

**Constructing Community Awareness Through Picture Books: A First Approach to EFL
Learning**

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“Never be so kind, you forget to be clever.

Never be so clever, you forget to be kind...

Never be so polite, you forget your power.

Never wield such power, you forget to be polite.”

— Taylor Swift, *Marjorie* (2020)

First, I want to thank my father, José Wilmar Linares Martinez, who, for as long as I can remember, has taken care of me, guided me, and above all, taught me. He has been my most significant support throughout my life, especially during this challenging yet rewarding process. This has been a big step in my life, and knowing that there are many more to come, I have the peace of mind of knowing that I can count on a man as exemplary as he is.

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ABSTRACT

This document presents the research process (creation, application, and results) of the pedagogical proposal aimed at identifying the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language. The study was conducted with second-grade students at Liceo Femenino Lorencita Villegas de Santos in Bogotá. As it was considered that using picture books could enhance foreign language skills, using social problems and students' needs as opportunities to approach English as a foreign language. This research project employed a qualitative methodology, utilizing field notes, interviews, and surveys for data collection.

Key words: EFL education, Young Learners, Community Awareness, Picture Books.

RESUMEN

Este documento presenta el proceso de investigación (creación, aplicación y resultados) de la propuesta pedagógica cuyo objetivo era identificar el impacto del uso de libros ilustrados contextualizados para construir la conciencia comunitaria en un primer acercamiento al inglés como lengua extranjera. El estudio se llevó a cabo con alumnas de segundo grado del Liceo Femenino Lorencita Villegas de Santos en Bogotá. Se consideró que el uso de libros ilustrados podría mejorar las habilidades lingüísticas en la lengua extranjera, aprovechando las problemáticas sociales y las necesidades de las alumnas como oportunidad para abordar el inglés como lengua extranjera. Este proyecto de investigación utilizó una metodología cualitativa, que incluyó notas de campo, entrevistas y encuestas para la recopilación de datos.

Palabras clave: Educación en inglés como lengua extranjera, estudiantes jóvenes, concienciación comunitaria, libros ilustrados.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM

Local and Institutional Context

This research project was developed at Lorencita Villegas de Santos Branch B, a girls' public educational institution located in the northwest of Bogotá. This educational institution is located at Carrera 51 N° 78-88, in Barrios Unidos, specifically in the Gaitán neighborhood. The school is limited to Carrera 30 and Calle 80 as the most important avenues. This is a residential and commercial area with many furniture stores, restaurants, and coffee shops. Currently, the school has two branches: Branch A serves third to eleventh grade, and Branch B serves preschool to second grade. A recent change in the modality of the school is the implementation of *jornada única*, which seeks to unify and strengthen the educational system, and it is also under the A calendar model.

The school was founded in 1962 and named after Lorenza Villegas de Santos, the former first lady of Colombia *during* the presidential term of Eduardo Santos Montejó from 1938 to 1942. This recognition was the result of her involvement in political issues and her dedication to people in need in the fields of education and health in the country. At its founding, the school had 110 students. Nowadays, the school offers educational support to 625 students: 321 in elementary school and 304 in secondary and high school. Both branches are approximately one block apart. Branch B has a play yard and a two-floor building, and each classroom has a screen and a bookshelf. Despite the institution's commitment to promoting English learning, there is no established program beyond offering English classes from the early stages of the students' process.

The purpose of the institution is to train female leaders who positively contribute to society by providing an appropriate educational environment. This perspective of education looks to provide the tools and the counseling necessary to help the students in their formative process to achieve success in each branch of education; this aim is justified under the institutional educational project of the school, which reads “Educate in life and for life, with quality and community projection”. On the other hand, some of the institution's core values—

bioethics, love, critical thinking, empathy, and autonomy — play an essential role in shaping the school's mission. The former demonstrates the commitment to the integral education of women to become intellectually, emotionally, and socially competent; thus, the objective of fostering a self-determined spirit that seeks to create life projects that contribute to society is crucial. With this mission, the institution expresses an interest in achieving a high-quality status in the educational field. Furthermore, in terms of future projection one important aspect is the reflection on happiness and the consolidation of identity as relevant aspects in the education of the students according to the vision of the school, considering this element as a key aspect to allow them to transcend and transform the multicultural and democratic society in which they live, to construct inclusive spaces while facing the challenges of nowadays globalized world.

Participants

This project was carried out with a group of second-grade students from Branch B, part of the *Jornada única* program. In this case, the selected group was 201; the classroom was composed of nineteen female students aged 7 to 11. The characterization process held at the beginning of the project revealed that the students came from different neighborhoods of the city, with a range of social strata from 1 to 3. In terms of the English as a foreign language (EFL) class, the school implemented an extension to the subject's class load, increasing it from one hour per week to three hours, delivered by the area's head teacher. Additionally, students mentioned throughout the project their interest in learning English through activities that involved movement, as later revealed in the interviews and suggestions, such as acting and dancing. Singing was the activity students preferred most, as well as handicrafts, which many students noted as a comfortable way to learn. Reading was not a central part of the class, but most students chose to read as soon as they finished a task. Later, students commented that reading fun stories was a way for them to distract and relax.

Moreover, in terms of group work and coexistence, during the study's observation phase, students formed small groups, a standard practice among young learners. Still, the interactions between those groups were aggressive, as they only wanted to work within their own groups and were rude to students who did not belong to theirs. These behaviors occurred when students used foul language after another student made a mistake or did not pay attention. The behavior problems prevented them from seeing each other as classmates, treating them instead as

strangers, making it difficult to achieve the success of the activities and the learning process of the group.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the data collected through the instruments used during the diagnosis stage, it was determined that students were experiencing difficulties with EFL language skills in general. According to the Ministry of Education (2015), students at this level must demonstrate verbal and non-verbal reactions to speaking English. Considering this, it was observed that students were aware when someone spoke in English; however, the observations showed that students in 201 did not produce any speech to respond to greetings or simple questions. In addition, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the rank used by the standards of education for first to third grade states that students at this age and level of education should achieve A1 which is a stage in which speakers should be capable of comprehending and using expressions and simple sentences from a common and daily context to ask and respond to personal information in a slow rhythm (Council of Europe, 2020). Nevertheless, during the observation, it was found that students had difficulty understanding simple instructions and were confused when the teacher asked them questions about their day or mood.

Furthermore, in terms of reading according to the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*, students in this stage should be able to understand simple words, and sentences, also they must be able to organize the events in a short story; nevertheless, only few students could recognize and associate vocabulary related to the parts of the body, and were able to organize the events of a story correctly, which can be a consequence of the absence of a deeper contextualization of the vocabulary and the lack of situated use of the language. As a result, students showed little interest in class activities, which might hinder their understanding of the language's communicative aspect.

In addition, although books were not uncommon in the classroom, they were used only as a warm-up activity, which did not allow for a more complex interpretation of the stories; as a result, the topics presented were not adequately developed. Moreover, besides the language-related problems, the diagnosis showed that it was difficult for students to interact with their peers, work in different groups from the ones they were used to, demonstrating not only

resistance to doing so but also a negative attitude towards it, resulting in a lack of motivation and the ability to solve minor problems in the classroom.

Given the students' lack of social skills, it is crucial to recognize that learning a language involves both theoretical and practical aspects. When learning a language, individuals are also exposed to connections between people and to continuous cultural exchange, which breaks down barriers between speakers and enables communication. It permits, at the same time, the construction of bonds that benefit not only the people involved but also their communities. In this case, the conflicts that arise when students are asked to work together can undermine the consolidation of leadership abilities, a principal aim of the institution, as well as their awareness of community construction, which is fundamental in the students' training process to become active citizens in Colombian society.

Rationale of the Study

One of the main reasons whereby the language takes such an essential role in the development of the human being in society is the opportunity to recognize the identity and perspective of oneself and others; therefore, to acknowledge the importance that the English language holds in the consolidation of relationships at a worldwide level, from issues related to politics, economy, and academic among others. The dominant role the English language has played throughout history as a global language explains why it occupies a special place in the educational curricula of many countries. By approaching this reality, the learning of the language can serve as a mechanism to identify the communicative needs of the speakers and connect them with others, and to identify points of agreement. Having a common language can be a tool for engaging with individuals from other contexts and for being aware of problems and ways of resolving them collaboratively; here, the importance of fostering this perspective on language through education to promote meaningful learning.

As previously mentioned, language learning serves as a tool to overcome the limitations of speech, improving understanding of different points of view and identity recognition. In this musing, a key element necessary to delve deeper into the educational field is the materials and mechanisms used to teach the language. Through research in literature as an approach to the comprehension of the language for young learners, a broad conception of how they can be

engaged and motivated through methodologies can be developed; also, this research process strengthens and fosters strategies based on the context of the students and increases the possibility of acquiring language skills authentically. However, even though literature is a good way to help learners become familiar with another language as they encounter meaningful vocabulary and contextualized chunks of language, its purpose must transcend mere use as a warm-up activity or a free-time distraction in class. By researching the use of literature in the language classroom not only the acquisition of the language plays a central role but also the value of literature in the domain of the understanding of a worldview that compounds the stories portrayed in the books, poems, theatre plays among others forms in which literature is presented, and how these stories serve as a bridge of comprehension of the world around the students.

The essential feature of this resource is the benefit it represents for students. Regarding the characteristics of the population, the main advantage of using literature to approach language proficiency might be its authentic, natural presentation of language structures and its thematic contextualization of topics, which will enhance student behavior and relationships. This could promote a deeper understanding of specific themes, allowing students to associate the language content with a practical perspective. Moreover, as the level of the students requires the use of images to facilitate the comprehension of the stories, the use of picture books present an adequate tool to merge the language learning objective, the engagement and motivation necessary to learn a language which is fundamental to promote in early stages of the learning process and the community content can be presented not only in the stories but also in the progress of the activities carried out with this material, guaranteeing an exposure of the language that focuses on a meaningful learning which, in turn, will promote the social interaction and the development of the communicative skill of the language.

To delve into this perspective, the use of strategies to promote communication in and out of the classroom underscores the importance of learning another language, in this case, English. By using a framework focused on community construction, not only are the communicative skills of the students developed, as it is a requirement in building awareness through dialogue, but also the conception of English as a tool to be involved in current-day conflicts, at a local and eventually in a global context, tearing down prejudices and misconceptions of EFL. Moreover, having as a basis the idea of a community in which all students are essential parts and can have a

say in the decisions and responsibilities for maintaining it converts the class into a dialogical space for learning rather than a competition track.

In this consideration, using the class of English from the communicative perspective to create a collective learning space that takes inspiration in the problems that the students face as a community might benefit students in aspects such as confidence, engagement and purpose to increase the motivation to learn a foreign language as it may lack the contextualized characteristic that learners often need to be involved in a meaningful learning process.

Research Question

Under this context, the question that laid the foundations for this research project is:

- What is the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language?

Research Objectives

General

To identify the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language.

Specific

- To identify the role of contextualized picture books when they are used as a tool to approach young learners to EFL learning.
- To describe students' responses towards the use of contextualized picture books to foster community awareness in an EFL classroom.

CHAPTER II.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents first, the state of the art which consists of five reviews of research studies that are relevant for this proposal as they offer a broader view of the themes and constructs explored in this project; and second, the theoretical framework which is structured by

the theoretical foundations that support this research project which are literature as a learning tool which covers the specific use of picture books, community construction awareness in the EFL classroom and teaching EFL to young learners.

State of the Art

In this segment of the research project, there will be a presentation of previous research that contributes to the field of study of this proposal, as it helps to delve into the construction of a pedagogical intervention that has as its central core the use of literature, specifically picture books, a first approach to English as a foreign language.

In the first study selected, titled “Picture Books for Initial EFL Literacy and Rights Recognition” (Silva, 2023), the researcher explored the potential of picture books to develop English literacy skills at an early stage while encouraging students to see themselves as rights-holding individuals. It was conducted with fifth-grade students at Magdalena Ortega de Nariño public school in Bogotá; the research employed a qualitative action research approach. The study used project-based learning as the primary pedagogical strategy and incorporated the *Educación para la Paz* framework, which connects with themes of Colombia’s internal conflict. The intervention was finalized in a forum where students presented picture books they had created. The findings showed clear improvements in students’ literacy skills and their ability to extract meaning from texts. Additionally, the activities helped students better understand their rights and the importance of respecting others’ rights. The use of picture books emerged as a powerful tool not only for enhancing English vocabulary and reading skills but also for encouraging critical reflection and personal empowerment. Furthermore, the study’s implications extend transversally to three key areas: language education, school communities, and rights awareness. In terms of language teaching, the research exposed how English can be taught effectively by connecting language skills to relevant social issues. By addressing themes that relate to students’ realities, such as conflict and agreement, the project fostered deeper engagement with the language. It encouraged students to see English as a means of expressing ideas and acknowledging society’s challenges.

