame'enui, 1990).

Now, according to the observations students have a fairly developed listening ability due to the constant use of the target language during the whole classes. This strength is interfering with the learning of writing as they are writing the way the word is pronounced,

but not the way it should be written. During some sessions, as it is shown on annex 4, students tended to commit mistakes at writing such as “famili” when they refer to “family”, showing a clear misspelling problem due to the mixture between codes (Smith S. B., 1998). The mixing of written codes problem is fundamental when learning to write and wanting to clearly express an idea in a written code.

On top of that, it is noticeable that age plays an important role there. Reason why developing a self-awareness at an early learning stage can lead students to stop relying on corrections from the teacher, and instead to look towards correcting themselves and provide an opportunity to interact with other students seeking to reflect on the linguistic system and concordance of the grapheme-phoneme relationship (Adams, Iwashita and Jenefer, 2004).

Moreover, the phonological awareness is not an ability that students are born with. It is a teachable skill and can be promoted by attention to instructional variables. Even if the phonemic awareness is auditory, it involves words in print, and it’s a good predictor of writing and reading difficulties (Smith S. B., 1998). Students benefit when using phonetics because so often writing struggles interfere with learning and prevent them from fully demonstrating what they have learned.

## **1.5 Justification**

The aim of this project is to improve students’ writing competence and their spelling errors. Juzwik et al. (2006) stated that students’ perception of writing tasks has not been widely researched in the literature. In fact, research has paid insufficient attention to the cognitive element of writing tasks (Buyse, 2013). Beyond that it is important to keep in mind relevant aspects as developing a consciousness regarding their own learning process.

It is because learning a foreign language does not only imply the memorization of a set of rules, but to be aware of the process to fully understand the language and its composition.

Firstly, the primary reason to choose phonological awareness as a tool is because it requires the student to notice how letters represent sounds. Also, because the phonetic awareness helps the students to understand the alphabet principle (that the letters in words are systematically represented by sounds). This association sometimes is hard to overcome, especially in English as a foreign language for young learners. This challenging process can be facilitated with the help of educational and authentic material in which it is shown to the child that learning is worthwhile (Mochón, 2005).

According to what is previously stated, Keme'enui (1990) mentions that developing phonemic awareness helps students to detect and manipulate sounds within words. This skill could prevent students from mixing words sounds at writing, as changing /u/ in run to /o/, which is one of the most common mistakes that students are struggling with (Annex 4). If students develop a self-phonological awareness, they could be conscious when changing the oral code into written words, which could prevent them from making spelling errors.

Continuing with the idea of writing as it sounds, from the observation stage it was found that students tended to choose the writing of the words depending on their sounds. This problem was also found on their mother tongue as can be notated in the survey where words such as *abeces*, *comfundo*, *asen* and *nose* (Annex 2). It is due to the fact that they are not aware of the phonetic conditions that involve writing. Students were writing words based only on how they felt in their mouths or sounded when they said them.

As they know how the word is pronounced but they do not know how it should be written, this project aims to use their biggest strength together with their most common mistake. The main idea is to develop a phonological awareness in such a way the students would become aware of the sounds and the writing code it is involved. When a student is conscious of what is doing rather than repeating certain information his/her learning process becomes meaningful.

### **1.6 Research Question and objectives**

The research question here is: How does phonological awareness shape the writing competence by implementing Task Based Learning (TBL) with students of the Centro de Lenguas from level A2 to B1?

**General objective:** To analyze the enhancement of phonological awareness using Task-Based Learning approach in the students of the Centro de Lenguas, carry out from basic 2 level until intermedium 1 to correct writing errors

#### **Specific objectives:**

- To explore the impact of using Task Based Learning to develop semi-controlled activities towards improving the writing skill.
- To describe the impact of developing a word awareness by sound reflections and identifications.
- To analyze the effects of using Task Based Learning controlled activities to develop a self-phonological awareness at writing.

## Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework and State of Art

In order to achieve the objectives raised above, and to propose an innovative solution to the problematic previously stated related to writing, this proposal is based on the effects of using phonology and its conscious use in writing. In addition, the literature review is focused on inquiring studies related to writing skill in EFL settings and the convenience of phonology in the foreign language learning process.

### 2.1 Summary chart

The following studies draw an idea of the possible conclusions that my proposal can obtain. All the studies were chosen trying to cover at least one of the main components of my research: problems with writing, use of phonology, and practice of task-based learning. The relationship between the use of phonology and teaching a new language is closely related to pronunciation or reading only, reason why those two components are not found under the same study. In addition, the connection was made of nine different studies, three of which are international, three national, and three locally from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. All this in order to be more objective at the time of the research, and to have a wide range of researches from which to obtain the most profitable for mine.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Ambit</b>
Moving Beyond Phonological Awareness: The Role of Phonological Awareness Skills in Arabic Reading Development	2006	Baha Makhoul	Hebrew University, Israel	International
Reading Acquisition Reorganizes the Phonological Awareness Network Only in Alphabetic Writing Systems	2013	Christine Brennan	Northwestern University, Illinois	International

Phonological awareness and reading competence: a foster model.	2014	Alejandro Acosta, Efrain Duarte, Rosa Osés	Autonomous University of Yucatan, Mexico	International
Aprendizaje de la lengua escrita en niños de primer grado a través del método eclético	2016	Janny Alexandra Hernández González	Universidad Nacional, Colombia	National
Adquisición de procesos lectores en niños de preescolar, una perspectiva etnográfica educativa.	2015	Liliana Prieto Rodríguez, Amina Esmeralda Cuenca Muñoz	Universidad de San Buenaventura, Colombia	National
La conciencia fonológica como factor predictor de la adquisición de los procesos lectores en niños y niñas de primera infancia. Una experiencia con maestros de tres instituciones educativas.	2012	Myriam García Hernández, Hermana Gladys Casas, Luz Stella Rodríguez	Universidad de San Buenaventura, Colombia	National
How to foster Phonemic Awareness through activities that promote cooperative learning in students of B1 level at Centro Colombo Americano.	2012	Laura Alexandra Girón Moreno	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Colombia	Institutional
Creating phonemic awareness in the classroom as a means to develop children's Reading and writing skills.	2009	Martha Adelaida Ramirez Rodriguez,	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Colombia	Institutional
Empowering phonemic awareness through peer and teacher correction to help reading and writing processes in English among students	2010	Ingrid Paola Aranda	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Colombia	Institutional

### 2.1.1 Literature review

Following the idea that was previously mentioned, the first study using phonological awareness is *Moving Beyond Phonological Awareness: The Role of Phonological Awareness Skills in Arabic Reading Development* (Makhoul, 2016). This research

developed a phonological training program to teach phonetics as a way to improve reading performance. One of the main conclusions leads to consider that the lack of phonemic repertoire and poor phonological awareness is related to a decoding error. This study is related to the present project due to the present action research study is based on the decoding error. Also, because of the phonological training program Makhoul used similar to the training program intended to be used in the current proposal.

Another related study is *Reading Acquisition Reorganizes the Phonological Awareness Network Only in Alphabetic Writing System* (Brennan, 2013). The goal was to determine the effects of alphabetic and non-alphabetic writing systems during functional magnetic resonance imaging. The main finding of the project leads to consider that the reorganization of the auditory cortex may result in better phonological awareness skills because of the differences in the principles for mapping between orthographic and phonological representations. Brennan's exploratory study stated the importance of the role of the phonological awareness inside the EFL setting like the Centro de Lenguas which once more reaffirms the importance of this proposal and the properness for the developing of the research within its context.

Next, it's find *phonological awareness and reading competence: a foster model* (Acosta, Duarte, y Osés 2014). It was a research project with students in first and second grade in an elementary school. The aim of this project was to develop phonological awareness strategies in order to acquire reading skills. The result showed the effectiveness of a phonological intervention and confirmed the relation of phonological awareness as a predictor of reading skill. This project supports the validity of the current action- research

project because it shows a positive relationship between developing phonological awareness.

Further, *Aprendizaje de la lengua escrita en niños de primer grado a través del método eclético* by Hernandez (2016) posed advantages of the meaningful use of phonology teaching method. This teaching proposal developed skills such the word recognition (that is also use on the second stage of this proposal at Centro de Lenguas) and shows the learning importance of the correspondence between grapheme and phoneme. The findings on the last stage of Hernandez' proposal obtained an improvement related to writing, which is the mainly objective in this research action project as well.

Moreover, *Adquisición de procesos lectores en niños de preescolar, una perspectiva etnográfica educativa* (Campos, Cuenca, Prieto, Rueda, y Vargas, 2015) aimed to describe the reading process acquisition having as a referent the phonemic awareness in preschoolers. There is found the three main stages of the phonological awareness development: lexical, syllable, and phonemic. which are as well used in the present research action project. The main finding was the close relationship between the phonological awareness and the reading acquisition. Two out of the three stages Campos et al work project relates directly with my current proposal; syllable and phonemic. The usage of these two stages provides an overview regarding on some important aspects to consider as a base theory.

Another work on using phonemic awareness to improve reading skill is *La conciencia fonológica como factor predictor de la adquisición de los procesos lectores en niños y niñas de primera infancia. Una experiencia con maestros de tres instituciones educativas*

(Hernandez, Casas, and Rodriguez, 2012). This work is based mainly on the teaching factor, the findings regarding to phonemic awareness as a reading predictor states the importance of teaching phonemics. It also mentions the teaching process as a facilitator or inhibitor in the acquisition of new knowledge. Hernandez et al project states the importance with my proposal not only with the use of phonetics as a tool but also with the modeling role the teacher acquires in order to facilitate the learning process.