This study is vital to present research because it demonstrates that it is feasible to introduce complex and profound topics, such as rights awareness, successfully in the EFL class.

Besides, student-made picture books served as an ideal tool for building a bridge between literacy development and critical thinking, empowering students to explore their identities and perspectives in a supportive environment.

Next, in the study “Unveiling Biliteracy Through Ecopedagogical Picture Books: Reading in a Rural EFL Classroom” (Cardozo, 2016), the research examined the development of biliteracy skills in a rural fifth-grade EFL classroom by integrating Ecopedagogical picture books into the curriculum. It was conducted at Quiba Alta IED, a rural school in Colombia, and focused on students aged 9 to 11 with no prior experience learning a foreign language. The research explored how contextualized teaching strategies could link English language acquisition to students' contexts in a rural environment by combining ecopedagogy and literacy strategies to create meaningful, contextually relevant learning experiences. According to the author, the students actively participated in observing their environment, connecting these experiences to the stories and visuals presented in picture books. Thus, this process not only fostered biliteracy but also encouraged an early glimpse of bilingualism characterized by the additive integration of English alongside their native language. The implications of this study relate to the idea that students can gain awareness of their context through different forms of literature, which benefits their development and also creates a meaningful environment for learning the language, as the topics can motivate them because they are contextualized.

In the following research, “Picture Books with Social Content: Enhancing Critical Reading in EFL” (Quitiaquez, 2023), the researcher examined the impact of combining pedagogical strategies, such as the development of reading skills and the integration of social situated content, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The study focused on the use of the natural approach, critical literacy, and picture books addressing social issues to enhance reading comprehension among EFL learners. The findings showcased the effectiveness of this layered approach in fostering both language proficiency and critical thinking. By integrating socially relevant picture books into lessons, students were encouraged to engage with the material to improve comprehension. The natural approach provided an immersive language-learning experience, allowing students to acquire English organically, while incorporating critical literacy practices helped them analyze the societal themes presented in the books. This research highlights the dual benefits of using picture books in EFL education. On one hand, they

serve as a tool for language acquisition, facilitating the improvement of reading comprehension skills. On the other hand, they foster critical literacy, enabling students to reflect on the social content in the stories. Using both strategies, the EFL classroom aligns with a meaningful perspective on English teaching, advocating for the inclusion of socially meaningful content to make learning both engaging and relevant. The study further emphasizes the importance of creating learning experiences that connect with students' realities and foster a deeper understanding of social issues. By adopting this approach, EFL educators can improve students' critical thinking abilities while providing an accessible entry point into the language. This research contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting picture books as a valuable resource for integrating linguistic and critical literacy development, particularly for young learners taking their first steps in English language learning.

In the following research titled “*El Libro Álbum: Recurso para Desarrollar Procesos Resilientes*,” (Manjarres, 2022), the researcher explored the potential of picture books as a tool to foster resilience in at-risk children during early childhood. Through the development of a pedagogical manual, a reflective diary, and a web page, the proposal aimed to strengthen children's resilience by leveraging picture books as a medium for communication and emotional growth, recognizing resilience as a skill developed through everyday experiences and interactions. Thus, picture books act as intermediaries, bridging communication and building resiliency by presenting relatable narratives that help children navigate challenges. While not a standalone solution, this approach offers a structured framework for educators and psycho-pedagogues to incorporate resilience-focused activities into their practices. This research also highlights the broader implications of using picture books in community settings. By engaging young learners with visual narratives, these resources facilitate discussions about resilience, empathy, and social cohesion. They promote community awareness and collective well-being, serving as accessible tools for addressing complex emotional and social issues. The study contributes significantly to the current project by illustrating how picture books can support early childhood development. It underscores the importance of integrating visual storytelling into pedagogical strategies for teaching English, treating the language as a means for personal growth.

Finally, the research titled "Children's Picture Books to Implement a First Approach to Writing" (Triana, 2017) investigates the use of Children's Picture Books (CPBs) as instructional models to introduce young learners to the writing process. In this research, CPBs were employed as examples for creating short texts, while Guided Writing activities provided structured support to guide students through each stage of writing. The findings indicate that this pedagogical intervention significantly improved students' writing skills. Beyond technical progress, it also promoted positive learning behaviors, such as self-correction and collaboration, fostering an active and reflective approach to learning. These benefits were observed to extend beyond the English classroom, suggesting that the strategies could have a broader impact on students' learning across subjects. The study emphasizes the motivational power of CPBs in encouraging students to be mindful of their learning processes. By engaging with CPBs and participating in Guided Writing activities, students developed greater awareness and agency in their educational journey. This research demonstrates how picture books can meaningfully enhance language skills and promote holistic learning behaviors in young learners.

Theoretical Framework

Teaching English to Young Learners

For this study, it is necessary to state that young learners, as asserted by Avezova (2022), are students between five and twelve years old who require specific adaptations to the methods applied in class to tailor them to their developmental stage. To meet the needs of this population, it is necessary to consider aspects of their cognitive processes, such as attention spans, needs, and other cognitive processes that come into play when learning another language. In this determination, it is essential to consider how learning can blend with children's contexts. Chinh Duc (2018) mentioned that to approximate the language learning of children to real context scenarios to improve and offer a broader range of opportunities to socialize and share their progress, it is necessary to understand the context and strategies applied to age-appropriate lessons whose pedagogical objective is to foster abilities such as creativity, play, and communication.

Furthermore, teaching English to young learners requires creating a balance between structured learning and opportunities for exploratory and practical experiences. Recognizing that

young learners need environments that promote their curiosity and imagination, lessons should be designed to integrate games and interactive activities that foster creativity and engage students, reflecting their diverse ways of learning. By creating instruction that fits the different classroom contexts and aligns with students' developmental stages, teachers can introduce language concepts in ways that feel intuitive and enjoyable rather than unnatural or mechanical. Moreover, incorporating real-life contexts and culturally relevant themes not only enhances comprehension but also establishes meaningful connections between the language and the students' world, fostering both linguistic and cognitive growth. This conceptual approach ensures that language acquisition becomes an engaging and productive process rather than a monotonous academic exercise.

As a response from the more traditional perspectives of the teaching of the language the comprehension of the different stages of cognitive development allows the improvement in terms of engagement and motivation in students as it understand the necessities and skills that the students are constantly using and developing in their contexts; therefore, elements like creativity and flexibility are key aspects to translate in the curriculum and in the classroom practice, rather than filling on the prescribed textbook, the students could interact with each other at their own pace while integrating the contents offered in class.

Literature as a Learning Tool

To determine the theoretical grounding of this research, it is essential to acknowledge the role that literature has in the education field. Literature is often seen as a resource for practicing reading and comprehension. Even if it is an accessible source for these goals, it is necessary to shift that idea and start seeing literature not only as a tool to practice reading skills, but also as a complement to this stance, and using the content of the stories presented in those books as an authentic source to promote meaningful Learning. (2017) argues that children's literature serves as a source of reflection and can encourage children to think critically about topics of interest in the classroom and those connected to their lives, due to the content presented in many stories, such as portrayals and contrasts between fiction and the realities of our societies. By using books with a strong storyline that are of interest to children, students can not only foster development in their reading processes but also engage in dialogic learning between their contexts and the book content.

Children's literature can be used in the EFL classroom as a mediator of values and attitudes, which makes it an interesting subject matter for the design of a pedagogical proposal that seeks to improve the progress of the acquisition of the language and to use the themes and resources that could help to foster dialogue and relationships among students, due to, the stories that contains key elements that could relate to students' contexts like different historical and cultural backgrounds. To create and benefit from the content and the construction of a bridge between the book's context and stories, and the learning objectives established in class, there must be an appropriate and careful selection. This represents a dedicated aim on the teacher's behalf to consider a variety of thematic content in children's literature to connect with the language purposes sought to foster in the classroom.

Additionally, incorporating literature for children in the language classroom allows teachers to create a learning environment that fosters empathy and cultural awareness. The meticulous selection of books allows the presentation of different contexts, settings, and experiences, which provide students with new realities to explore and encounter different perspectives beyond their own. This exposure can help students improve their understanding of social diversity and cultivate respect for multiple contexts and experiences. Furthermore, literature encourages imagination and creative thinking, as students engage with various narratives and alternative realities. These elements make literature not just a tool for academic growth but also for the development of emotional intelligence and social skills, reinforcing its importance as a dynamic educational resource.

Contextualized Picture Books. Having in consideration the characteristics and needs of the specific students of this study it is necessary to establish the type of texts that are appropriate and beneficial for them; therefore, a kind of text that allows the learning of the language and of diverse contents are picture books, Arguello San Martin, Ramirez-Avila, and Guzman (2020) state that "images can allow young learners to break down a short story sequence, process ideas, and use simple, familiar words to convey meaning" (p. 119) In this case picture books serve not only a tool to present EFL structures and vocabulary but also to portray specific community topics that could enhance the learning process as a whole. The potential of this type of text allows the approach to classroom problems to be presented in a more accessible, contextualized way in the language classroom, which is a key element for promoting community awareness.

In consideration of the aim of this study, contextualized picture books are carefully selected in accordance with relevant sociocultural topics relevant to the context in which they will be used. In the current research, picture books address social themes involving problems in different communities, schools, families, and neighborhoods, and include language content, creating a deeper space for learning. This resource not only supports linguistic development but also helps students connect their knowledge to real-world uses, training informed and socially conscious individuals in the construction of community.

Community Awareness

A crucial understanding in an English as a foreign language class is the possibility of creating an environment that fosters other kinds of learning beyond the language's grammatical structure. Bearing in mind that language acquisition is not the goal but a tool to promote different types of understanding of the world, guarantees meaningful language learning from a natural point of view and practice. In this research project, the aim of developing a sense of community plays a central role, as it improves language proficiency and addresses the difficulties and conflicts that arise from students' lack of awareness in their interpersonal relationships. Soller et al. (2004) define a community as the environment in which individuals can share and gain knowledge naturally, learning from others and improving the base knowledge. It is crucial to consider that the information and customs of the community represents a specific and contextualized type of social structure, in this case families, schools and neighborhoods are the first examples of communities which children are exposed to. Therefore, being aware that one is part of a community implies responsibility for sharing knowledge and taking action to improve the quality of life of the community's members. Syatriana and Sakkir (2020) state that “a learning community can occur if learning outcomes are obtained from collaboration with others”. This perspective of classroom collaboration aligns with the communicative aspect of the language and the common goals established in the classroom to improve the socio-affective dynamics among the individuals who comprise the educational field. This means that language learning can be achieved through exposure between groups, where the possibility of learning from those at the same level exists. It is valuable not only in the classroom but also outside, as the main goal is to promote social interaction in the school to achieve good results in those social skills in a real context, where collaboration from students is essential in problem resolution.

Additionally, fostering community construction awareness in the EFL classroom creates a space for students to develop meaningful collaborative skills. By engaging in cooperative learning activities, students are exposed to diverse viewpoints, which enhances their ability to navigate and resolve conflicts constructively, considering the need to balance group efforts with leadership abilities, a key point in the training of socially aware students. This approach also pays attention to emotional intelligence knowledge, as it is a real scenario for students to process their own emotions and help others to do the same, as students learn to empathize with their classmates and find common ground due to the progress of their communication strategies, according to the different social contexts that they can be in. Moreover, the collaborative nature of such environments reflects real-world scenarios, preparing students to participate effectively in a globalized society where teamwork and interpersonal skills are increasingly valued.

Basically, the learning community considers aspects like the opportunity to ask children to be involved in collaborative groups guided by teachers; this learning environment fosters a genuine interest in learning that individual work might not potentiate. Through open communication and a shared sense of responsibility, children work together to solve problems, joining their strengths. This builds respect for diverse perspectives and an openness to better ideas, acknowledging that truth can be multifaceted and allowing learners to express and use the language with meaningful, authentic purpose.

Figure 1 displays a visual representation of the theoretical constructs of this study. Thus, the metaphor of a plant is used to represent factors related to teaching English as a foreign language with the aim of building community awareness among young learners, using children's literature, specifically picture books, as a strategy. The soil, serving as the foundation, represents the principles that teaching English to young learners offers, as it hands out essential aspects in this process, such as understanding cognitive development, fostering creativity and play, and promoting collaborative learning, those elements that provide the fertile ground necessary for meaningful and lasting strategies and activities. Found in this foundation is the seed, which symbolizes literature as a learning tool. This seed lays the foundation for critical thinking, engagement, and deeper connections between language acquisition and contextualized content. Emerging from the seed is the stem, representing the use of picture books as a specific application of literature. The stem acts as a branch, approaching the theoretical potential of

literature into the practice that is in contact with students' needs and contexts. Finally, the leaves represent the outcomes of this process: the construction of community awareness and the development of language skills. These leaves represent the benefits for students, fostering empathy, collaboration, leadership, and communicative competence, thereby creating a dynamic and socially connected environment.