Besides, Lombana with *How to foster Phonemic Awareness through activities that promote cooperative learning in students of B1 level at Centro Colombo Americano* (2012) designed to show the effects of using cooperative learning to improve writing and speaking skills. One of the conclusions to highlight in this action-research study is the fact that students showed an improvement in all the learning skills. Lombana's study mentioned the use of cooperative learning, although there were found worksheets, and controlled activities applied to foster phonemic awareness which relates directly with the task based method the present action-research project proposes.

One more study that works with reading and writing altogether is *Creating phonemic awareness in the classroom as a means to develop children's Reading and writing skills* (Ramirez, 2009). Ramirez's work intended to show an improvement on reading and writing by using a comparison study. The main data collection was dictations of isolated words. A highlighted finding from this study is the fact that words dictation can show a short-term improvement. This study used dictation of isolated words differencing from this research action study in term that the dictation starts with a basic stage word dictation, through a more complex stage sentence creating and ending up in with an independent writing. The

improvement is demonstrated by using dictation as a tool serves as a reference to reaffirm to use it on a first stage process in my current proposal.

Vargas throughout *Empowering phonemic awareness through peer and teacher correction to help reading and writing processes in English among students* (2010) pointed to help students with their learning and writing process. This study was based mainly on corrections by using as a tool phonemic awareness (only the high stage of the phonological awareness; phonetics). There were found some improvements related to the reading part in terms of pronunciation, as Vargas used sounds imitation to correct errors during the application. In terms of writing, the main exercise was to recognize words and their correspondence with the printed form which was achieved in general terms.

The previous study differs from this proposal as the tool used in only the high stage of the phonological awareness that is the phonemic awareness and not all the stages included, which does not show a complete process. The fact students were linking sounds with their corresponding written form of a words relates directly with the first and second stage of the present work where words identification is used.

As the previous studies demonstrated, Phonological awareness (PA) can be used to improve different skills regardless the target language. The majority of the studies fixated their attention on the advantages of PA based on reading highlighting the gap and the research needs to be filled it up. To conclude, as is posed before it is not the first time that phonemic awareness is taken as a starting point to enhance learners' English skills. That is why the inquest done before feeds the current study and reaffirms the imperative role of phonemic mixed with the learners' role represented in their writing skill.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

On top of what was mentioned at the beginning of the proposal and taking into account the needs found on class A1 at Centro de Lenguas, this chapter focuses on a brief explanation of the main constructs of this project: writing, phonological awareness, and Task Based Learning (TBL). The constructs are supported by theoretical as well as pedagogical considerations.

### **2.2.1 Writing**

The definitions of writing can be stated by some experts as Rivers (1981) who states that writing is assigning information or expression of original ideas in a sequential way in the new language. Brown, (2001) claims that writing is a thoughtful process as well. He states that writing might be planned and given with an infinite number of adjustments before it is released. In this research proposal, the writing process among the students is a competence process with multifaceted stages students need to go through in order to fulfill writing tasks.

#### **Writing competence:**

Since students learn a language through both written and spoken ways, they cannot be separated to improve their communicative competence. In the process of communication, rather students know the rules on how to communicate to others, how to get information, than knowing a set of rules about the language itself. Brown (2001) states the definition of a language competence as “one’s underlying knowledge of system of a language – its rules of grammar, its vocabulary, and all the pieces of language and how those pieces fit together” (Pag. 31). Competence goes beyond the knowledge of a language, it refers to

have the necessary skills to act effectively in a variety of situations. When the students comprehend the language, it means that they have a language competence.

Continuing with the idea of language competence, Bachman (1990) divides it into two parts: organization competence and pragmatic competence. Organization competence is the ability to understand and form correct sentences, recognize meaning of sentences and pour those sentences into a text. Pragmatic competence, on the other side, refers to the ability to use the language in different social situations, and the level of formality of the language used depending on the circumstances. Based on Bachman's division, it can be concluded that writing is part of the organization competences due to its more focused on the written form of the language.

Besides, it is worth to mention that writing is a recursive process, which means students inspect through the process, frequently moving back and forth among the stages. Students should learn tactics for invention and discovery, and teachers should help students to generate content and determine a purpose. Also, it is stated that readers, purpose, and event define all types of writing and effective writing fulfills the writer's intention and meets the readers' needs (Urquhart and McIver, 2005). It means that writing is a multifaceted process and it seems reasonable to expect, then, that the teaching of writing as a challenge process as well.

Also, Brown (2001) frames this challenging activity into a two-step process. The first process is figuring out the meaning and the second process is putting the meaning into language. Writing represents what we think. It is because the writing process reflects things which stay in the mind. Students who are reluctant to write things down often suffer

for this activity. The students find difficulties when they start looking for some reasons to write and produce written sentences.

On the positive side, Harmer (2004) affirms that writing encourages students to focus on truthful language use. It is because students reflect on the language when the students engage in their writing process. Based on the definitions above, writing is a productive process done through some stages. Primarily, exploring and conveying ideas, thoughts and feelings into printed form. Secondly, conducting many rereading processes to carry out a grammatically and methodical texts. The writing productions are in the forms of legible texts which should be meaningful to everyone who read the writing.

Based on the previous definition of writing, it is important to highlight that the aspects which shape this study are essential for creating a space where the writing stages can be fully developed, also the self-awareness where students can reflect about their own learning process can be constantly affected by the contact students have with their immediate context (classroom and familiar nucleus) influencing directly their process. The writing perspective proposed previously is seen from the construction of competence that requires different stages and revisions before the final text is released. To conclude this construct and based on those definitions, it can be stated that writing is a complex activity that requires different stages to produce a meaningful text for the writer and reader.

### **2.2.2 Phonological awareness**

Phonological awareness is the understanding of the different ways that the oral part can be divided into different gears and operated. Adams (1990) defines it as the ability to comprehend and involve in skills such as rhyming, alliteration, and syllabication. Being phonological aware indicates to have an overall understanding of all those levels.

There is a difference between phonological and phonemic awareness. The phonemic awareness is the complex understanding of the spoken language. It also includes phonemic awareness skills like sound identification, sound blending, segmenting, and sound manipulation. The main difference is that phonological awareness refers to a general appreciation of the sounds of speech, and later defines phonemic awareness by stating that is the understanding that words can be divided into a system of phonemes (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). Being phonological awareness includes going through all the levels from basic rhyme to phonemic awareness.

Phonological awareness differs from phonics awareness as well. The phonological awareness involves an oral manipulation of sounds and the auditory. Adams (1990) states phonics is a way of teaching reading that is built in the alphabet principle, a system that teach the correspondence of letters or groups of letters and their pronunciation. In that sense, phonological awareness and phonics can be related, however they are not the same.

Normally, the developing of emergent literacy skills as phonological awareness occurs intuitively as a function of child's exposure to language. As a child grows older, their basic phonological awareness does not progress into a more sophisticated phonemic awareness. Developing a phonological awareness can be highly related with learning to read, and even it is used as a predictor for later difficulties at recognizing the spoken word in the printed form (Stanovich, 1986).

Further, the written language is related to the phonological awareness due to the need of grasping the alphabetic principle that underlines the system of written language. That is why developing readers must be aware of the internal structure of words in order to benefit from formal reading instruction. This strong relationship between reading success and

phonological awareness persist throughout school (Lieberman, Shankweiler, Fischer, and Carter, 1974).

Based on the previous differentiations of phonics and phonemic awareness, it is important to highlight that even if they are different they all help to construct a phonological awareness. Depending on the phonological awareness the student is placed, they are exposed from simple to complex activities such: 1) rhyming songs, 2) sentence segmentation, 3) syllable segmentation or blending, 4) blending and segmenting individual phonemes. Those activities help to develop a more conscious learning process where students can be empowered and grow more independently.

### **2.2.3 Task Based Learning**

Task Based Learning (TBL) is an approach to a second foreign language learning in which task constitutes the main focus of instruction. Indeed, classroom materials and lessons in TBL are organized around activities and tasks that avoid focusing that much of their attention in terms of grammar or vocabulary (Richards, Schmidt, Platt, and Schimidt, 2003). The use of tasks based materials provide an alternative setting for the learning to develop an automatized process; acquire, internalize, and use the new knowledge during the learning process.

Within the framework of TBL, classroom task is defined as an activity that 1) is goal-oriented, 2) is content focused, 3) has a real outcome, and 4) reflects real-life language use and language need (Shehadeh, 2005). The constant use of task creates a strong believe that considers TBL facilitates the second language acquisition and makes the teaching practice more affective. It is due to the negotiation of meaning that task work activities enhance to offer an input and output necessary for language learning.

Also, students need a reliable input to develop a determinate task. According to the input perspective, interaction with the second language through different tasks provides learners with an opportunity to receive feedback on the level of their comprehension in the L2. Learners' noticing of and paying attention to linguistic form is also a necessary requirement for L2 learning (Long, 1998; Schmidt, 1998). Task based activities creates an ideal setting for students to grow a more conscious learning process.

Therefore, it can be concluded that negotiation of meaning and modification of input are necessary for L2 learning. There is some research that even states that the constants use of tasks provide learners with excellent opportunities for negotiating meaning, modifying input, and focusing on the formal properties of the L2 (Ellis, 2003). Tasks based activities help students to develop a more conscious learning process where the learner itself is more conscious about his/her process providing a scenario where learning is essential.

Furthermore, TBL is primarily used through tasks. For Willis (2004) a task is an activity "where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 23) Since tasks are goal-directed activities, participants decide which language forms to use to achieve the goal. Van den Branden (2006) defines a task as "an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language" (p. 4). It is evident in this definition that there is a language form needed to perform a task.

However, the language is the means not the end. Language is the vehicle to reach successful communication when having real-life communicative situations. Van den Branden (2006) also explains how in second language research, tasks have been used to

study language production, interaction, negotiation of meaning -all aspects to improve second language acquisition (SLA). Branden's task definition serves to clarify the reason behind the use of TBL in a setting as the Centro de Lenguas where students need to require the use of the target language and reflects on their learning process.

Besides, TBL theoretical construct draws an important view on how the target language is used, and how the data is collected on this research project. Learner output plays an important role in the acquisition process because it 1) forces learners to move from semantic to more syntactic analysis of the target language (TL), 2) enables them to test hypotheses about the TL, and 3) helps them consciously reflect on the language they are producing. (Swain, 1995) This process refers directly with the writing organizational competence which requires an approach that facilitates the developing of the writing stages and enhance a conscious learning process. All of which makes it possible for learners to notice a gap between what they want to say in the L2 and what they can say, which prompts them to stretch their current interlanguage capacity in order to fill the gap. This represents "the internalization of new linguistic knowledge, or the consolidation of existing knowledge" (Swain, 1995, p. 374).

Based on the above, it can be inferred that task-based method in this project is used so that students not only develop activities that are controlled or semi-controlled and directed to writing, but also to have the opportunity to interact with a new learning and to reflect on it. Something that is easily found when using the TBL.

## **Chapter 3. Research Design**

The study below contains two different research components, the first one is the paradigm framed in the nature of the study (qualitative research) and the second is the approach used by the researcher in order to construct a coherent process (Action-research). There is also a brief overview regarding to the data management and its functionality in the students' learning process divided into three different categories and their main indicators.

### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

This study is framed within the qualitative principles. According to Lincoln (2010) a qualitative research is an activity which locates the observer within the world. Also, it consists on a series of interpretative material practices that make that world visible. In the case of this study, it is a qualitative research due to the fact that students are observed and analyzed within the world of the English class.

Therefore, the qualitative research interprets the setting in the real context using a series of representations such as field notes, recordings, interviews, pictures, conversations, and so on, to interpret the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Those representations are used in this study to construct and interpret the students' world in level A1, classroom 205, in the Centro de Lenguas.

### **3.2 Action Research**

The type of the study is action research. According to Stringer (2007), action research designs are a systemic proposal done by teacher (or other individuals in an educational scenario) to gather information about a specific topic, and further to improve the teacher and student learning. In this particular scenario, a preservice – researcher teacher is the one of charge of designing this project.

This study uses the model suggested by Stringer (2007) which is categorized in three phases; look, think, and act. The *Look* step refers to the data collection or analysis scheme. The *Think* stage denotes a reflection and more extended critique of instructional, theoretical, and even political implications. The *Act* cycle focuses on action steps related to academic skills or on social action beyond the classroom. The *act* cycle often involves framing new questions that lead to further inquiry. Because of the flexibility, this proposal uses *Look, Think, Act* cycle which spirals from one inquiry into next one.

### **3.3 Data management instruments**

The data collection method is defined as a simple technique used to collect empirical research data (Johnson and Turner, 2010). For this study the data instruments are;

Field notes: These written reports come from observation of the classes. Further, Johnson and Turner (2010) states that the main purpose of observation is a constant one, this is to create an environment where the participants act normally regardless the observer presence. Field notes can record important information from normal classes as behavior revealed towards a variety of activities, activities, events and other factors from the application of the proposal, and serves to complement the other instruments.

Artifacts: Kalmbach (2010) states an artifact as a type of physical documentation that proves the participation of student during the class. This definition is relevant due to the fact the artifacts is one of the data collection items more important in this action research project. In this proposal, the main artifacts are the texts students write to show their learning process through the writing organizational competence.

### **3.4 Triangulation**

Triangulation is a data analysis method based on the three or more perspectives (Data Collected). Eileen Ferrance (2000) recognizes the importance of mixing different data collection methods. There are several reasons to combine them, but the main one is to get different perspectives to get the data from, so the results are trustworthy and support the issue is being addressed.

For this study the triangulation process is carried out taken into account the field notes registered during the data collection phase (Teacher-Researcher perspectives), and the artifacts (written products that contain students' performances) made by the students in the different sessions.

### 3.5 Categories

Based on the three main theoretical perspectives presented in the previous chapter, the data collected is analyzed keeping in mind its functionality in the students' learning process.

Unite of analysis	Categories	Indicators
Writing skill	Writing skill development through phonological awareness.	The student writes a word in a correct way when the teacher spells it.
		The student spells a known word in a correct way.
		The student gives examples of a word that contains a specific letter sound.
		The student chooses the right written form of a word by the pronunciation.

	Self-phonological awareness to correct misspelling errors at writing.	The student corrects misspelling errors done by himself/herself, or from the peers.
		The student relates images with the spoken form of a word
	Development of task based writing activities to progress the acquisition of phonological awareness.	The student uses descriptive writing in complete sentences
		The student shows an organizational writing competence.
		The student fulfils free task based activities to develop phonological awareness.

### 3.6 Ethical considerations

To conduct a research, regardless the type, the National Commission for Human Rights developed a guideline for conducting research on its *Belmont Report* (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978). This report shows three principles; 1. the beneficence of treatment of participants in order to maximize good outcomes and minimize risks, 2. The respect for participants by protecting autonomy and ensuring complete information about the project, and a voluntary participation, 3. Ensure justice by a fair distribution of risk and benefits. All of which are taken into account in this proposal.

Finally, there is a consent informed that is created by the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional as a unique way to get the parents all informed about the purpose and characteristics of the project. This document ensures the voluntary participation, and a well-informed one.

### 3.7 Population and sampling

The population is divided depending on the students' performance; 20% with low, 20% with middle, and 20% with a high one. The 60% total of students is the sample on this research project (15 out of 25). The decision is taken according to the results with the diagnosis 1 and 2. There is also a consent form signed by the parents that is relevant to determinate the final population from which the data is recollected and analyzed.

## **Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation**

Many studies have been developed using phonetics as a tool. Surprisingly the majority of them work around the speaking skill, and deeper on pronunciation. This action-research project wants to grow a phonetic self-awareness on students since A2 Level until B1 and an emergent teaching approach as the Communicate required by the Centro de Lenguas. This proposal is set into three different stages, each stage has a different and specific task, however they altogether lead to the same objective; improving writing by developing phonological self-awareness with the task-based learning method as the primary one, and the communicative approach as a secondary and emergent one.

### **4.1 Vision of Language and Learning**

Taking as a reference the theory that is presented in the previous chapter, the vision of language of this project is based on Task Based Learning towards improving writing skill. Language is the development of grammatical knowledge to express meaning, considering the fact that meaning and form are highly interrelated, and grammar exists to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings (Willis & Willis, 2001).

As it was mentioned before, the vision of language and learning is addressed in regard to the TBL method. Van de Branden (2006) states that with the TBL method, the class becomes mainly students centered, which generates the main responsibility of learning over the students. It does not depreciate the role of the teacher as it is labeled as a model, and the learning process is characterized as autonomous when performing a task.

On the other hand, the objective of learning a foreign language is the acquisition of the language competence (Willis & Willis, 2001). The closer the learner approximates to these

norms, the more successful they are assessed to be in learning. The learning environment needs to be created where students feel comfortable and motivate to acquire the language competence.

#### **4.2 Roles of the teacher and student**

Task Based Learning is student-centered which gives the student the major participation. Due to the nature of the project, the student needs to be conscious about his/her own process. To achieve it, she/he needs to be aware of the importance of working in groups and the responsibility that carries out the development of each activity.

David Nunan (2001) state the role of the teacher as a guide and a facilitator. The teacher is a guide as it is the one focusing on meaningful task communication, and use the target language as much as possible. The goal of the language teacher is to try to develop pedagogical tasks that are as close to real-world tasks as possible, thus creating activities that are meaningful and relevant to students. Besides, the use of different tasks creates opportunities for the students to interact between them clarifying doubts and comparing answers.

#### **4.3 Activities and resources**

The aim of the activities is to facilitate the language learning by creating opportunities for the scholars to use the language creatively and spontaneously through different tasks based activities. Each task is set depending on the indicator to be evaluated. Nunan (2001) clarifies the difference between two different type of tasks; target task and pedagogical tasks. The real world or target tasks are communicative acts that are achieved through language in the world outside the classroom. The pedagogical task is the preparation to

develop a specific activity. In this action research study, both, the target and the pedagogical tasks are used to develop the activities in class.

The materials required along the process are worksheets, games created by the teacher, classroom material such; colors, pencils, scissors, markers, erasers, books, notebooks, tv, and computer. This proposal seeks for the use of authentic material in which recall the motivation and create a desire from the students to develop the different tasks and activities. Reason why the materials vary depending on the class, and student's motivation.

#### **4.4 Evaluation**

The assessment is primarily based on task outcome. It does not necessarily mean that the product of each activity is presented in a solid material, as there are some activities that depends on the student participation and wiliness to work (individual and team work). Respectively, the Centro de Lenguas has their own evaluation measure which this proposal respects and follows. For instance, each semester is divided within three terms; the first one worth 15% out of the final score, the second 15%, and the third 20% for a grade out of 50 points. The grade percentage added together showed a participation grade more than a knowledge measurement. Even though the final product is relevant in terms of evaluation, there is not the only item to be evaluated as students are considered different and unique in each way, the process every student goes through may vary. Besides, what was taken into consideration to evaluate the students was their performance during the task based activities during each stage of the intervention and how those performances contributed to the final achievement.

#### **4.5 Instructional Design**

As it was stated previously on the action research phases (look, act, and think); it is a process that is continuously repeating. That definition was considered to design three stages in which the three research phases is applicable by a constant observation on each activity (look), and making changes if it considered necessary (act and think). There is a spelling exercise at the beginning of each class that aims to show clearly the process of each student. The results from the dictation help to take important decisions about possible changes along the implementation of the project.