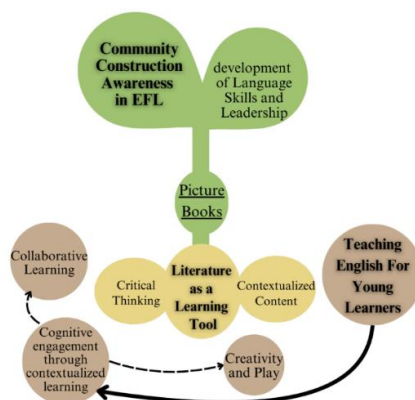


Figure 1: Graphic Representation of Theoretical Constructs' Relationship.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, the aspects that constitute the methodological design of the study, such as research paradigm, type of research, and data collection instruments, are going to be addressed to illustrate the importance that they have in the development of the project.

Research Paradigm

Given the characteristics of this research project, the qualitative paradigm best suits the requirements for approaching the object of study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define this paradigm as a position in which researchers are interested in understanding the experiences and the meanings behind them of the research participants, focusing on the perspectives and how they can be significant in conceptualizing the phenomenon. This paradigm is characterized by its focus on the exploration and description of the problematic, with the primary objective of comprehending the complexity of the difficulty and attending to participants' perspectives. Even though this approach does not exclude aspects such as quantification and objective observation, it highlights the importance of interpreting the information collected. Thus, qualitative research

allows a deep understanding of the complexity and diversity of human perspectives and experiences that can be hidden beneath other phenomena or variables. Hence, a detailed, systematic view of reality is crucial.

That is why in the educational field this perspective is helpful as it presents itself as a tool to explore the dynamics that occur in a classroom giving valuable close up to the educative realities that compound the learning-teaching process, specifically in the language learning field, in which various aspects enter in debate, in this case having in mind the learning of English as a foreign language plays a vital role in the definition of the perspectives that play a part into the educative sphere, knowing the perceptions, motivation, input, experiences between other elements that conform the worldview of the students related to the language is fundamental to understand and improve the processes that are already occurring in the classroom. Also, it is necessary to understand the contextual factors that influence the language-learning-teaching dynamics, which is why the qualitative paradigm is well-suited to this need.

Type of research

Given the objectives of the current project, this study is an action research study. Somekh (2006) established that action research goes beyond describing, analyzing, and theorizing social practices; it aims to reconstruct and transform those practices. It promotes equality between researchers from outside the site of practice and practitioner-researchers from inside, working together with the aspiration to carry out research as professionals, with skillful and reflexive methods and ethical sensitivity, considering that the objective of the study was to identify the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language, it is necessary to reflect upon the teaching practice and the thoughts that emerged from the students. This understanding of action research serves as a critical view of education as it reveals the importance of taking the time to analyze the processes developed during the research, under this characteristic of action research, Burns (2009) states that, action research involves a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which allows researchers to systematically investigate and improve their own practices or situations, because of that conception this research project had three cycles of implementation seeking for a continuous improvement and understanding of the data collected.

This process begins with identifying a problem or area for improvement in a specific context, through collaborative actions that imply a plan of action that is developed involving interventions or changes in practice, so these actions are implemented and the results are carefully observed and documented; it is important to mention that those observations are also essential to create the process of reflection that plays a crucial role throughout each cycle. The researcher is in a constant cycle of critical analysis of the outcomes of the planning, making allowances for alternative perspectives, and redefining approaches to maintain the process's alignment. This cyclical nature of action research fosters continuous learning and adaptation, leading to improvement and innovation in practice. Through this structured process, action research empowers researchers to actively engage in analyzing their own practice while also contributing to the field of knowledge.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

In action research, the selection and implementation of data collection instruments are essential to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. That is why these instruments must offer a diverse range of methods for gathering information, including surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis, among others. In this project, each instrument has a specific purpose in each step of the research and also in the different characteristics of the phenomenon that is being studied, the use of these instruments is essential in the understanding of the context and the impact of interventions; moreover, using multiple data collection methods is an important step in qualitative research as it serves many sources of information that must be contrasted in the process of triangulation which strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings by verifying information from different sources and perspectives. Triangulation is defined by Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) as the process of validating study results by combining multiple data sources, including various instruments, to verify the importance or validity of a potential finding. This process not only enhances the comprehension and depth of the data but also helps reduce the biases and limitations of using a few instruments of recall. For this research project, the instruments collected were questionnaires, interviews, diagnostic tests, and students' artifacts.

Questionnaire. Questionnaires are a data collection technique consisting of a list of structured, organized questions designed to gather concise information on a topic of interest to

the researcher. Canals (2017) argues that the questionnaire questions should foster a sense of comfort among participants, ensuring they do not feel judged. Particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as attitudes towards languages and linguistic identity, questions should be phrased indirectly or integrated into broader discussions to maintain a respectful, non-intrusive approach. Beyond recollecting attitudes, questionnaires can gather various demographic details like age, education level, family dynamics, country of origin, and residency, among others which offer a diverse range of information for the data analysis process and provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena and the context under investigation, in this research, two questionnaires were implemented, the first to characterize students in a socio-cultural aspect (See Annex A) and the second one to collect perceptions and comments from the students at the end of the research project (See Annex H).

Diagnostic Tests. Diagnostic tests are assessments administered to individuals or groups to determine their current level of knowledge, skills, or abilities in a particular area. These tests serve as tools for educators, trainers, and professionals to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to design instructional strategies or interventions. Cruz et al. (2024) explain that Diagnostic tests can cover a wide range of subjects or domains, including academic subjects, language proficiency, cognitive abilities, and job-related skills. By providing insights into learners' starting points, diagnostic tests inform the development of personalized learning plans, intervention strategies, and curriculum adjustments to meet the needs of individuals or groups better. In this research, a diagnostic test was conducted to characterize the proficiency level of the students (See Annex B)

Interviews. Interviews are a key instrument in research, as they are structured conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee that focus on a specific topic through diverse questions to obtain and comprehend the Subjective perspective of the population of interest, as stated by Hopf (2004). Interviews conducted in the classroom environment offer a unique opportunity for students and teachers to actively engage in the research process by grounding the research in their own perspectives. These interviews can be structured or semi-structured, each serving distinct purposes and yielding different types of data. In this research, semi-structured interview offers a better approach as a tool, thanks to their flexibility. Canals (2017) states that semi-structured interviews offer interviewers greater flexibility to adapt

questions and seek clarifications, fostering a conversational atmosphere that promotes comfort and relaxation among participants. As a result, these interviews are well-suited for collecting qualitative data, allowing for deeper exploration of topics and longer durations that encourage participants to share their perspectives. In this research, a semi-structured interview was selected to know the teacher's perspective according to the learning process of the students (See Annex: C)

Focus Group. As was previously mentioned, interviews serve as a mechanism for participants in a research project to engage with the process. Under this conception, Akyildiz and Ahmed (2021) explained that focus groups are small groups of people who discuss questions from their perspectives and perceptions during a research project under the direction of a moderator. As the implementation process of an action research project requires, a specific moment of reflection is mandatory to improve the processes and fundamentals of each cycle, to collect this information the focus group interview provides a meaningful closeup to students, as it can be employed with a small group to facilitate the discussion and the conversation around the questions to gain a deep acknowledgement of the narratives and experiences of the participants and by this a better understanding of the phenomenon, Dawadi et al. (2021). The realization of this instrument will be carried out after the implementation of a cycle to collect the opinions of five students on activities, learned concepts, and the reception of picture books, to determine the effectiveness of the cycle from the students' perspective. (See Annex: F)

Artifacts. In educational settings, students' artifacts are deeply used, emphasizing the importance of collaborative discourse and knowledge construction. According to Oshima et al. (2020), learners and their collective knowledge produce objects or artifacts that materialize their collaborative interactions and shared experiences. These artifacts encompass a wide range of tangible and intangible products, including written documents, multimedia presentations, artistic creations, and even oral traditions. During the research project, each artifact served as a manifestation of the collective work, understanding, perspectives, and insights generated through collaborative practice among learners as they used the language content proposed in class (See Annex I). By engaging in meaningful interactions and co-constructing knowledge, students not only contribute to the creation of these artifacts but also can use them as valuable resources for further learning and reflection.

Voice recordings. Considering the implications of the study, an essential source of data is voice recordings as it offers key details about the characteristics and improvement of the population specifically in this case as one interest is the enhancement of the speaking skill in the EFL classroom, additionally it offers support in the analysis stage as it facilitates the collection of the results in activities, interviews and in the class in general as stated by Kröger (2022). Each voice recording could offer key information that the researcher might have omitted in the moment but could be noticed in the analysis phase, which makes this instrument fundamental to the study as there were a total of twenty one voice recordings, one per each class, even though not all of the recordings were equally significant for the analysis, most of them offered a valuable source of data being the voice recording 11 the most important as it contains a central role play activity (see annex J).

Procedures for data collection.

To begin with the data collection process a consent format (see annex G) was handed out to the students on March 11 of 2024 to be filled out by their guardians as it is legally established with the intention of asking for permission from their guardians to participate in the research, as it indicated the type of information and the nature of it, as well as the purpose of it. As a way to collect the data necessary for the development of this project the non-participant observation began on March 14 of 2024 in the classes of Citizenship and English of second grade specifically the group 201, as this observation process allowed a detailed characterization of the students in terms of language and coexistence, this observation was registered using field notes (see Annex D) having as a central point of interest the development of the classes in contrast with the attitude, actions, participation and other events related to the students. Additionally, in the field notes, a socio-economic reality, a survey was conducted to gather data on deeper levels of information, such as economic stratum, hobbies, preferred style of working in class, and so on, to explore the students' interests and context. After This to know the academic reality and background of the students in the area of English an interview was realized to the head teacher (see annex C) inquiring the common development of the class, the activities that resulted more successful, advantages and difficulties in both coexistence and language development and questions related to the development of this project like the place that literature occupied in the classroom. Finally, in this first stage of the research, a diagnostic test (see annex B) was applied

on April 25, 2024, to establish the level that the students have regarding the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), considering the standards of the subject to set a starting point in the implementation stage.

As the research project advanced the implementation stage started on September 2 of 2024 with the creation of lesson plans (see annex E) that combined both the central themes of community construction with the language content established in the curriculum of the institution, Alongside with the field notes carried out in each class, a constant source of data were both the voice recordings carried out in each class (See annex J) which contain information about the response of the students towards, greetings, previous knowledge questions, questions related to the stories read, roleplays, group work conversations and reflective questions). Furthermore, at the end of each lesson plan students were asked to fulfill a series of tasks which final product reflected the topics worked during class, there were a total of eight artifacts developed by the students, these activities involved creativity, group work, individual work and understanding of the contents, these artifacts include, schedules, portrays, collages vision boards, and drawings among other activities.

Moreover, at the end of the first two cycles, a focus group interview was conducted (See Annex F) to gain a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives. After the third cycle, it was not possible to conduct the planned focus group due to time limitations. In each interview, five students were selected to answer a few questions about the activities, picture books, and content used in class. The answers from those focus groups were used to complement the following activities, given the importance of reflection and improvement in each cycle.

Finally, to conclude the research project, a final questionnaire was administered to gain students' final perspective, helping analyze what they considered they learned, improved, and liked about the pedagogical proposal.

Ethical Considerations

The data gathered in this research project is used for academic purposes only, and it is not intended to be published or mention the names or personal information of the population of the study. Although the participants signed a consent form authorizing their cooperation (see Annex F), they are free to request the termination of the investigation whenever they deem appropriate,

and this will not have any repercussions for them. Additionally, all data will be treated with strict confidentiality, with any identifying details removed or replaced with codes to protect participants' anonymity. The researcher will securely store the collected information and limit access to academic supervisors involved in the project.

CHAPTER IV

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

In this chapter, the visions of curriculum, learning, teaching, classroom, and language that support the pedagogical proposal will be outlined, considering their importance in defining instructional design and in its further implementation.

Vision of Curriculum

For this research project, the curriculum's vision is guided by a socio-critical perspective to build community awareness in an EFL classroom. From this point of view, the curriculum of an educational institution might not be determined solely by a set of topics and the way they are approached. Still, it might also transcend the superficial layer of content to delve into the construction of collectivity and community. In this sense, Del Basto Sabogal and Ovalle Almanza (2015) argue that this curriculum is the result and expression of a calculated, dialogic, and contextually aware process, and that, through this proposal, the formation of an individual who plays an active role in society is achieved. This perspective not only reinforces community awareness but also fosters an environment for collaborative learning, which is fundamental in the language-learning field.