Referring to the objectives of this project, this proposal used phonology to improve writing. As it was mentioned on the previous review of literature with the definition of phonological awareness, topics such rhyming, alliteration and syllabication were included to develop skills such sound identification, sound blending, segmenting, and sound manipulation, all of which leads to a more conscious use of writing.

On top of that, every Saturday a spelling game is presented at the beginning of the class to introduce the new topic for the day. No every class is taking into account on the following application calendar, as the spelling game does not exceed a 15 minutes activity and not every class allows a proper and more transcendental activity due to the need to apply other activities and topics required from the Centro de Lenguas. The dates bellow are set depending on about one-hour activity – apart from the spelling game - that involve task based activities, phonology, and writing at the same time. The data recollected from the spelling game, and the different activities serves for the posterior analysis.

#### **4.5.1 First Phase (February – March)**

Firstly, the first two months focuses on the three first lessons from the book as main topic for the class. To raise a phonetic self-awareness rhyming is crucial to develop sound

identification and sound blending skills. The students develop controlled tasks according to TBL, in which they combine they project topics with the book contents.

Every class starts with a spelling game that is modified regarding students' needs and desires. In order to go through the content from the book and the project, there are four lessons plans applied in different dates, which corresponds to one topic from the project mixed with one from the book *Big English 2*.

#### **4.5.2 Second Phase (April - May)**

The second one differs from the first one on the topics the lesson plan addresses. This phase takes as consideration the following three chapters from the book and uses alliteration and syllabication as the main topic to work phonological self-awareness by using segmenting, and sound manipulation skills. To achieve that, the lesson plan goes around letters and vowels combination, which is one of the most critic problem showed on the Annex N°4.

The second phase is applied within five different classes, therefore, there are five lesson plans. The number of tasks to develop phonological awareness and writing skill is accompanied by some games and exercises done at home, and posted on Edmodo as one of the 8 individual work and complementary hours set by the Centro the Lenguas.

#### **4.5.3 Third Phase (June- August- September)**

This last phase is more focused on applying the knowledge they acquired during the previous stages. That is the main reason why this phase is longer than the other ones. In terms of the content of the book stated by the Centro de Lenguas *Big English 2*, the last three chapters from the book is addressed as the content of the class. Now, in regard to the

planning, this phase has more semi-controlled activities according to the task-based learning approach. Within those three months, students would start producing short descriptions depending of different incomes as books, and videos.

This phase has 6 lesson plans total to develop different tasks in terms of writing where the use of phonological awareness is applied, and therefore analyzed. This last phase has more semi-controlled activities as the students are more likely to commit mistakes compared to the two previous phases.

#### 4.6 Timetable

Phase	Indicator	Date						Content from the book	Objective teaching/learning
		February	March	April	May	June	August		
First phase	Alphabet – vowels and letter sounds. Who wants to be a millionaire game to choose the right written description of images.	18	01, 04						Unit 1: In my classroom Unit 2: Playground fun. Unit 3: In my house  - To grow sound identification and sound blending skills through rhyming. - To develop controlled task based activities with letters sound; S/Z, F/V, M/N
	Board race. Students will write on the board what the teacher says.		18						
	Scrabble game to create words based on a specific letter. Simon says game to draw what is pronounced to develop sounds discrimination.	25	4						
Second phase	My dream house description.			1				Unit 4: In my town. Unit 5: My dream job. Unit 6: My day.  -To raise alliteration and syllabication to develop segmentation and sound manipulation skills. -To foster vowels and letter combination.	
	Guess the word game part 1 and 2. Letter cards to create words that contain a specific sound.			1, 15	6, 20				

	Image-sound recognition activity.			29						
<b>Third phase</b>	Reading <i>Home</i> by Amy White. Creation of the first accordion book.					03, 10			Unit 7: Food Unit 8: Wild animals Unit 9: Fun all year	-To create productions of descriptions based of different books that would be read in class, and videos. -To develop Semi-controlled activities from Task Based learning.
	Reading <i>Seasons</i> by Amy White. Creation of the second accordion book.					19-26				
	Awesome animals. Frog game to grow sound identification and letter recognition.						02, 16			

The time table is divided within three sections showing the stages of the project, and the indicators on each phase. The dates are set depending on the schedule the Centro the Lenguas (CDL) organized at the beginning of each term, and it can be modified depending on different factors as CDL decision or human factors as the cancellation of a class due to sickness.

#### 4.7 Lesson Planning

There are numerous reasons to write and prepare a lesson plan. For instance, Jensen (2001) states the importance by mentioning that planning provides a more unified lesson. It allows the teacher to clarify beforehand the specific objectives, and the activities/materials

needed to reach those objectives. Also, planning provides an opportunity to link activities and lessons plan between each other generating a learning path to guide students through the same main goal. Planning the lessons provides opportunities to reflect about the different tasks students are fulfilling during the application of this proposal, this reflection allow the teacher to be more explicit about the content and guidance to provide a meaningful class.

Further, as a requisite by the Centro de Lenguas the use of a teaching book must be used as a guide. The different topics are set throughout all the three phases by using the topics set by the book *Big English 2* as following;

**Centro de lenguas Universidad Pedagógica Nacional**

**Teacher:** Aura Cristina Leon Castro

**Course Basic 2**

**Date:** 01 – 03 – 2017

**Topic:** Writing competence, and sound identification.

**Teaching objective:** To connect basic knowledge in a real classroom environment.

Students will be able to difference the commands to follow basic instructions.

**Learning objective:**

Time	Activity	Organization - Resources	Assessment
8:00 to 8:30	Review vocabulary with a guessing game. Students will need to go to the board to write the word that is described.	Students will be divided within 5 groups, 5 students per group.	Participation and the wiliness to work in group is relevant.
8:30 to 9:00	Students will draw their dream house, and will write a short description of it.	Individually. However, they can work in	Writing production is assessed in this part.

		groups to draw the house.	
9:00 to 9:30	Each student needs to describe orally their dream house, and what it's in it.	Individually. Students will go to the board to present their draw.	The use of the target language to communicate is assessed.
11:30 to 12:00	Students will have two charts in which they need to classify words that contains m/n and f/v.	Students will be working individually.	The phonetic discrimination sound is tested

Each lesson plan is designated with the same structure where a determinate time is given to develop the activity, following the description of it, how the students are organized, and evaluated. The assessment of each activity and students' performance is determinate by what they are doing, and how is their reaction through it. As it was stated before, the evaluation is a continuum set by the process and not only the outcome.

The different tasks activities to raise a phonological awareness to improve the writing competence are set to be developed since the beginning of the class until the break. Each activity has a 30 minutes set time to develop 3 different activities building phonological awareness per lesson applied, and it is mixed with the topic determinate by the book *Big English 2*. The time of each activity is not always followed, as there are some activities that can be developed within a less frame time, however is was set in such a structure to avoid unplanned thing that can prevent and activity from not being developed the fullest.

## Chapter 5. Data Analysis Procedure

The proposal was carried out through a process where students were developing different task based activities. Those activities were arousing the level of complexity due to students' performance and developing of phonological awareness. For developing phonological awareness was used name writing, rhyme awareness, beginning sound awareness, alphabet knowledge, concept of word, decoding and print knowledge for the study.

In terms of limitations, it is necessary to clarify that the application of the proposal started when students were in basic 2 and ended up in Intermediate 1. Further, it started with 25 students on basic 2, when the next level was reached, the number of students were reduced to 20; 2 of them failed the basic level, 2 of them quitted the Centro de Lenguas, and 1 students changed the schedule to afternoon classes due to a ballet class in the morning.

On the other side of the issue, the achievements of the students were unexpected, as was posed before the learners were supposed to face a process in where their lack of confidence at writing and their skill doing it was challenged, reason why at first students showed an active participation in the activities proposed but several mistakes at doing it. For example, there was a rejection during the first class regarding to writing and the spelling game (Annex 5), but on the second class and so on students became more aware of words and sounds, to the point where they were the ones asking to have more exercises involving writing (Annex 6).

Besides, a pet class was created on the first day of class of the application of the proposal as a participation and good behavior reinforcement (Skinner 1983). Students

created the name, and some set of rules for the one that take Toby home – the lion pet class- to follow. Rules as; give him a bath when necessary, feed him, and love him where made to ensure the wellbeing of the fluffy toy. The second semester that corresponded to the level Intermedium I students chose Toby again from different other options; a bunny rabbit, a monkey, and an owl. Both semesters students recollected pictures doing different activities with him, and one aspect of the final presentation at the end of each level consisted on playing a video that recalled all the memories with Toby.

Furthermore, along the process the study had modifications mediated by the nature of a classroom; it means that due to the dynamics of the class (time, syllabus and behavior) the proposal changed. Although at the beginning of the process the students were supposed to create three accordion books total, it became in the creation of two accordion books that were used to achieve the objectives because of time. The achievements so far showed the appropriate and expected use of their linguistic competence in English by most of the students, in fact, there were students that had the chance of continuously reinforce at school as there are other cases that were only practiced at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

### **5.1 Category N°1: Writing skill development through phonological awareness**

The elements analyzed below correspond to the three data resources proposed and applied since the beginning of the study. Students were having the same activity; spelling game at the beginning of the class as a routine, and the main activity was done later as it was combined with the main topic of the class. It was done to reinforce the phonological awareness most likely before the break, however the time of the day where the activity was developed did not affect the results. As a way to motivate students, and due to their age range -from 7 to 9 years old-, a pet class was chosen as a reward. The kid with an active

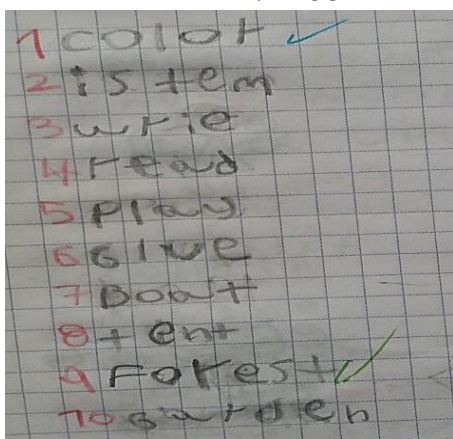
participation and better spelling performance could take Toby home and keep it until next class.