As mentioned before, the socio-critical perspective fosters the development of various social skills in students. For the requirements of this research, it is also necessary to determine the characteristics of those skills to improve the problem. One of the main proposals for the construction of community is a curriculum integration, which seeks to understand the curriculum as a contextualized tool for promoting social integration in the classroom. Beane (1997) mentioned that "The sense of community is built not only on the relationships among the adults and young people but on the idea that they are mutually engaged in addressing shared" (p. 65). The union of the relations and context of the students in the creation and application of the

curriculum is a key element for succeeding not only in the language classroom as it is necessary to improve those skills but also, to construct the social abilities that a citizen need to fulfill their role in society, considering curriculum not only as instructions to behave and learn in skill but to educate students as future leaders that are socially aware of their contexts.

Vision of Learning

Under the purpose of this research, an essential element to define is the vision of learning that is considered in the implementation stage. This vision highlights the importance of connecting the concepts and themes worked on in class with the real world and the elements that shape students' lives and motivate them to make their own connections. In that sense, the structure guiding this project centers on discovering, learning, and creating. Here, learning is understood as a bridge for students to build relationships with their realities. This perspective on learning is known as contextual teaching and learning (CTL). The main objective of this approach is to make learning an authentic experience for students, fostering their engagement in the resolution of problems. In this learning position, students' roles become active, promoting dialogue among them. Hudson and Whisler (2007) explained that “strategies as cooperative and collaborative learning, integrated learning, problem-based learning, and work-based learning may be used to encourage inquiry and stimulate higher-order thinking” (p. 55). These mechanisms that foster collaborative work are the field in which community awareness can be developed, as well as the approach process of literature and language learning.

By understanding the nature of the problem is fundamental to determine that the learning is emerged from a collaborative perspective; Warsah et al. (2021) describe this type of learning as a process in which the ones that are involved contribute to each other's learning “among individuals within a learning group, they interact, negotiate to solve problems during learning, make use of their cognitive and metacognitive skills during interactions, and become responsible for their learning.” (p. 444). One of the main objectives is for students to feel comfortable engaging in this type of interaction, so they can use the skills they are progressively learning in a collaborative space, the central core of which is mutual understanding and dialogue among individuals to create a community.

Vision of Classroom

An important aspect to keep in mind when approaching community construction awareness in the classroom, especially with young learners, is the classroom layout. As mentioned before, a primary goal from the teacher's perspective should be the promotion of interaction between students; thus, it implies the creation of an environment that allows that students can see each other as a source of knowledge which can be reached by interaction, recognizing the educative process as a collective result of a dialogic encounter of perspectives, in this case that environment takes place in the classroom. Taking this into account, the language class becomes a space for implementing problem-solving tasks that blend language content and community awareness. Riasati and Mollaei (2012) mentioned that "The critical language educator relates knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to knowledge of social problems and how to act to solve these problems." (p. 224). Additionally, to this statement, it is necessary to recognize the opportunity to foster classroom interaction by focusing on students and treating their opinions and answers as valuable language expressions, connecting and guiding students' ideas to the class's learning objectives.

Vision of Language

Finally, the vision of language of this research project focuses on the role that it has in the interactions and how it helps build a series of social skills in children; this view of language can be associated with Vygotsky's constructivism, which highlights the role of language in the construction of knowledge through the interaction and approach to the learner's context. Here, language acquisition is not seen as the final goal but rather as a tool to achieve specific objectives in the learning and consolidation of a sense of identity and community. "In the same way that internal speech and reflective thought arise from the interactions between the child and persons in her environment, these interactions provide the source of development of a child's voluntary behavior." (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90) In this vision of language, reflection is an essential part of learning. It now improves confidence in exchanging thoughts and opinions, especially at an early stage of language acquisition, as in this research.

Instructional Design

This proposal aimed to implement a series of actions to identify the impact of using contextualized picture books to build community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language. This proposal was designed to address both the students' interests and the characteristics of their learning process. Thus, a total of 9 picture books with themes related to community construction were chosen. Besides, one of the criteria for selecting the books was the language content and its level of complexity, aiming to provide students with appropriate materials for their age.

This pedagogical intervention was structured into three (3) cycles, with three lessons in the first cycle and two sessions in the second and third cycles (See table 1. Cycles of Intervention.). These three cycles aimed to create a route to construct community awareness. The first cycle is *Identity: Discovering Me!* The second is *School: Learning together*, and the third is *Community: Creating a future*. Each cycle includes three picture stories that explore language skills and boost students' confidence and community thinking by gradually building healthy relationships among students.

Table 1 displays a general overview of the proposal.

Cycle	Lessons	Objectives	Suggested Language	Picture Book
Cycle 1: Identity: Discovering Me! General Objective: To develop identity consciousness through picture books. Sessions: three lesson plans divided into three sessions each. Session time: 50 minutes.	<i>“Daily missions”</i>	✓ Students will be encouraged to talk about routines while discussing group work and responsibilities. ✓ Students will recognize basic routines; language related to the days of the week.	➤ Days of the week	Chickens to the Rescue Written and illustrated by John Himmelman.
	<i>“Light your emotions”</i>	✓ Students will identify the importance of recognizing emotions and the role that they have in shaping identity. ✓ Students will understand key aspects of their preferences related to their routines in and outside the classroom.	➤ Emotions and feelings	A Flicker of Hope Written by Julia Cook and illustrated by Mackenzie Haley.
	<i>“Taste of difference”</i>	✓ Students will acknowledge the importance of culture in shaping community while respecting differences. ✓ Students will recognize and appreciate different opinions and preferences as part of building community.	➤ “I like, I do not like, I love, I hate” ➤ Food Vocabulary	Everyone Loves Lunchtime, but Zia Written by Jenny Liao and illustrated by Dream Chen.
Cycle 2: School: Learning Together. General Objective: To acknowledge the school context and relevance through picture books. Sessions: three lesson plans divided into two sessions each, each of 50 minutes.	<i>“Welcome to school!”</i>	✓ Students will identify and describe characteristics of the school and the elements that make it up. ✓ Students will demonstrate respect for differences within the community by highlighting the role of the school.	➤ School supplies vocabulary	This is school. Written by John Schu and illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison.
	<i>“Every Role Matters”</i>	✓ Students will explore and discuss the roles and activities found in the school. ✓ Students will recognize the importance of different professions in society.	➤ Verb to be ➤ Professions	Career Day Written by Anne Rockwell and illustrated by Lizzy Rockwell.

	<i>"A stair to my dream"</i>	✓ Students will identify personal dreams or goals and the way to achieve them. ✓ Students will recognize the importance of teamwork in achieving dreams by participating in a community setting.	➤ WH questions	Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me! Written by Eric Carle
Cycle 3: Community: Creating a future. General Objective: To acquire community construction awareness through picture books. Sessions: three lesson plans divided into two sessions, each of 50 minutes.	<i>"Where I belong"</i>	✓ Students will identify actions that foster togetherness and welcome people in a community. ✓ Students will demonstrate understanding of inclusivity and group work	➤ Adjectives ➤ Can and cannot	My Family, your family Written by Lisa Bullard
	<i>"Your Talent Our Strength"</i>	✓ Students will recognize their own unique talents and describe how these abilities can contribute to the community. ✓ Students will celebrate diversity and how it can create collective growth.	➤ Verb To be: affirmative and negative sentences	All are Welcome Written by Alexandra Penfold
	<i>"Art in Action"</i>	✓ Students will explore examples of cultural art forms in their community. ✓ Students will comprehend the transformative power of cultural expression in improving their community.	➤ WH Questions	Maybe Something Beautiful Written by Theresa Howell and Isabel Campoy

Table 1. Cycles of Intervention.

Cycle 1. Identity: Discovering Me.

In this cycle, titled “Identity: Discovering Me,” the main goal was to introduce students to the concept of community and the ideas that comprise it. Since this is their first contact with the topic, the initial step was to help them recognize themselves as individuals, emphasizing that each person possesses unique characteristics and traits. Understanding these differences is important to appreciate how communities are built and how they can grow. This cycle is composed of three lesson plans (See Annex E): the first was named Daily Missions, focused on daily routines and days of the week, and used the picture book *Chickens to the Rescue*, which highlights the importance of teamwork, routines, and collective action, providing an example of how individuals contribute to a group. The theme of routines offered students the opportunity to practice topics like days of the week, space for team dialogue, and the duty of creating a schedule together. The second Lesson plan was named Light your emotions focused on emotions, and expressing likes and dislikes using “like, don’t like, love and hate” for this lesson plan the book selected was, *A Flicker of Hope*, focused on the value of self-worth, demonstrating that even with flaws or difficulties, each person has characteristics that make them valuable and capable of contributing to a community, focusing on students’ own interests and the capability to express them, and finding commonalities with their peers. Finally, for the third lesson plan, Taste of Difference, the topics selected included food vocabulary and preferences. To approach this topic, the book chosen was *Everyone Loves Lunchtime, but Zia*, which explores the value of cultural diversity and shows how individual backgrounds and traditions influence perspectives on community and its construction. Together, these stories allow students to practice vocabulary related to food and create a collaborative menu, laying a strong foundation for students to begin exploring their identity and its role in community building while presenting the content and the space for developing skills that belong in the EFL classroom.

Cycle 2. School: Learning Together

In the next cycle, titled “School: Learning together,” the objective was to develop consciousness in the students about the importance of school and the way it is a place to construct a community. In this case, the students had already been introduced to the concepts of community and identity, so this stage was to guide them through the main concerns and problems of a community, such as conflicts, organization, and problem resolution. The students

were exposed to the school's structure, its parts, and how they are constructed. Through this, students strengthened the concept of working together and the benefits that can result from it, understanding their role as students and future leaders, and which functions are important now and will be in the future. Under this proposal three picture books were presented, the first lesson plan was named welcome to school, focusing on school supplies and activities carried out at the school, for this purpose the book selected was *This is school*, which approaches the concept of school, the elements that make it up and the importance of it as a place to build community, providing ideas of how students can contribute to their school, in the first lesson vocabulary was practiced involving school supplies, parts of the school and the activities that are developed there. The second Lesson plan, titled Every Role Matters, explored the content of professions and the verb to be. The book that was chosen was Career Day, " which focused on the importance of the different types of professions and occupations and how they are all important in society. Finally, for the last lesson plan, A Stair to My Dream, the topic was professions, but this time it included key actions related to them. Additionally, the book selected was *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me!* This explores the value of the diversity of interests and life goals, focusing on societal roles, demonstrating how individual actions and occupations are essential to building a community and how these aspects are developed in the school.

Cycle 3. Community: Creating a Future

In the last cycle, titled "Community: Creating a Future," the main goal was to close the implementation stage and give students tools and spaces to picture ways to improve and develop the process of reflection to question their learning processes, taking into account their cognitive stage and necessities. Since this is the last cycle of the project the main intention was to create the idea that they can still aim for spaces to work together and create a future that includes every single one of them, by focusing on the importance of community and the continuous developing and construction of it, the initial step was to show them strategies to express themselves and to develop critical thinking, so art was the conduct to route those emotions and messages, this concept is developed alongside the last part of the implementation.. Understanding the force that resides in every student and a collective way to demonstrate it. The first lesson plan, titled Where I Belong, integrated the content of adjectives and family members using the picture book *My Family, Your Family*, which illustrated the characteristics of a community like a family and

highlighted the importance of family as the first community children encounter in their lives. The second lesson plan was named *Your talent our strength* exploring topics such as adjectives and verb to be by highlighting the different characteristics that everybody has, the book chosen was *We'll Make Things Better Together*, focused on the value of working together as a space for creativity and creation, as the role of the characters revolved around the idea of creating the foundations to close gaps between individuals and improving the abilities of collective work besides their differences. Finally for the last lesson plan, *Art in action* explored the parts of the city and their characteristics through the book *Maybe Something Beautiful* students were able to recognize the value and worth of creating a community and how they can improve it, as a conclusion of the process, showing how despite differences and conflicts a community is a space to grow, learn, build and give back what we receive, in this last cycle the importance and characteristics of the EFL classroom were highlighted focusing on the aspects that form a space for communication and collective creation while constructing a community.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, the analysis of the data collected and the main findings of this research project are presented. Additionally, the approach used to organize and analyze the information, as well as the procedures carried out during this process, are explained. After establishing those steps in the research sequence, the categories that emerged will be presented and explained.

Procedures for Data Analysis

While collecting, managing, and organizing the data, a method was followed, both physical and digital. In the first one, a folder was organized into sections that delimit different types of instruments and data; for instance, one section was dedicated exclusively to legal formats, such as consent forms and institutional guidelines for teaching English. Another section was designated for data collection instruments, including interviews and questionnaires directed at the teacher or the students. An additional section was focused on the artifacts collected and produced by the students in this case, activities, tests, and voice recordings that were the result of tasks related to the reading of the picture books, finally as a key piece of information there is a section that contains the field diaries of all the class interventions (twenty-one in total across all cycles).

It is important to note that the collected data was also divided into three subsections, one for each research cycle, which allows us to analyze it individually and improve in the next cycle. In the second one, to maintain adequate organization and protection of the collected data, a digital copy of each previous result was created, following a similar folder structure that facilitates access and further use of the data.

To carry out the process of analysis, considering that it better fits the nature and necessities of the study, the grounded approach was used since it is presented as a rigorous set of instructions that is also adjustable to different scenarios in which the data collection and analysis come from the information itself (Charmaz, 2014). Under this approach the researchers construct the meaning and concepts based on what they found while investigating a topic, which means that the specific data later on reveal a more complex reality, this inductive data allow the analysis as it is necessary to make a continuous comparison between the data and its analysis which is the best option when analyzing such complex and contextual problematic that is education.

Furthermore, an important aspect when considering the analysis of the data when approaching the grounded theory is that it is fundamental to value the perspective of the participants of the study, having this in mind the *Emic* perspective gives theoretical support to the process of analysis, due to the place that the researcher occupies in the development of the project as an insider; thus, there is a connection with the population, the context and the person who carries out the research, which facilitates the ability of collection and analysis of the data. From this perspective, considering how participants comprehend and participate in the events that occur naturally in their environment, and how those perceptions are indispensable to creating meaning, is significant (Markee, 2012). Taking into the account the characteristics of the research which looks for the identification of the roles that picture books held in the EFL classroom and how those roles can improve both language skills and community construction awareness, the participants, in this case the students are the ones that offer valuable information as they are developing their social habits in that context; therefore, their visions towards the research project are essential to build the concepts and understand appropriately the results obtained.

Based on the data and following the grounded approach methodology as Corbin and Strauss (1990) point, the analysis process starts from the first time when the researchers start to

collect the information, building since the first moment connections and concepts; however, to maintain the rigor and interpretability of the data it is necessary to have a system that facilitates the creation of verifiable concepts. In this case, the first step into the analysis consisted in the detailed appreciation of each piece of data gathered and identifying possible trends inside the information, this was conducted on interviews, questionnaires, artifacts, voice recordings, and field diaries to triangulate and consolidate the findings, these first discoveries were pointed using color coding, a technique that consists in assign a color to different results that may have similarities or resemblance, when all the information was divided into those central themes, later review of each element was conducted to determine if the similarities were enough to support the construction of a new stage called grouping which consists in the creation of groups of information that are compound of behavioral patterns and other factors that are closely related for the consolidation or further concepts.

Finally, as the final groups were created, the last step was labeling, as Corbin and Strauss mention, the concepts that are developed throughout the process of investigation start as temporary as they are enhanced by the continuous compilation of data that is repeated along the procedures, which allows the unification of the groups that create meaning (1990). When the groups are finally constructed, the labeling summarizes the content in easy-to-identify final categories and subcategories, which is crucial for explaining the results.

From the point of view of efficiency, the next step was to organize those categories and subcategories according to its importance and relevance in relation with the objectives that were stated in the description of the problem, in this case the first objective is to understand the role of contextualized picture books as educational material in fostering community construction awareness for young learners, that is to say which was the significance that the picture books occupied the learning process of the students alongside the construction of social skills that would be beneficial for their development in a community. On the other hand, the second objective is to describe students' responses towards the use of contextualized picture books to foster community awareness in the English as a foreign language classroom, which is connected to the first one. However, it emphasizes students' comprehension and understanding, and how they perceived the processes and tasks they produced themselves under the teacher's instruction.

To organize the categories and subcategories and account for their connections to the objectives, a hierarchical diagram was created to illustrate their relationships, facilitating further description of the results obtained during the intervention process.

Categories of the Analysis

This research project seeks to identify the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language. The organization presented in Figure 2 visually represents the relationship between the objectives and the categories and subcategories that resulted from the analysis.

The categories *Supportive role of picture books in the approach to EFL learning* and *discovering a sense of community while reading* emerged from the first research objective, as they are the principal findings regarding the role of contextualized picture books when used as a tool to engage young learners in EFL learning. As the students improved their language skills since the activities implemented aimed to be multidimensional and required children to challenge themselves to achieve the results expected, the first category explores the role of the picture books in the consolidation of EFL skills under this result the subcategories *Building reading understanding skills* and *A first step into speaking English* refer to those findings that are constructed with the data which demonstrate clear signs of improvement in language skills specially in reading and speaking. Arising from the second category, *Identifying and valuing community roles* and *Acknowledging diverse realities while reading* were the subcategories that respond in a relevant way when identifying the role in the construction of social skills related to community awareness, as the data revealed that picture books work as a bridge for children to connect their realities and contexts with the stories presented in the literature chosen.

Concerning the second research objective, the categories that emerged were *Language acquisition fostered by collaborative learning* and *improving engagement and participation in the EFL classroom*; those categories are connected to data which revealed that when the students were exposed to the picture books and the tasks that surrounded the reading process, their behavior showed an upgrade in the issue that inspired the project, which was the lack of social skills for community work. From this perspective, the subcategories *language use in a teamwork context* and *Joint creation of meaning in reading-related tasks* gather the principal findings from exploring students' responses to the instructional design proposed.

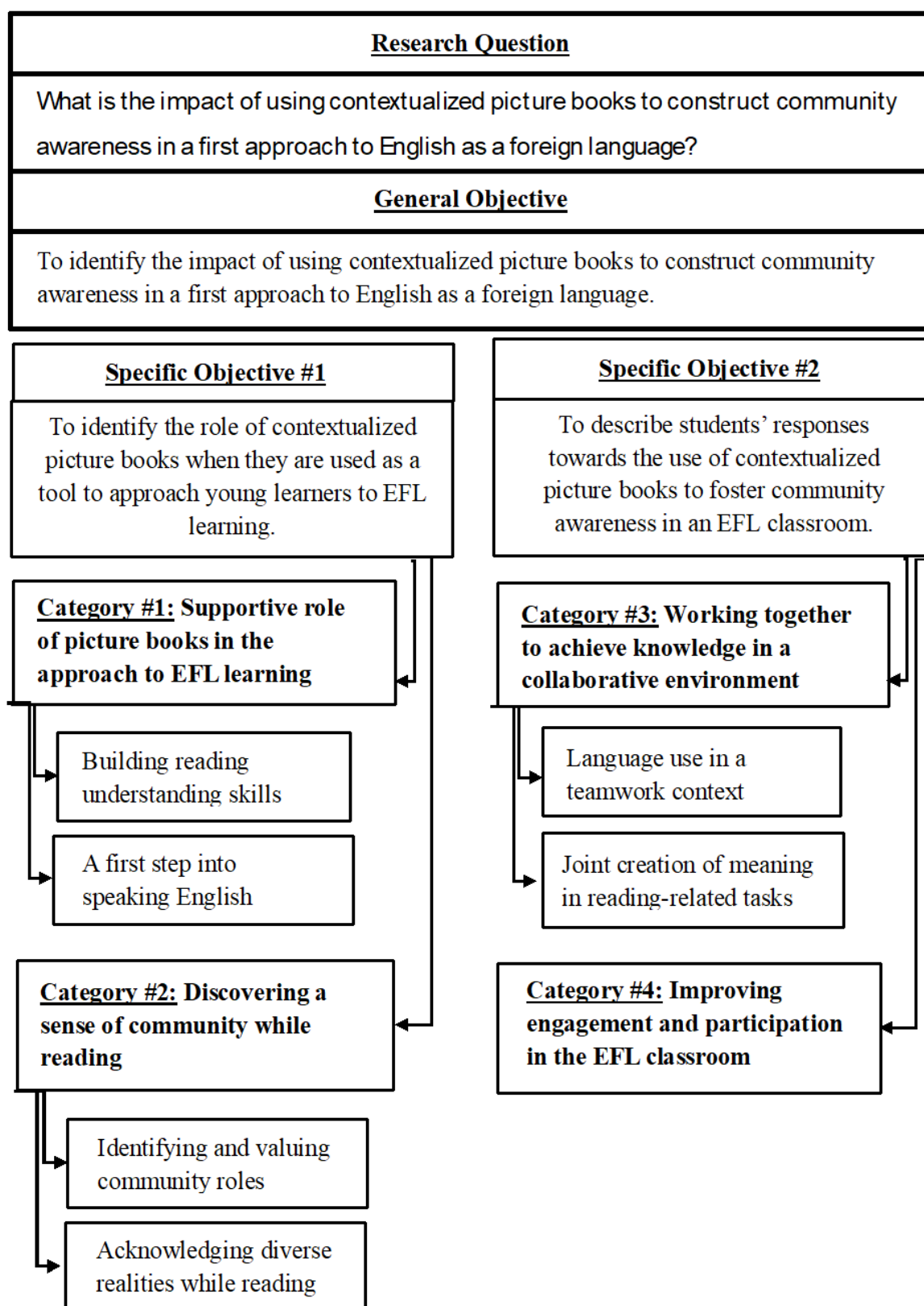


Figure 1. Visual representation of the relation between objectives and categories of analysis.

Category 1: Supportive Role of Picture Books to approach kids to EFL learning.

The first category highlights the supportive role of picture books in the development of students' EFL skills. Consequently, as this type of literature was a transversal axis in both the planning and the sources of collaborative tasks, the communicative content, such as vocabulary, expressions, and common structures, was naturally incorporated into children's lexicon. Data revealed that continuous exposure to the contextualized picture books not only benefited the students' community construction awareness, as the principal aim, but also significantly improved their language learning process, as intended. This leads to the implementation of a strategy that is not focused on the continued repetition of a grammar structure, but the learning of the language in a natural way, which does not disrupt children's cognitive progress.

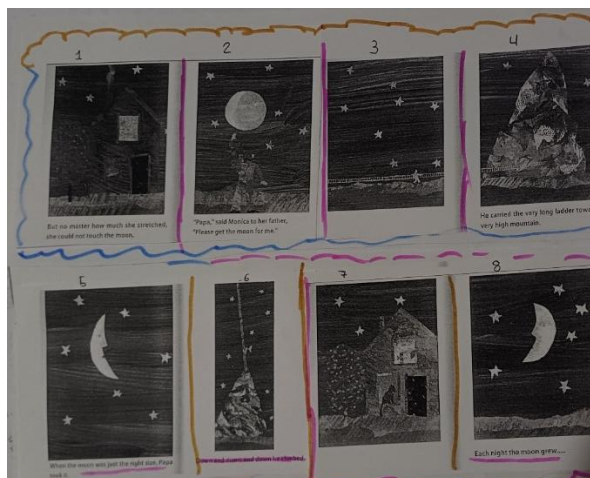
As noted by Can & Tezcan (2021), the use of literature in the classroom is helpful because it offers a wide range of content related to students' identities, such as culture, history, traditions, and values, which also creates a sense of community among students. Therefore the teacher who decides to implement this type of resource needs to be cautious when selecting the framework that the students are going to work with because, when students can connect with it the further discussions, activities, and tasks proposed based on the reading are not seen as a pointless obligation but a safe environment for children to express willingly and with a freedom perception, this point of start is the ideal one when children learning a language particularly a foreign one as they feel secure to make mistakes since they can learn from them.

Based on the above and considering the data gathered, two subcategories emerged as the following are the main EFL skills that students improved during the research project: *Building reading comprehension skills*, and *A first step to speak English*.

Building reading comprehension skills. The first subcategory collects the data gathered corresponding to the improvement made by the students of second and later third grade in the area of reading comprehension, as it is clearly connected with the picture books, this skill is fundamental for the evolution of the project, the nine books that were chosen were accompanied by a pre-reading activity, a literal understanding activity and a productive task, these activities were planned according to students' cognitive development and were focused on improving those skills. According to Shen & Huang (2021), picture books are a multimodal form of literature, exceptionally favourable for children, as they present both verbal and non-verbal ways

of communicating in an age-appropriate way to introduce students to semiotics in an undirected way. In this regard, data showed that this material enhances students' and recipients' comprehension and analysis abilities, building on their reading comprehension skills.