### 5.1.1 Indicator 1: *The student writes a word in a correct way when the teacher spells it.*

The data gathered that shapes to this indicator were taken from the same two different resources data was collected during the data gathering phase (Artifacts and Field Notes). Firstly, it is important to mention that the following image belongs to the second application of the spelling game. The student who was taken as an example wrote words guided by their pronunciation. Only those words that were right were the ones getting the check mark. After the word was spelled and checked, students were spelling back the word, and the teacher was noting it on the board for everyone to compare answers.

The firsts spelling games applied showed a lot of mistakes at writing in general. Words like “wrie” and “istem” as it shown in the picture from session 2 draw the attention due to

Illustration 1. Spelling game



students tended to write words based on how they felt in their mouths or sounded when they said them.

Students were continuously making the same mistakes specially with the firsts and last letters of the word.

The phenomenon was highlighted as field notes showed “*children frequently realize /s/ and /z/ as “th” sounds, while producing th-words with [f] in place of*

*voiceless “th”, and [d] or [v] in place of [ð] like the word “with” being writing “wid”.*”

(Field note, annex 7). The age and English level range in which students are set explain

somehow the confusability of the letter's shape and pronunciation with other letters, and the fact is frequently found in print materials.

According to what was previously stated, Bowen (1998) mentions those findings are related to the complexity of the English language which echo the interconnected relation between articulation and spelling. A reinforcement of the alphabet knowledge, and the beginning sound awareness was taught and reinforced on the following classes. The importance of this English language complexity (Bowen, 1998) was later on raised when the alphabet knowledge was tested and some words were proved to be challenging.

Furthermore, students were improving the recognition of the letter when giving them an example of a word that starts for that letter. This modification on the spelling game was done due to students were struggling with the letter *e*; students were mostly writing [i] when spelling [e] (Annex 8, session 4). This misspelling error was repeating constantly, and it was becoming a general problem. Students were writing [i] when referring to [e] as in Spanish – their mother tongue - the /e/ sound is written [i]. Even though students were receiving the class in English, and the target language was constantly used, they were unconsciously relating their learning on their native language.

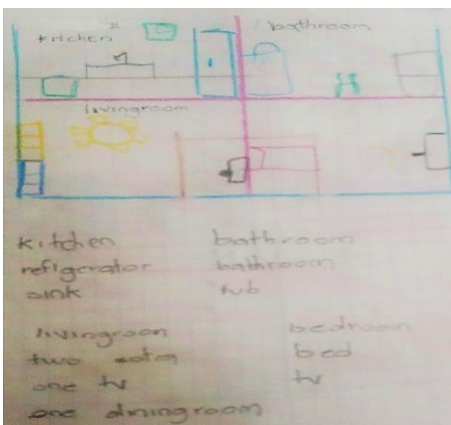
Besides, Odin (1989) remarks the native language interference as a proof that students understand the word, however they cannot materialize what they visualize in their minds in the writing code. They can recall how a word is written in the native code, and students mix both codes to create a new one breaking a clear communication between what the student want to express and what they are communicating.

To end up this indicator, the following classes were based on using specific letter sounds and recognition due to students needed to be more familiar with letters and sounds. In this fact, Hanna (1966) remarks most English spelling is based on the phonological system of the language. Saying that half of English words can be spelt correctly with grapheme phoneme conversions alone, making strong decoding ability a very powerful tool for learning to write properly when identifying the words sound. Such an affirmation indicates a challenging overview when using phonetics at writing, challenging did not mean impossible as students were progressing with the passing classes.

### **5.1.2 Indicator 2: *The student spells a known word in a correct way.***

As in the previous section, to answer this indicator it was necessary to appeal to artifacts and field notes with the performances of the students towards this indicator. The first resource taken into consideration was an artifact resulting from an activity where students had to draw their dream house and describe what was on it (Session 3, March 1<sup>st</sup>). The authors of the images below, as most of the students developing the activity, were writing list of words instead of writing sentences. When students were asked to describe orally their composition, they were using complete sentences. The spelling of the words was mostly correct, but their writing communication was broken due to grammar structures.

*Illustration 2. Dream house description*



When students were developing the task, they did not have anything to lay on to check the spelling of a word more than their own knowledge. The illustration 2 is a clear example where students were showing a big improvement in terms of spelling as there were few mistakes only. Also, the field note from the class

states that “*the fact they were able to explain what their draw and list of words meant reaffirms they knew what they wanted to express when developing the activity*” (Annex 9). There was just a gap that broke the communication between what they wanted to express and what they really did.

According to Bass (2012) the problem is not merely a word gap. He affirms it is due to an exposure gap. Exposure to fewer words means that students have been having contact with few examples of complex/logical thinking: few sentences, few questions, and few explanations of ideas or arguments. Clear writing requires proper grammar from models they can imitate. Many students’ lack of vocabulary and practice prevent them from building a readable sentence/text. On the other side of the issue, when motivating students to write, writers might exhibit low self-worth and confidence, which can impede learning (Hidi & Boscolo, 2010). This low confidence prevents students to demonstrate what they already know, as the example of the dream house description. Students knew what they wanted to express, their lack of confidence impeded them to accomplish the task.

To conclude, students achieved the indicator regarding to spelling, due to their still basic English level and lack of confidence their writing was not coherent. It is well known no one born knowing how to speak or write coherently. Depending on the students’ home and school environment, she/he may or may not be surrounded by people that motivates writing, and serves as a model to lay on.

### **5.1.3 Indicator 3: *The student gives examples of a word that contains a specific letter sound.***

To accomplish this indicator was used a modified spelling game, and more activities where students had to spell the word letter by letter with an example of words that started from the

required letter, or identify a letter sound in different words. To evaluate this indicator, it was imperative to make the students talk with their peers about a written form of a word as it is presented in the field notes (Annex 10) and the artifact (Artifact #6) presented below giving account of that.

The illustration 3 shows a controlled task that students were required to fulfill in groups. The activity corresponds to letter sound identification. The aim of the activity was for the students write the word that corresponded to each image. Then, they had to identify the

*Illustration 3. Vowel sound identification*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**BUD AND JUNE**

Bud and June had a contest to see who could draw more pictures with the same vowel sound they heard in their names. Write the word below the picture.

 _____	 _____	 _____
 _____	 _____	 _____
 _____	 _____	 _____

BONUS: Who won the contest? \_\_\_\_\_

SKILL: Long U and Short U Vowel Sounds  
Worksheet 1-1-13

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letter sound /ʌ/ that is found in the name Bub, and the letter sound /u:/ find in the name June. From the field notes it is perceived that:

“students found a coping mechanism to develop the activity. It was practically the same for every group; they were asking the teacher repeatedly to pronounce the words while they were discriminating the letter sound.

After several repetitions, it was find out the task was not developed within groups by the whole class was working together to identify the sound.” (Annex 10).

In addition, students were discussing with each other and by raising their point of view whether the word sound corresponded to /ʌ/ or /u:/, they were giving reasons to convince the other about their findings. The teacher role was more like a moderator due to students were the ones actively developing the task.

Furthermore, Treiman and colleagues (1997) reported that many letter names contain their corresponding sounds, taking one of two forms: the consonant-vowel (CV) pattern of /consonant sound/ + /i/ as in the letter B, or the vowel-consonant (VC) pattern of /ε/ +

/consonant sound/ as in the letter F. Preschoolers are aware of these regularities, particularly the consonant-vowel form, just as the letter form from the words resulting from the task applied in the Centro de Lenguas' class. These results are consistent with the idea that children use their segmentation abilities and the initial sounds of letter names as cues for the letters' sounds.

To sum up, along with oral language and phonological awareness, the letter sound identification represents one of the most important emergent literacy skills acquired by young children. Letter sound and name was found to be a significant predictor of writing. Although these skills in letter identification and writing were expected to grow over the application of the proposal. It is an important finding that there is already a foundation of phonological awareness to identify spelling and the written form of a word from which the additional growth can occur.

## **5.2 Category N°2: Self-Phonological awareness to correct misspelling errors at writing**

This category sought the reinforcement of the self-phonological awareness students were acquiring so far. This time the phonological awareness complexity was raised in such way students were not only spelling orally, but looking forward to correct errors done at writing by themselves or by others. The evaluation process was merely through the process and not the result. Also, as motivation and to strengthen the active participation from the students, they could take the pet class Toby to their houses for a complete week.

**5.2.1 Indicator 1: *The student chooses the right written form of a word by the pronunciation.***

This indicator is confirmed when students chose the written form of the word by the pronunciation at the Guess the word game (Session 6, April 15th). It was done through a power point presentation that contained an image with different written forms of the word represented by the picture. Even though students were confused at first, they were repeatedly pronouncing the word, and they were figuring out the word due to the pronunciation. From the field notes is stating when;

“As students were set by groups, they were arguing about the correct written form of the word. The words were most likely similar, which confused them somehow. A student did not understand why the right answer for the image was the option 1. Cheese and not the 2. Chesse (which his group has chosen). A peer correction was done from different groups. However, the student was not satisfied with the answer, and he was still confused. The teacher had to intervene not to explain why, but to pronounce each word regarding the way it was written. At the end the student was not confused anymore, and a different student added; “Es como zoo con double /ou/ o sino sería /zo/,” to which he nodded.” (*Annex N° 11*).

As it was stated at the opening of the chapter; students were combining the main topic of the class with activities that reinforced their phonological awareness. From that activity students were chosen the written form of the word based on their previous knowledge, and they used the pronunciation and their phonological awareness to clarify doubts.

Furthermore, as Lyon (1998) states the main goal of instructing students through a word recognition and sound correspondence is to help children figure out the alphabetic system of written English and become comfortable with that system as they become more aware of

it. Students showed they were becoming more and more aware of the relationship between sounds and print to the point it is the first mechanism they lay on when confusing on how a word should be written.

To conclude this indicator is fundamental not only to see the way the students apply the phonological structures of the language but also to notice how naturally they have produced and create meaning from a limited linguistic spectrum they had at that point. Furthermore, the results achieved at this point shall allow further results toward their use and adaptation of the alphabetic system.

**5.2.2 Indicator 2: *The student corrects misspelling errors done by himself/herself, or from the peers.***

Considering students were going through a process where each stage was not separated but continuously connected, the example stated on the previous indicator serves to show how this indicator was achieved as well. Students were not getting a specific feedback regardless their mistake. On the other side, there was a team correction where everyone was raising their point of view regarding the way a specific word is written. It helped to develop a self-awareness of the learning process they were involved to. The teacher-researcher was involved when students were making question and to clarify doubts.

A clear example of what was previously explained is the conversation that two students were having regarding how the word “zoo” is written; “*Es zoo con double /ou/ porque o sino sería /zo/*” (Annex 11, session 6). This shows the developing of phonological self-awareness to clarify doubts regarding how a word should be written having into account its pronunciation.

In addition, Brown (2001) remarks that feedback is one of the main factors in the process of learning a foreign language. Whether is peer review, self-correction, or done directly from the teacher. There are some authors that best confirm the approach adding that “knowledge is best acquired through negotiated interaction” (p.380) instead of getting the answer (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996) The negotiation of a response is best done through an ambience where the person who the learning is being negotiated with is accessible. A teacher is not always available. Reason why a peer rectification and self-correction seems to meet the demand.

The fact students were developing a more solid phonological awareness is highlighted at corrections. Their confidence is allowing them not only to self-evaluate their mistakes, but to correct and provide reasons why a word should be written in determinate form. It states their level of phonological awareness reached at this point.

### **5.2.3 Indicator 3: *The student relates images with the spoken form of a word***

As it was stated on the justification of the project, the writing form of a word is crucial when wanting to correct writing errors. It does not mean that every application of the proposal was done merely at writing. Students were struggling when pronouncing similar words, which most likely was figured out by the context in which the word was used. This indicator was created for students to use their phonological awareness to discriminate isolated word sounds. According to what was previously stated, an example related to this indicator is showed in an activity done on April 29<sup>th</sup>, describes as:

“A power point presentation that contained all the letter sounds the students were struggling with. Then the teacher was pronouncing a word – with a notorious gesticulation

as all the words were having a similar pronunciation – and the students set by groups needed to discuss the word they think the teacher was mentioning and selected, so their team scored a point. ” (Annex 12, session 7).

They were not getting all the answers right though. Despite their mistakes, students were working in groups and arguing about the pertinence of one answer over to another based on the pronunciation. The fact students were discriminating similar sounds showed the proficiency they had acquired at the phonological level.

Thus, the ability to process different auditory stimulus is believed to underlie successful language acquisition. Likewise, the development in rapid auditory processing of both verbal and nonverbal stimuli are characteristic of individuals with a high phonological proficiency (Aslin & Hunt, 2001). It does not mean students have acquired a perfect phonological system, it refers to the expertise they had attained to the level of auditory discrimination.

### **5.3 Category N°3: Development of task based writing activities to progress acquisition of phonological awareness**

The last category of the proposal sought to implement a writing activity in which students created two accordion books. The books were made based on the reading of *Homes* by Amy White (2002), and the second was *Seasons* (2002) by the same author. The creation of the books was divided within two classes per accordion book that included the creation and

decoration of them. Those books were used to decorate the classroom and will be presented on the last day of class –The application of the project ended before the final day of class.

Illustration 4. Books outcome



On the illustration N°4 is showed the outcome used and how it would look like on the closing of the semester.

On top of that, to answer this category and its indicators it was necessary to appeal to artifacts and field notes with the performances of the students.

Also, it is necessary to clarify students were in an Intermediate English level as well which required a more elaborated sentence structure.

### 5.3.1 Indicator 1: *The student uses descriptive writing in complete sentences.*

The artifact on illustration 5 shows a descriptive writing in which the student not only wrote complete sentences, but also included the vocabulary learned from the reading as the

Illustration 5. Accordion book Houses



new word *brick*. A field note from the class states that “*students were writing different versions about their sentences. They were checking a dictionary someone brought to class, and asking the teacher if the sentences was well written as well*” (Annex 13, August 19th). The result from the artifact and the field notes shows the process

students were going through when writing. They not only cared about the drawing but the way they were transmitting their ideas in the written code.

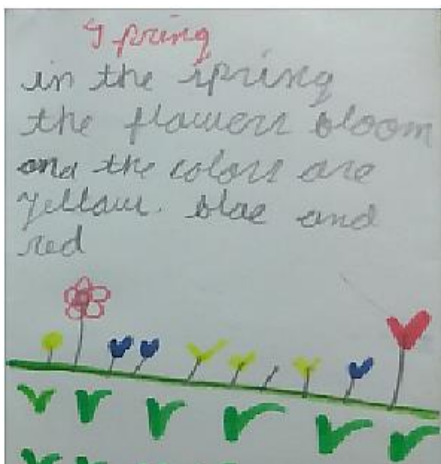
The fact students were focusing on the grammar and coherence affirms that writing encourages students to focus on truthful language use. It is because students reflect on the language itself when the students are engaged in their writing process (Harmer, 2001). Those reflections allow students to self-evaluate their process, and correct misspelling errors as well. Besides, students went through different stages where the text was adjusted by self-correction, peer-correction and teacher rectification showing the use of a thoughtful process (Brown, 2001).

Both books showed a well elaborate sentence structure in where spelling errors were almost none due to the fact students cared about grammar, sentence structure, and the spelling of the words. Students were conscious on the use of English even though it is a second language for them. That consciousness allows them to create a more elaborate writing, and prevent them from making spelling mistakes.

### **5.3.2 Indicator 2: *The student shows an organizational writing competence.***

Keeping in mind the theoretical framework and its definition of the writing competence as the ability to understand and form correct sentences into a text (Bachman, 1990), students were using their organizational writing competence to describe the season spring as it is shown on illustration 6. (Session 13, September 2<sup>th</sup>). Besides, the field notes from the class add “*students were feeling more relaxed at writing ending up as more complete paragraphs and the links of different ideas into a text* (Annex 14). Both the artifact and the field notes reaffirms students were feeling more comfortable at writing ending up as a more complex writing production.

Illustration 6. Accordion book Seasons



According to what was previously mentioned, Urquhart and McIver (2005) reaffirms writing is a recursive process which means students inspect through the process. That inspection process need some stages where students check, correct, and modify their writing before it is released. By students going through those stages evidences their knowledge of the target language, and an understanding of the

language itself including the rules that follow it.

The fact students were going through the writing stages previously mentioned provides reasons why their outcome showed an organizational writing performance, also that they were thinking not only on the structural form of the language, but also on the facility for the reader to understand the text.

### **5.3.3 Indicator 3: *The student fulfills free task based writing activities to develop phonological awareness.***

Due to students' English level, and writing proficiency, other activities were applied for them to reinforce their learning. An example of this indicator is found on a free task based activity done on June 10<sup>th</sup> when "*students were drawing an animal they considered awesome, and writing some specification on what make that animal great... a student asked; "miss, giraffe es con /jei/, yeah?" when I denied with my head, the girl added; "¿cuándo la escribimos con j?" to which another student noted – "in Spanish".*" (Annex 15, session 10). The peer correction from a different classmate shows some students are

getting a deeper reflection of the target language, even though there is some mother language interference along the way.

Furthermore, the fact students are reflecting and differencing how a word is written in two different languages – mother language and target one – shows a deeper understanding on the structure of any language itself. Snowling and Hulme (2011), confirm students may have problems with developing decoding skills because they are understanding and processing information to do with the phonemes in their mother language.

The achievement of this indicator shows student's performance and that their phonological awareness is not only affecting their target language learning, but providing an understanding of their mother language as well. It helps students to decode written language when writing a non-familiar word or confused one.

## Chapter 6. Results Summary

Throughout the last section the analysis of each indicator was presented. There were analyzed the different resources that contained the data gathered to answer to each of the indicators previously presented. For each indicator was selected at least one artifact which respond to the necessity posted in each indicator, and its analysis. To finally complement those examinations, the field notes resulting of the sessions were taken as one of the resources that complement the data analysis.

As it was mentioned previously, the level of the difficulty grew throughout the application of the present proposal as student's progress. They started by only listening, and then writing down what they were hearing. To reinforce the conclusion that was drawn from the first diagnostic in which was stated that students have a good listening skill, and they can most likely understand what is said to them using the target language, the first session was used. The game Heads and Tails were students were drawing what they were understanding from the teacher, and passing around orally to the first person in line, clearly shows they did understand the word and its meaning. (Annex 8, session 4). Bearing that in mind, the next sessions were used to develop a beginning sound awareness and the writing process.