To begin with, the information gathered revealed the students' ability to conduct organization-related tasks involving the content of the picture books read in the EFL class. This can be seen in the following data fragments:



(Artifact #19, Second cycle: March 20th, 2025, student group #3)

(...) Although all groups completed the sequencing task, it required more time than expected, as the black-and-white illustrations caused some confusion in interpreting the images. However, students were able to collaborate effectively, discuss the storyline, and justify their choices. The activity also served to reinforce comprehension and the concepts of progress, reflection, and closure.

(Field note #14, second cycle: March 20th, 2025, lines 39-45)

As data revealed in the previous examples, the students could analyze and organize the sequence of the moments of a specific story, even when some difficulties occurred with the material, students were able to arrange each moment using both the images and the fragments of the story without any help. After the organization activity finished, the students were asked why they chose that order. Some children stated that it is the way that they remembered it, highlighting the supportive role that these books occupy in the reading and comprehension

process in children, as the following data revealed that they were able to recall previous information to develop the tasks they were asked.

 2 Makes experiments, <u>discovers dinosaur's bones</u>, and <u>study in the lab</u>. Plays soccer at the park every day. Sells shoes and folds clothes at the store.	 1 Drives a big truck on the road. Cooks hamburgers and <u>serves food in a restaurant</u>. Teaches children, <u>writes on the board</u>, and <u>helps students at school</u>.
(Artifact #14, Second cycle: March 13th, 2025, student group #2)	(Artifact #15, Second cycle: March 13th, 2025, student group #1)

T: Let's help your classmate. How do you say "cantante" in English?

S#1: music

T: No...

S#2: Musician!

S#3: Singer!

(Voice Recording #4, Second cycle: March 13th, 2025, Lines 24-29)

The previous fragments are a sample of how the students had the opportunity to engage in comprehension activities related to the vocabulary and context seen in the books used in class, in the artifacts 14 and 15 the students were asked to see the images of different professions presented on the book "profession day" the task was to analyze the image and match the principal action that those people made in the story, data showed that students were able of connecting both key words and the illustrations to create a connection in meaning, additionally, the use of questions while reading to activate prior knowledge, such as "who is he/she", generated a continuous wave of participation and help between students which created a bond among them that facilitated the work in groups, as data revealed in voice recording 4, in which students help each other to recall the professions that were presented on the book, and improving the amount of words and expressions that they use in class.

Furthermore, additional data collected showed that students were able to use the vocabulary and structures from the picture books to create a different product beyond the reading comprehension tasks, as presented below.



(Artifact #20, Second cycle: March 20th, 2025, student #12)

T: ¿Recuerdas algún cuento ilustrado trabajado en clase?

S#1 – S#2: de la vela y las emociones

S#3: la niña que no quería comer, porque le daba pena

S#2: De los pollitos

S#4: a mí me encantó el de la velita porque también me gustó mucho

S#3: el de los pollitos también estuvo muy bueno

S#2: sí estaba bueno el de los pollitos porque hacían muchas cosas todos los días

(Focus Group #1, First cycle: November 24th, 2024)

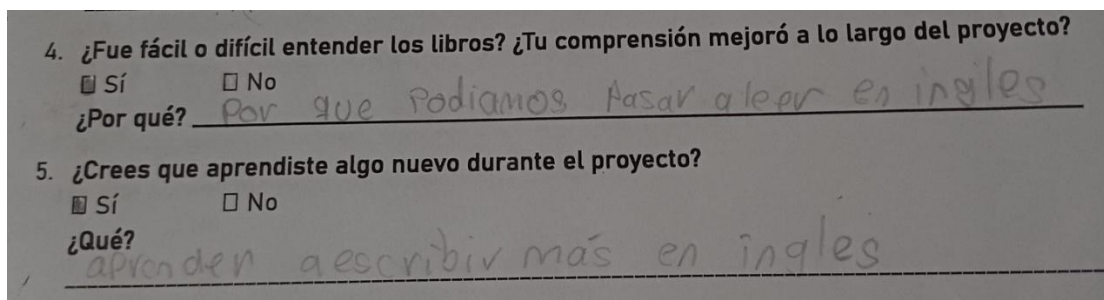
The reading of *Maybe Something Beautiful* generated thoughtful short answers to comprehension questions, such as “The city was sad,” “They painted the walls,” and “Because they want it beautiful.” Students connected the visual transformation in the story to the vocabulary introduced earlier, like “the city is gray”, “the bee is yellow”, showing understanding of both the narrative and the target language content.

(Field note #20, third cycle: May 22nd, 2025, lines 17-22)

These fragments exhibit that the natural exposure of contextualized language content in a friendly and appropriate format, like picture books, connects children’s realities with their external world, for example in the artifact 20, students had to imagine their dream profession in the future and cut and paste some words that had relation with it from a vocabulary bank

achieving the use of contextualized new words in a reading related task and a personal projection of their life projects. By using these picture books students gained recognition of the vocabulary in a real context as it is seen on the field note 20 where students used adjectives seen previously during class to describe the city portrayed in the book and making connections with their own city, this makes learning fun but more than anything meaningful, as the students were able to not only remember what the stories portrayed in the books were, but they also assimilated the language content that was not superficial, for example in the book “Chickens to the rescue” the main characters were a group of chickens which routine consisted in help a family during the different days of the week, the students demonstrated that they remember the chickens as they were funny or endearing characters but also they remembered that they had a routine and some of the actions of it, as data evidenced on focus group 1, another example could it be “Career day” which introduced to the students crazy and interesting professions with their everyday actions, children were excited to imagine themselves in a vision board of their future lives; in addition, they were able to select the correct vocabulary to complement their boards in a cut and paste activity.

Finally, in the first stages of the learning process, it is fundamental to gain confidence to keep learning from previous mistakes by being able to be conscious of one's progress and aware of the development of the abilities that compound it, as shown in the excerpts from the final questionnaire.



4. ¿Fue fácil o difícil entender los libros? ¿Tu comprensión mejoró a lo largo del proyecto?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Por qué? Por que podiamos pasar a leer en ingles

5. ¿Crees que aprendiste algo nuevo durante el proyecto?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Qué? aprender a escribir más en ingles

(Final questionnaire, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, Student #4)

4. ¿Fue fácil o difícil entender los libros? ¿Tu comprensión mejoró a lo largo del proyecto?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Por qué? porque entender la libro era fácil

5. ¿Crees que aprendiste algo nuevo durante el proyecto?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Qué? aprendí a leer en inglés

(Final questionnaire, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, Student #12)

In this questionnaire, students were asked whether they found it challenging to comprehend the stories in picture books. Some students answered that they recognized key words that facilitated their understanding, or that reading the book was easy. Additionally, they considered that they improved specific language skills, such as reading and writing, which students highlighted most.

A first step to speak English. The second subcategory gathers information on the development of speaking skills in second and later-third-grade students. This skill is considered a core ability in the language-learning process, specifically in EFL, as it enables students to use the vocabulary and structures encountered in picture books in an active oral context. In each session, speaking was promoted through interactive activities such as TPR warm-ups, group discussions, and productive tasks that required students to express personal preferences, feelings, or community-related ideas. These activities were designed with students' developmental stage in mind, with the intention of creating spaces for natural, contextualized oral interaction. As noted by Derakhshan (2015), speaking goes beyond simply knowing the linguistic features of a message; expanding oral communication requires more than memorized vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. One obstacle in teaching speaking is the mismatch between course materials and real opportunities for practice, as authentic contexts for oral production can be challenging to provide. In this sense, data showed that it becomes essential to consider students' interests and needs to foster meaningful speaking opportunities in class.

The data collected on speaking skills highlights students' progress in using the linguistic content from picture books and integrating it into their own oral production. This subcategory focuses on how the planned activities encourage students to go beyond repetition or

memorization and engage in meaningful oral interaction. The analysis emphasizes the importance of creating authentic spaces for communication where learners' interests and needs are considered, as this fosters more effective development of speaking skills in the EFL classroom. The following excerpts contain transcriptions of voice recordings from the three main stages of each lesson plan: an introductory activity, the reading of a picture book, and a production activity.

T: Why do you like doing exercise?
S#9: Porque me gusta patinar
S#2: A mí me gusta jugar fútbol
S#3: Es muy divertido como estar afuera
S#4: A mí me gusta correr

(Voice Recording #3, first cycle: October 1st, 2024, Lines 10-15)

In this first fragment, data revealed that the students could understand some questions, commands and expression in English as they were able to respond; however, they did not include previous words or expressions learned in the classroom; for instance, they mentioned actions like “patinar”, “jugar” and “correr” instead of the verbs practiced in earlier sessions according to the head teacher, in this case “skate, play and run”. This suggests that while receptive comprehension is good, active production needs improvement.

T: Okay, what food did you choose?
Group #2: Ice cream
T: Do you like ice cream?
S#2: I love ice cream

T: What food did you choose?
Group #3: sushi
T: Do you like sushi?
S#4: I love
S#5: I love

(Voice Recording #6, first cycle: November 13th, 2024, Lines 5-13)

In this fragment of a post-reading activity in which the students were asked to draw their silhouettes in groups and including the foods that they like and that have a connection with them, based on the book “Everybody loves lunchtime but Zia” all groups were able to respond with the expressions explained on class, even if the structure it is not complete like “I love” instead of “yes, I like ice-cream” data revealed that there is an impact in presenting both the language content with a picture book that helps contextualized the vocabulary so Children can understand and see how it can be used in a real scenario.

S#1: I make discover
S#2: experiments?
S#1: yes yes....

T: What is this profession?
All students: veterinarian
T: Are you sure?
All students: Scientist

(Voice Recording #11, second cycle: March 20th, 2025, Lines 1-7)

S#5: I take care of pet
S#6: yes..?
S#5: Give medicine
T: What is this profession?
All students: veterinarian

(Voice Recording #11, second cycle: March 20th, 2025, Lines 14-18)

The previous three excerpts are from a role-play; the main activity intended for the book “Career Day.” Students were asked to choose one of the professions portrayed in the book and, using the vocabulary learned, create a scenario on their own. In this activity, most students were able to put in context the actions and expressions related to their profession, as data revealed in the first fragment “I make discoveries” “experiments? Even if the grammar is not adequate, the improvement in using contextualized vocabulary is a step in the right direction, contrasting the first voice recordings in which all the answers were in their native language. In the second example, there is a similar case, in which students use the vocabulary but still have some issues connecting their ideas to give fluency to their speech; however, the improvement in recognizing the meaning and the creation of the scenario that requires it shows the importance of offering younger students activities in which they can be challenged without ignoring their interests, such as their dream professions and how picture books can fill the gaps between their motivation and the language content required to express it, as it is showed in the excerpts below of the voice recording that include students’ understanding, ideas and guesses towards the content of the book.

T: What is the name of the book?
S#13: Beautiful
S#15: Some beautiful
T: Who is she?
S#2: una niña
T: a girl, right? What does she have in her hand?

S#16: brocha
S#2: paintbrush
T: Perfect! Now look at her city. How is her city?
S#5: Fea
S#2: Ugly

(Voice Recording #21, Third cycle: November 22nd, 2025, Lines 1-11)

T: So the girl thinks about making something...
S#5: maravilloso
S#7: beautiful
T: Very good, what do you think they are going to make?
S#2: Pintar la ciudad

T: Paint the city...Why?
S#6: para que quede beautiful y ahí está el sol de la niña
 ...
T: What are they going to do?
S#1: Painting

(Voice Recording #21, Third cycle: November 22nd, 2025, Lines 42-52)

Finally, the previous excerpts are part of a recording of the book “Maybe Something Beautiful” being read. To make the reading process more transparent for the students, some questions were asked, for example, “What is the name of the book?” and students were able to pronounce some words in the title, the ones they were familiar with: “Beautiful” and “Some beautiful”. Additionally, data revealed that students were able to recognize and correct each other as they recalled vocabulary like school supplies (seen during the second cycle): “a girl, right? What does she have in her hand?” “brocha” “paintbrush.” In this case, the continuous questions help students stay focused, making sure they are understanding the story and activating prior knowledge, which is beneficial for them as they can contribute meaning to the conversation, as they expressed that they like to paint or their favorite colors. Finally, data showed that students were able to predict the final of the story as they were asked “what do you think they are going to make? A student answered: “Pintar la ciudad” and “para que quede beautiful y ahí está el sol de la niña” after that the vocabulary to express that was given, and then the last question related to inference was made: “What are they going to do?” with one student answering “Painting”. This last example showed the importance of exposing children to contextualized material in class, such as picture books, but, more importantly, the accompaniment the EFL teacher needs to ensure the material is used effectively.

In conclusion, the information gathered revealed that students were able to incorporate selected words from the picture books into their oral production. Although their spoken interactions remained simple, they demonstrated the ability to recall and use vocabulary in meaningful contexts, taking an initial step toward a more confident, functional use of English in class.