To start, the first category *Writing skill development through phonological awareness* demonstrated a process that went from passive listening to the spelling of single words to a more active participation where students were orally spelling known words and even to provide examples of words per letter they were spelling. It showed a deeper understanding of the relationship that governs the English language between letter-sound relationship. The fact students were able to get across the alphabetic principle verifies that there is a

systematic connection between letter and sounds, and that understanding helped them to write more coherent words preventing them from making usually spelling errors.

Next, the second category denominated *Self-Phonological awareness to correct misspelling errors at writing* provides a more elaborated learning process where the outcomes stated the tight relationship between letters and sounds. In this category students' mapping of the correspondence on the written and oral code shows the technique they were using to find it out. Students were paying a detail attention on the form the teacher's mouth was making when pronouncing the words. The repetitions of the words got children to refine and extend their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and find the right written form of the words based on the pronunciation.

Last but not least, the final category called *development of task based writing activities to progress acquisition of phonological awareness* provided opportunities to write. Students were basing the creation of two different accordion books based on a previous reading. Their process to create the books allowed students to use their decoding skill. They showed a more complex understanding of sounds of language as they became aware of individual speech in words. Children's phonological knowledge provided them the confidence to write and lay on their phonological awareness to correct misspelling errors. Their confidence, and their English level resulted from a one-year application, ended up in a more complex writing competence where their organizational, grammar, and structure was clearer.

To end up, the three categories mentioned above provides an optional path for getting students off to a fast start in mapping the relationships between letter and sounds. The

results were beyond expected as their phonological awareness and understanding of the language reached their mother tongue. On top of that, it is necessary to take into account the student's personal context where parents' support and the educational situation may help for an additional growth occurred.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusions**

Based on the general objective that addresses to the analysis of the enhancement of phonological awareness using Task-Based Learning to correct writing errors, it is possible to conclude that task based activities allowed students to structure their writing competence and the ideas they wanted to express in a specific situation. That phonological awareness enhanced the self and peer correction on the students and provided a better base to lay on and can be used to prevent misspelling errors at writing. Furthermore, students ended up paying a detailed attention to the printed words and the way their own text were written.

Besides this fact, it is important to mention that the writing activities were designed to guide the students, to provide them vocabulary and a situation they could recognize. Based on what was posed in the data analysis section the students' achievements demonstrated that the basis and the constant practice in class allowed them to develop a phonological awareness at English which was complemented by the autonomous proficiency level the students were developing along the process. This phonological awareness, that included word awareness and sound identification, provided them an advantage in learning the relationships between phonemes and the letters patterns that typically represent them. Also, they generate a reflection not only at decoding on the target language, but on the structure of their mother one as well.

Besides, the use of task based activities within the application of the proposal provided students to involve a need to write more than isolated words to express real thinking. They found a need to write, and clear purpose as well. The creation of the semi-controlled task based activity related to the creation of the accordion books helped the students to have an initial point that structured their writing performances. It contributed them to identify their own learning process, and to develop a more comfortable posture referring to writing.

Students went from writing isolated words to explain a draw, to create complete sentences without losing the meaning of what they wanted to express. They found spelling words easier due to the clues offered by the sounds in words learned during the application of different tasks. The fact English language is alphabetic allows children to use phonology as a coping mechanism when presenting spelling mistakes, especially when student is writing a word guided by the pronunciation.

Furthermore, this proposal was focused on developing self-phonological awareness through different tasks based activities which was reached to an extent. Self-phonological awareness demonstrated to be a powerful tool that leaded students from the Centro de Lenguas to analyze the structure and mechanism that involves English as a language itself. That instrument also allowed them to analyze their mother language by finding differences and similitudes.

However, another learning tool arouse such the group work and peer correction demonstrating along the process to be an even more powerful learning mechanism to such an extend students where comparing answers and arguing to clarify doubts. Saying that, the application changed to generate more spaces where team work was required leading to a more unified group. Those extra benefits would have never been obtained by developing self-awareness only.

On the other hand, the teacher's performance is necessary to be taken into consideration. Along the process I faced different situations towards the process and the dynamics of a common setting. I was immersed in a continuous praxis process where I was a teacher-researcher which made me realized gaps existing in the students. Furthermore, it permitted me to focus on a deeper knowledge of the language to guarantee the proper learning for my students. The different classes at the university referring to phonology

created a basic knowledge, however a deeper research and understanding was needed to ensure I understood the correspondences between letter-sounds and a proper explanation of that correspondence as well.

This study is not only enclosed in the enhancement of a linguistic component (writing competence) among the students, this study should be seen as an overview process where a deeper research is needed. English sound-letter correspondence is up to 50% out of the total sounds, it would be necessary to see to what extent of their learning a language apprentice can bear on their phonological knowledge to write with competence and prevent spelling errors.

## **Chapter 8. General Recommendations**

As part of this process it is necessary to suggest certain facts that might be useful for the continuity of the language learning process which started in 2016-2. The research component deserves suggestions due to it is necessary to make emphasis on processes like the one that has been concluded. Enhancing research processes where the normal ones are challenged creates a path for future and deeper researches. Learning a language should be a whole, and the division that is done applying a specific strategy to improve only one competence should end as well. This research has shown that a tool that is normally used for reading and speaking can benefit writing skill as well. The only limitation is the way it is used and the teacher's purposes. Besides, and as a pedagogical suggestion for future research on the field, it could be considered to develop a phonological awareness where the peer correction, and more grouped work is done as it is suggested on the analysis of field notes found on annexes 10, 11, 12, and 15. Developing self-phonological awareness was meaningful, but throughout the application of the proposal the peer effect was highlighted to reinforce that phonological learning process.

On the other side of the issue, language centers as the Centro de Lenguas should offer a closer follow up to the pre-service teacher, not only to guide them on their teaching process but also to help them reach the high standard required by the institute. Fortunately, I had several experiences teaching and managing parents as well, but not everyone } }ne does not live the same experiences and closer support could prevent students from giving up on teaching when arriving to the pre-service teacher experience. Besides, the Centro de Lenguas requires to fulfil different tasks as grading, parents meeting, and exams that

require an extra labor time, in order to avoid frustrations, we should have personalized support to address to in case of doubts, someone that guide students through the process

Furthermore, in regard to the pedagogical component, it is necessary to reflect about the need to focus on a specific learning skill. Learning a new language goes beyond writing, reading, speaking, and reading. The fact the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional requires a learning skill prevents a more interesting research process. The fact we need rely on some language competence closes the investigation by limiting the curiosity of the investigator and making that this type of processes is done more out of duty than out of desire.

The above suggestions were made in order to improve the pedagogical, investigative, and disciplinary processes. Nor it does negate the extent to which it was reached with the research that was done, and that even without such the obtained results reached beyond expectations. However, these changes could have facilitated the process, and that the investigation would have come even further.

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## Annexes

**Annex N°1:** Survey done to the students when they were on basic 1 as part of the observation. From the answers were taken information as age range, economic status, who they lived with, what they did in their spare time, and if they have visited countries where English was the native language to characterize the population.

### Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Proyecto de investigación en el aula Encuesta

Responde las siguientes preguntas de manera voluntaria.

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Edad: \_\_\_\_\_

1. ¿Has estudiado inglés antes?

2. ¿Te gusta asistir al Centro de Lenguas? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Con quién vives?

4. Marca con una "X" para escoger el medio de transporte que usas para asistir al Centro de lenguas los sábados

a) Caminando

d) Carro propio

b) Transmilenio

e) Moto

c) Taxi

f) Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Cuál es tu materia favorita? Marca con una "x"

a) Matemáticas

c) inglés

e) Edu. Física

b) Español

d) Artística

f) Otra: \_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿Por qué es tu materia favorita?

7. ¿Qué te gusta hacer en tu tiempo libre?

8. ¿Qué te gusta hacer en tu tiempo libre?

9. Marca con una "X" las actividades que te gusta hacer en tu clase de inglés

a. Leer

c. Aprender vocabulario

b. Escribir

d. Hablar

e. Otra: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Teniendo en cuenta la respuesta anterior, ¿por qué te gusta?

11. ¿Cuál es la parte que más se te dificulta al aprender inglés?

a. Leer

c. Aprender vocabulario

b. Escribir

d. Hablar

e. Otra: \_\_\_\_\_

12. ¿Por qué te parece tan difícil?

13. ¿Cuál es tu parte favorita de la clase de inglés y por qué?

14. ¿Alguna vez ha viajado fuera del país a un lugar en donde sólo hablen inglés?

15. Si tu respuesta anterior es afirmativa, ¿Cómo fue la experiencia?

**Annex N°2:** When answering the survey, it was found students write words as they sound in their mother language; Spanish.