Category 2: Discovering a Sense of Community While Reading

This category is built on young learners' ability to extract meaning from carefully chosen, contextually rich literature; in this case, picture books serve as a primary source of diverse scenarios in which children can explore other realities. Trihastuti (2023) addresses this aspect of students' cognitive appreciation by stating that young learners can comprehend not only the structures and macro-elements of a story but also the symbolic aspects of a book that contains complex social dynamics through the language and pictures it uses. This bridge that literature offers to children is crucial for helping them be aware of situations that are part of their context, in a way that is easy for them to understand. Moreover, these books provide key elements for problem-solving strategies, with an aesthetically pleasing presentation. This is beneficial for children, as this cognitive dimension is among the most relevant in their learning processes.

Thus, data revealed that the books selected in the three cycles of implementation were connected to students' realities or interests since the processes of selection was carried out taking in consideration the importance of the contextualized topics and stories children were able to receive openly the stories and learning that the books offered, plus to reflect upon the activities that were related to the books, in this case the central axis of the books that were chosen was community problematics or importance, this was carried out through different stories starred both by children or characters that are eye-catching for them such as animated objects or animals. This category presents findings on how creating a diverse portfolio of literature helped students focus on different forms of community while reflecting on their own.

Identifying and valuing community roles. This subcategory gathers information on students' recognition of the different roles presented in the picture books read in class and how they can reflect those roles in their classrooms, families, and neighborhoods, as the primary communities they can recognize. This aspect is fundamental to building awareness of community construction, as it allows learners to acknowledge the contributions individuals make to the collective environment. In each session, the identification of roles was promoted through the reading process of each picture book and the activities that emerged from the key concepts and ideas of the books; those activities required students to reflect on their own actions and the actions of others, and how they can create a community effort of improvement. These activities

were designed to encourage the valuing of different forms of participation, from leadership and creativity to listening and supporting others.

As noted by Pastini and Lilasari (2023), the effectiveness of student-centered learning is deeply influenced by local factors, including the socio-economic characteristics, teaching methods, and community values and goals. The connection of classroom practices with cultural and social values directly affects how students perceive collaborative learning. From this perspective, community roles in the EFL classroom must be a transversal aspect of conversation, making the recognition of diverse roles central to the learning process.

The data collected for this subcategory highlight students' progress in identifying and valuing their classmates' roles. This analysis shows that students actively engaged in identifying these roles in the stories portrayed in the picture books. The following excerpts contain evidence of student analysis during group work and collective productions, illustrating how learners recognized and expressed the importance of different roles in their classroom community.

Notably, one student remarked, "Es importante trabajar unidas" (It is important to work together), emphasizing the collective nature of the lesson's theme. Another student commented, "Cuando hago cosas como de la casa sola me canso" (When I do housework by myself, I get tired),

(Field note #3, first cycle: September 24th, 2024, lines 31-46)

The first excerpt is from a field diary for the first picture book presented in the classroom. Its importance remains valuable as it presents how students can easily connect the topic of the book *Chickens to the rescue* with the importance of rely on other people when doing different but everyday activities in a daily routine, in this case the students could notice the connection between the story and the importance in their own lives, this was the first step into de deepening of critical social issues but fitted in a way that would motivate students and that it could be easy to relate with their life-experiences.



(Artifact #3, first cycle: September 11th, 2024, collaborative work)

The previous image corresponds to a strategy of recognition of the other and oneself, as children demonstrated that the only answer or opinion that mattered was their own this “community mural” was created as a way to show children that besides them there are other people that could have the same or different preferences, in the first activity students were asked to put their favorite subject in the tree and then looking for someone with the same answer, students recall the topics and previous books that highlighted the word community as an space for difference and welcoming.

To form the groups, the teacher selected students at random. This initially caused discomfort among some students who seemed displeased with the selection. However, with guidance from the head teacher, the students adjusted and began to work collaboratively.

(Field note #11, second cycle: March 25th, 2025, lines 9-13)

T: Okay, let's hear!
 T: What was your team?
 S#5: playground
 T: What school supplies did you use?
 S#5: Pencil
 S#6: markers
 S#7: colors
 S#6 ruler “y ya”

(Voice Recording #9, second cycle: March 11th, 2025, Lines 4-12)

In the fragments above, the information showed a common situation in the classroom, when students did not have the chance to make their own groups, they would get frustrated as they prefer to work with their close friends; this situation was considered and understood as a common behavior in this developmental stage; however, it was still relevant to approach different group organization, in this case at first student did not want to work together but with the assistance of the teacher they divided the work and were able to find common ground for dialogue and organization, as they finally manage to complete the task understanding the importance of every group member in the fulfillment of an activity.

Although some students needed a sentence frame like “The (place) is (adjective)” to get started, they were able to complete their sentences correctly with teacher guidance. Students worked individually but with the shared goal of contributing to the class mural, which reinforced the sense of a collective project.

(Field note #21, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, lines 24-29)

Another common circumstance in the classroom was students' language level, which impeded more complex discussions and dialogue; nevertheless, students could express their ideas and opinions using the model structures provided by the teacher, a strategy needed when approaching young learners. Moreover, those situations did not affect the group work developed in class as students were able to work both individually and in groups to achieve a common goal, such as a collage, mural, or “art gallery,” as it was pointed out in the previous excerpt, revealing the importance for children to identify a community and to feel a part of it comprehending the roles and dynamics attached to it.

Acknowledging diverse realities while reading. The following subcategory collects information on students’ engagement with picture books and how they can reflect different cultural, social, and personal realities. This aspect is essential to the approach taken in this research project, as it is considered in EFL education that reading not only serves the function of language acquisition but also creates a bridge between students and the content in the books. In this way, picture books and the activities around them become a powerful strategy to introduce learners to diverse experiences, helping them expand their worldview and foster empathy.

As Mandarani and Munir (2021) explain, teachers may select from diverse methods and strategies if these help students imagine the lives of others. This awareness process supports the recognition of multiple perspectives related to identity and community in education. Considering

this, the teacher's role extends beyond instruction and pedagogy, as EFL educators become agents of social understanding by guiding students to understand and respect differences. The integration of reading activities that present varied realities aligns with this perspective, since it equips learners not only with linguistic tools but also with the foundations of critical awareness and empathy.

The data collected in this subcategory highlights students' ability to respond to texts that depicted realities different from their own. Evidence showed that students went beyond basic comprehension of the narrative to reflect on fairness, respect, and the importance of valuing diversity. The following excerpts contain transcriptions of student responses from guided reading discussions, reading-related tasks, and reflective activities, illustrating how learners acknowledged and valued diverse realities as they engaged with the texts.

They mentioned that the differences in foods reflect different cultures by saying “como ella era china su comida es de allá” “es diferente porque es de sus papas”, showing their understanding of the lesson's core theme and book content of respect for diversity and community.

(Field note #7, first cycle: October 28th, 2024, lines 24-28)

S#2: Cada profesión tiene una función diferente que nos ayuda a convivir.
 (...)
 T: Is there a profession you did not know?
S#14: Arqueólogo
 (...)
 S#4: Judge
T: Do you think that all professions are good?
S#1: yes
S#2: Sí todas ayudan en algo

(Voice Recording #16, second cycle: March 25th, 2025, Lines 2-35)

In the field note and voice recording excerpts above, students were able to recognize different cultural and identity expressions and realities presented in the picture books; for instance, when working on *Everybody Loves Lunchtime but Zia*, students recognized the Chinese background of the main character using expressions like “that food is from there (China).” Students recognized situations such as cultural shock and interculturality, which made them aware of the diversity found in a community, as many students said they felt similarly to the

main character, since they are from other countries and are confronted with Colombian communities.

The class ended with a brief discussion led by the teacher on the importance of working together by recognizing what we enjoy doing and how each person can contribute to the community with their own talents and preferences.

(Field note #13, second cycle: March 13th, 2025, lines 34-36)



(Artifact #4, first cycle: October 24th, 2024, group #2)

An interesting topic of conversation that emerged in the classroom was preferences, abilities, or talents. As the field note and artifact showed, students felt excited to show their talents to the whole class, such as whistling, singing, or dancing. In the book *A Flicker of Hope*, students appreciate the feeling of not belonging in a community that could resonate with them by understanding the importance of different abilities, professions and actions in a community, as they were able to recognize the diversity that could be found in their own neighborhoods opening a new reality for them when approaching community construction awareness as they comprehend that diverse spaces require diverse people.

Students highlighted the role of love, support, and togetherness, reinforcing the main message that families can look different but share similar values.

(Field note #17, third cycle: April 17th, 2025, lines 30-32)



(Artifact #12, second cycle: September 29th, 2024, group #3)

Finally, data revealed that students were open to learning about different types of communities. The previous excerpts demonstrate activities related to one of the project's main topics: family, as it is the first type of community to which children are exposed. In this case, the picture book chosen was *"My Family, Your Family,"* in which students appreciate different types of families. This allowed students to talk about their families and realize the diversity in their classroom as it was portrayed in the book. Considering these different examples, students were asked to create a collage by looking in magazines and newspapers for images that could fit their families or creating a family organization as they wanted, using both their language knowledge and their artistic skills to create an example of how communities, in this case, a family, can be different without making it less important, highlighting the role of picture books in opening diverse realities in a familiar and engaging for the students.

Category 3: Working together to acquire new knowledge.

The third category showed students' responses to activities aimed at collaboration, particularly in group work, which was a critical point identified in the research's diagnostic process. This strategy aimed to improve students' relationships when approaching the EFL learning process, as the language view supporting the research was the communicative one. During the implementation, children were constantly asked to share and build on the ideas and opinions that emerged from each of the participants in a group, since the first moment, a critical aspect was the lack of motivation in group work; even if this aspect could be explained by the

cognitive stage of the students the hostility to it revealed the necessity for a strategy to improve it.

This approach created an environment where knowledge was understood as a collective construction arising from dialogue and mutual understanding. In this sense, the collaborative use of language allowed learners to acquire new vocabulary and explore expressions, making language use a meaningful process. Consequently, collaboration became crucial to building community awareness, which was one of the project's primary considerations.

As stated by Alahdal & Al-Ahdal (2019), interaction supported by communicative tools such as conversations has been shown to increase both the quantity and the complexity of learners' language production. This reinforces the idea that when students work together, interaction offers opportunities to exchange and create meaning; therefore, the reflection is based on the interaction found in class and in authentic group work. Therefore, when the classroom becomes a space where students collaborate rather than compete, the learning process turns into a shared experience that enhances both individual and collective growth.

Based on the above and considering the evidence gathered, two subcategories emerged as central to this collaborative approach in EFL learning: *Language use in a teamwork context*, and *Joint creation of meaning in reading-related tasks*.

Language use in a teamwork context. This subcategory compiles information on how students used English during collaborative activities, recognizing that these situations are natural contexts for English use, particularly in group work, where communication and collaborative actions were fundamental to completing the tasks proposed. This subcategory highlights how teamwork is essential in the EFL classroom, as it creates authentic opportunities for students to use language toward a common goal. As students interact with each other, they can practice not only vocabulary and structures introduced through picture books but also develop social skills such as collaborative thinking and the execution of group plans. Teamwork was promoted during the research project through group tasks and collective productions that challenged students and their perceptions of each student's contributions. The tasks were designed to focus on collaborative work without leaving individual work behind, as it remains fundamental to the construction of identity. Under this perspective, data revealed the role of language as a bridge for shared understanding and joint creation.

As Ellah (2025) emphasizes, collaboration on real-life issues allows students to develop teamwork and critical thinking skills that are essential for citizenship formation. In this sense, task-based learning becomes a powerful approach for fostering language use in teamwork contexts. These appreciations are relevant to the population of this project, as second- and third-grade students are confronted with EFL curricular goals but need an approach that understands their developmental stages by integrating linguistic practice with collaborative problem-solving. This perspective reinforces the idea that teamwork tasks in the EFL classroom support language practice and foster social skills.

The data collected for this subcategory illustrates how students used both individual considerations and collective integration. Evidence showed that learners improved their English use to complete the activities and share their opinions, even when their vocabulary was limited. Data collected suggest that teamwork contexts provided authentic opportunities for meaningful language use that aligned with both linguistic and social goals. The following excerpts exemplify how learners employed English in teamwork contexts to achieve common objectives.

In the sharing stage, each group presented their poster to the class. The teacher asked, “What was your group?” and some students were able to answer orally, while others read the name from their poster. When asked, “What school supplies did you use?” students gave simple lists including “pencil, pencil case, markers.” The teacher extended the question by prompting them to identify additional materials not initially mentioned.