Ilustración 7. Language interference 1

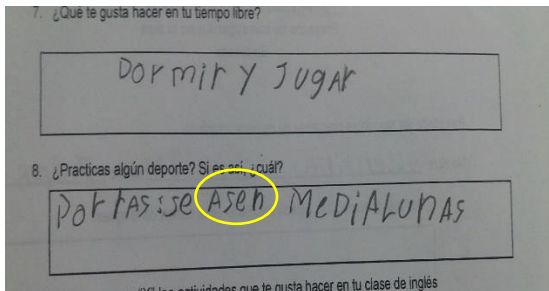


Ilustración 8. Language interference 2

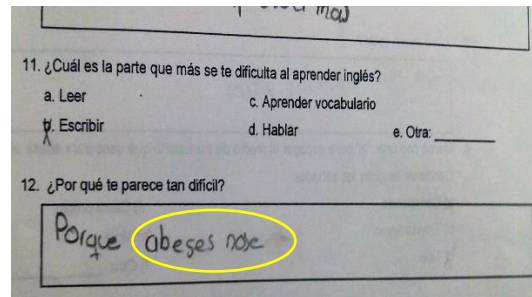
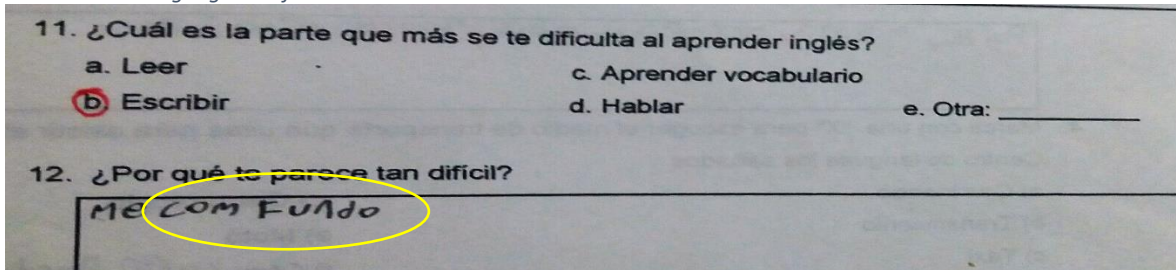


Ilustración 9. Language interference 3



**Annex 3:** Part of the field note N°4 where students were presenting the oral exam for their first term on 03-09-2017.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
Students were using playdough to create a monster. Then, the	Although the students did not have a previous preparation for the exam they were getting from 8 to	Good preparation for the exam. Fair use of the target language when speaking.

description of the monster was the oral exam.	10 in their grades. Only one student got 7.	
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**Annex 4:** Field note that states students write the way a word is pronounced done on 20/08/2016.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
The closer activity was to write about what they learned during the class.	The students denoted preoccupation for writing in English, so they asked the teacher if they could develop the activity in Spanish to which the teacher answered with a negative. Apart from that, there was a common mistake; <i>famili</i> . Also, students were checking constantly the book to find familiar words to write down. At the end, some students gave up, and wrote the words in Spanish.	Fear to express ideas in English even when they have the necessary knowledge to do it.

**Annex 5:** The first spelling game was applied on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Some students demonstrated an unhappy stance regarding the activity.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)

<p>The first spelling game was applied.</p>	<p>Students were writing what the teacher was spelling; isolated words to introduce the topic "class supplies". However, there was a rejection towards writing and the spelling game at the beginning of the activity. Negative comments stopped once the activity started.</p>	<p>If students continue showing a negativism towards the spelling game, the activity would need to be modified according to their likes and desires.</p>
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**Annex 6:** Second spelling game applied on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Students showed a better disposition towards writing to the extend they were the ones asking to have the spelling game in class.

<p>ACTIVITY (Description)</p>	<p>TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)</p>	<p>ANALYSIS (Meaning)</p>
<p>The second spelling game was applied to reinforce the vocabulary related to school supplies.</p>	<p>Students showed a better disposition towards this activity. The students were the ones asking to apply this activity without even naming it. Also, their team scores improved a lot compared to those gotten the previous class. There was a notorious ABC review. There are some students still struggling when catching the spelling of the words.</p>	<p>So far students show a better disposition regarding to the spelling game. The results improved in terms of spelling as well.</p>

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**Annex 7:** Field note from the second session of the application of the proposal on February

25<sup>th</sup>. Students showed carelessness about how a word is written.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
Work on the book Big English 1, to answer questions related to a previous reading in Unit 2; Playground fun.	Students were focusing on answering the questions and understanding. However, they did not care if the words were well written. Students were asking for translations of words, and they were writing it as the word sounded.	Children were careless to the written form of the text. They frequently realize /s/ and /z/ as “th” sounds, while producing th-words with [f] in place of voiceless “th”, and [d] or [v] in place of [ð] like the word “with” being written “wid”.

**Annex 8:** On March 4<sup>th</sup>, a spelling game applied at the beginning of the class with a modification; instead of naming letter alone, they were accompanied by an example of a word that starts from that letter. Also, in this session N°4 of the application of the proposal a game Heads and tails was used to reinforce the conception that students can understand what is addressed to them orally.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
Spelling game to introduce to the topic In My House.	The spelling game was modified, so students are now listening an example of the letter they hear. Students shows and	The modification of the spelling game allows students to reflect and associate the letters

	improvement with the recognition of the letters, especially when differencing "e" and "i" that has been lately one of their biggest weakness in terms of spelling.	with known words and their written form.
Game heads and tails. The mentor-teacher was saying as a secret the description of an object found in a house and the students needed to pass around what was mentioned to the last person in line until it reaches the first student. Then, that student was in charge of drawing the object described.	Students were showing an active participation and engagement during the game. Also, they showed a good listening skill and found some coping mechanism to do it even faster as only mention the object. As everyone got their turn to listen first and last in the game, that modification done by the students was not censured.	Student shows an active participation in games due to their young age. Besides, their good listening skill is still presented.

**Annex 9:** Field note from session 3 applied on March 1<sup>st</sup> in which students were drawing their dream house, writing a description about their draw, and orally explained their work. The writing outcome where isolated words, however their oral speech was more completed.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)

<p>My dream house; students needed to draw a house and write the description of what they draw. Then, orally explain to the class their picture.</p>	<p>Students were engaged on drawing their dream house. When it came to write the description of the house, they merely wrote the words of the parts of the houses, and elements that are found in there. However, when explaining their drawings, they used more structured sentences.</p>	<p>The fact they were able to explain what their draw and list of words meant reaffirms they knew what they wanted to express when developing the activity, however they still do not have the necessary confidence to develop the same orally capacity into written words.</p>
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**Annex 10:** Students were discussing with their peers about a task-based activity where it was necessary a letter sound identification. Session 5, April 1<sup>st</sup>.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
<p>Letter sound identification; students needed to write the word that corresponded to each image. Then group the words into similar vowel sounds and answer what is the sound that is repeated the most.</p>	<p>Students found a coping mechanism to develop the activity. It was practically the same for every group; they were asking the teacher repeatedly to pronounce the words while they were discriminating the letter sound. After several repetitions, it was find out the task was not developed within groups by the whole class was working together to identify the sound</p>	<p>Students can recognize vowel sounds and are finding new mechanism to relate letter-sound.</p>

**Annex 11:** Another authentic material was used to create the game “Guess the word”. It was done on April 15<sup>th</sup> that corresponds to the session 6. It evidences the phonological

awareness process from which a confused student went through, and how was overcome thanks to peer correction.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
<p>Guess the word game; students were divided within groups, and they needed to choose the right written form of the word guided only by the pronunciation.</p>	<p>As students were set by groups, they were arguing about the correct written form of the word. The words were most likely similar, which confused them somehow. A student did not understand why the right answer for the image was the option 1. Cheese and not the 2. Chesse (which his group has chosen). A peer correction was done from different groups. However, the student was not satisfied with the answer, and he was still confused. The teacher had to intervene not to explain why, but to pronounce each word regarding the way it was written. At the end the student was not confused anymore, and a different student added; "Es como zoo con double /ou/ o sino sería /zo/," to which he nodded.</p>	<p>Once more peer correction stands as a powerful learning tool. Perhaps it is needed the re-evaluation to a more groupal awareness style and less self-individual one.</p>

**Annex 12:** Field note from April 29<sup>th</sup>, session 7. Working by groups idea is reinforced at developing phonological awareness.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
<p>Game letter-sound from a power point presentation that contained all the letter</p>	<p>The teacher was using a notorious gesticulation as all the words were having a</p>	<p>Competitions seems a good way to engage students in an activity,</p>

sounds the students were struggling with. Then the teacher was pronouncing a word and the students set by groups needed to discuss the word they think the teacher was mentioning and selected, so their team scored a point	similar pronunciation. Despite the difficulty of the activity, students were working in groups and arguing related to the select the right answer. Not all the answers were right, however they seemed to understand the activity and enjoyed as well.	even if the reward is only to know they won. On the other hand, once more group work appears as a great learning resource.
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**Annex 13:** Field note from session 11 applied on August 19<sup>th</sup>. A reading aloud exercise was applied where students were paying detailed attention to the printed words. Afterwards, when creating the accordion book, they also were more careful on their own writing.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
Reading of the book Homes by Amy White. Afterwards, students created an accordion book to explain what they learned from the reading.	Students were paying close attention to the printed words when reading the book. Besides, they were writing different versions about their sentences. They were checking a dictionary someone brought to class, and asking the teacher if the sentences was well written as well.	Students are more aware that the form a word is written matters. They also care more about their writing structure as they look for coherence in their texts.

**Annex 14:** Students demonstrated a more elaborated writing performance on session 13 done on September the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)

<p>Reading of the book Seasons by Amy White. Afterwards, students created an accordion book to explain what they learned from the reading.</p>	<p>Students cared about the writing form of the words. They checked several times their writing and required for corrections from the teacher. Besides, their work looked as a more elaborated one where longer sentences and more complex grammar sentences and structures appeared.</p>	<p>Students were feeling more relaxed at writing ending up as more complete paragraphs and the links of different ideas into a text</p>
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**Annex 15:** A free tasks based activity was applied on June 10<sup>th</sup> corresponding to session 10 where peer corrections is emphasized. Besides, it shows a mother language interference and at the same time phonological reflection.

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)
<p>Students were drawing an animal they considered awesome, and writing some specification on what make that animal great.</p>	<p>They all were engaged with the activity working on the floor, chairs, and in groups or individually. A student asked; “miss, giraffe es con /jei/, yeah?” when I denied with my head, the girl added; “¿cuándo la escribimos con j?” to which another student noted – “in Spanish”. The activity went on without more notorious events.</p>	<p>Once more peer correction seems relevant when developing phonological awareness. Besides, students are showing that their phonological awareness they have developed in English can allow them to link their learning and apply it on their mother language.</p>