(Field note #12, second cycle: March 6th, 2025, lines 27-33)



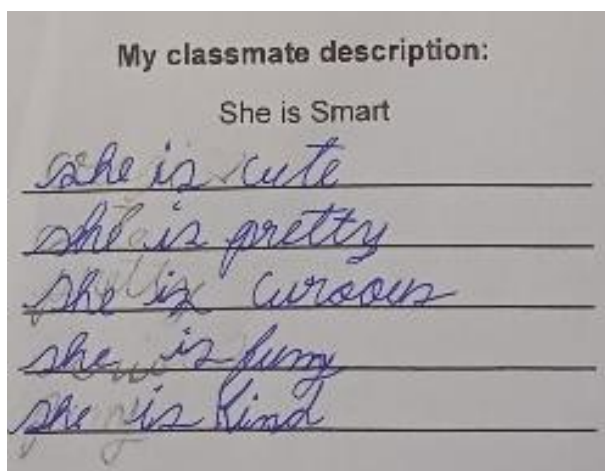
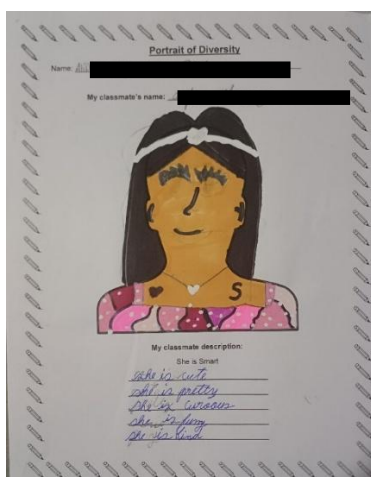
(Artifact #10, second cycle: March 6th, 2025, group #2)

In the previous excerpts it can be appreciated that students use contextualized English vocabulary such as school supplies to explain their process instead of repeating some words without a proper purpose, data revealed that using real scenarios for students to express benefit

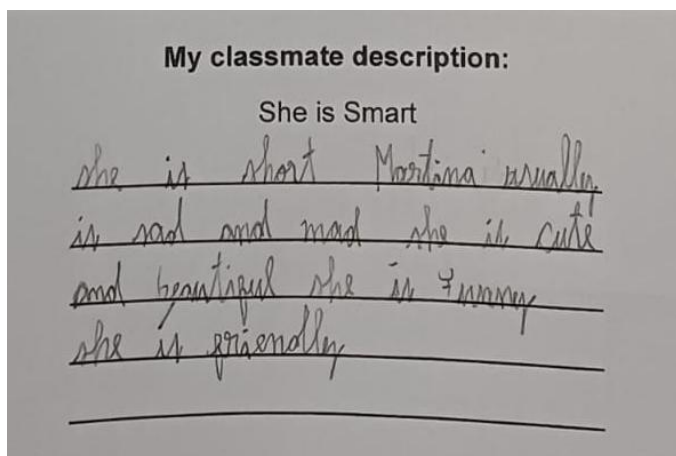
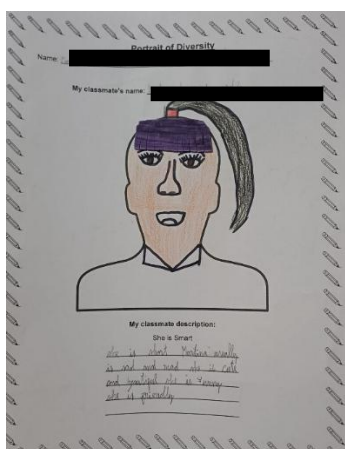
the fixation of the content as they found a specific space to use it, moreover, students worked together in groups creating different roles to achieve the activity which is another type of strategy to use the vocabulary, by creating a poster students were asked to mention the activities and the materials required to create it, this exemplified the ability of the students to focus and improve their problem-solving skills while also using the target language to work autonomously in a group.

Students organized themselves into pairs for the main activity. They were tasked with drawing portraits of their partners and writing three descriptive sentences using the verb *to be*.

(Field note #19, second cycle: September 9th, 2025, lines 10-13)



(Artifact #19, first cycle: September 29th, 2025, student #5)



(Artifact #19, first cycle: September 29th, 2025, student #9)

The fragments of data above were taken during an activity in which students were creating a portrait of a classmate and using a specific structure to describe her, namely the verb to be. To achieve this, the grammar content was not explicitly presented to children. However, the teacher modeled it in this sense students were confronted to use a proper English structure to describe someone familiar which create a genuine interest on them to draw the best possible the characteristics of their partner while also highlighting the characteristics that they appreciated, this resulted in a reflective yet creative exercise in which students needed to use the language content and receiving instant feedback from their classmate which benefited their engagement process in the task that emerged from the picture book worked on class.

7. ¿Te gustó trabajar en grupo con otras estudiantes?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Por qué? porque dialogamos
 8. ¿Cómo te sentiste durante las actividades del proyecto?
bien

(Final questionnaire, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, Student #4)

7. ¿Te gustó trabajar en grupo con otras estudiantes?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Por qué? hablamos mucho
 8. ¿Cómo te sentiste durante las actividades del proyecto?
bien

(Final questionnaire, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, Student #18)

Finally, students recognized that they were able to communicate using certain words or expressions in English to express and work together, which resulted in an improvement of the previous class work that was developed in only Spanish, focusing on the safe environment that was created to engage students and motivate them to use the target language, as it was a key aspect expressed by students in the final questionnaire, Data revealed the importance in this case

to give children the space and necessity to use the language which challenges and gives them a contextualized and naturalized environment to learn English.

Joint creation of meaning in reading-related tasks. The final subcategory gathers information around students' responses towards the collaborative construction of meaning during reading-related activities. This process benefits EFL learning by transforming individual exercises into a collective understanding, fostering comprehension through student exchange. The joint creation of meaning was fostered through guided reading, group work, and collective reflection. These tasks encouraged students to use English to express opinions and interpretations and to build shared ideas, while simultaneously improving their reading processes in their personal and community realities.

As and Thanh (2022) explain, this approach enhances learners' cognitive engagement by helping them connect picture books to their lives, think critically about ideas, and solve problems posed by the texts. Moreover, it enhances classroom discussion by incorporating students' personal thoughts and experiences, creating a deeper, more meaningful engagement with EFL education. This theoretical foundation supports the integration of reading-related tasks that move beyond comprehension checks to become spaces of dialogue and shared construction.

The data collected regarding this subcategory demonstrates how students built understanding collectively during reading activities. Evidence revealed that learners not only activate prior knowledge from the texts but also add more information to the discussion by connecting it to their own experiences. The following excerpts illustrate how learners co-constructed meaning during reading-related tasks.

Once the candles were completed, each group assembled their candles into a large chandelier representing classroom unity. The teacher provided supportive feedback, encouraging students to use full sentences, which enhanced their language practice and confidence.

(Field note #6, second cycle: October 21st, 2024, lines 20-24)



(Artifact #5, first cycle: October 24th, 2024, collective work)

As an important aspect to consider when planning the activities was to connect the content of the picture books with strategies that foster language skills and community construction awareness to approach the conflicts that could exist in the classroom, as a way to combine those elements, students were asked to create different types of tasks that involved handicrafts as they answered in the characterization questionnaire that those types of activities were preferred by students, in this case as the fragments above revealed students were able to create individual paper candles with their basic info such as favorite food, least favorite animal and information related to their interest and considering others in a way to understand community, in this case creating a metaphor in which a candle represents an individual and a chandelier to represent a community, with different information connecting the contents worked on the picture book and creating meaning by their own group work experiences.



(Artifact #10, second cycle: March 6th, 2025, group #2)

6. ¿Cambió algo en la forma en la que ves a tus compañeras o tu salón después del proyecto?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 Si respondiste "sí", ¿qué cambió? cambio la forma de ver a mis compañeras

7. ¿Te gustó trabajar en grupo con otras estudiantes?
☒ Sí ☐ No
 ¿Por qué? porque cada una se ayudaba

(Final questionnaire, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, Student #17)

In the preceding extracts, there is another type of collective work as students needed to portray a common space and actions developed in the school, in this case, the group was assigned to work based on the playground, in this activity students were asked to think about the actions related to that place as it can be appreciated students were able to use some vocabulary in English like Roller-skating and run while others are in Spanish this poster revealed the ability if the students to work together overcoming difficulties and achieving common goals as it was a process that was carried out during all the implementation stage, as it is shown in the final questionnaire where students commented that they helped each other to work effectively together, while gaining confidence and language skills.



(Artifact #25, third cycle: May 29th, 2025, collaborative work)

T: sobre trabajar en grupo ¿qué opinan?

S#11: bien, normal

S#12: Sí, a mí me gusto, porque hablábamos y hacíamos cosas chéveres

T: ¿recuerdan algo que hayan hecho en grupo?

S#12: cuando actuamos

S#13: cuando actuamos y hicimos el collage

(Focus group #2, second cycle: November 27th, 2025, Lines 45-51)

Finally, in this category, the previous excerpts revealed the bonds students formed while working together. As a final task, students were asked to think about a place in the city and how they could improve it, or what aspect they liked most about it. In this activity, students also needed a model to structure their ideas; nonetheless, the collective mural created from those particular ideas and opinions of students was conceived as a collective way to think about the place where students live and how they are involved with it as they are aware that they make a fundamental part of their communities, highlighted by the second focus group that they had conversations and fun activities related to group work and how they can create and share their own perspectives using English to create community knowledge.

Category 4: Improving engagement and participation in the EFL classroom.

The last category displays the evidence collected during the research project related to students' responses to the activities and tasks developed in the EFL classroom, which were based on picture books and aimed to foster community construction awareness among young learners. In this case, one of the main responses focused on the engagement and participation that emerged from students themselves. This category is essential, as one of the key issues when addressing not only community-related concepts but also EFL lessons in general is participation and how students feel motivated in class, which is fundamental to their learning process.

To comprehend this aspect in EFL teaching, Matrić et al. (2019) point out that engagement and behavior are key elements in the learning process due to the necessity of children to make an effort and pay attention to the lesson while allows effective participation, To create an environment that benefits this behavior in the students the activities executed must follow and fit young learners attention span and cognitive development stage as it can build emotional engagement in learners by connecting the topics and curricular requirements with students interests, experiences and own stories; therefore, the correct strategies applied in the classroom motivates students improving their performance in the tasks assigned. This is necessary because it aligns with core values in the teaching of young learners, such as interest, excitement, safety, and curiosity; thus, participation becomes a natural part of the class rather than a mandatory action, fostering a friendly learning environment.

As mentioned before, and considering that the construction of community awareness is an internal perspective in children autonomy is important to highlight the effort that both teacher and students need to make to achieve those goals, data revealed that on one hand the teacher need to foster confidence and engagement through materials, activities and resources; on the other hand, students need to focus and be challenge to become active learners who can understand and create their own knowledge which is not a separated or excluded idea but a connected knowledge built from diverse perspectives in the classroom. To illustrate this category, the gathered information showed students' responses regarding their engagement and participation as they approached community construction awareness through picture books.



(Pre-reading activity #3, first cycle: October 28th, 2024)

T: ¿Recuerdan que antes de leer el libro vimos un video?

S#10: sí

T: ¿les parece mejor leerlo de una vez o ver un video antes?

S#11: video

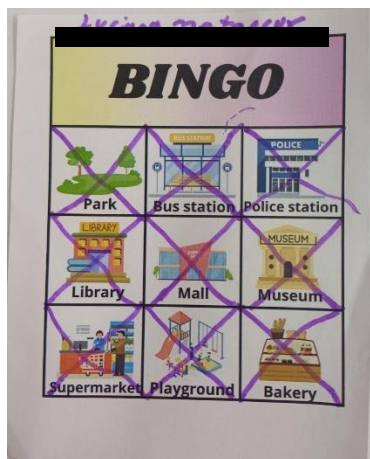
S#12: sí es más divertido con un video

T: además de eso que les gustaría añadir a las clases

S#11: como llevar los puestos para atrás y como que hagamos una mímica y más movimiento como juegos

(Focus group #2, second cycle: November 27th, 2025, Lines 32-39)

In the previous data excerpts, it can be appreciated that the role of the teacher in the EFL classroom must connect children's interests, as the first photograph shows the use of different contents like movies, documentaries, songs, and other types of multimedia products that stimulate children interest and curiosity as in that case which the primary language topic was food, as a pre-reading activity a short scene from a movie that the students previously said that they like was the starting point to approach the topics and engage children with the following activities. Moreover, when planning this project, data revealed that taking into consideration students' ideas or recommendations also increases students' participation in class as the activities fit and accommodate in a better way their own views or learning styles, as students in the second focus group commented that they would like to incorporate more physical and acting exercises, as well as a short video previous to the reading of each picture book and more games, having in mind these opinions while planning improved students participation and engagement as they felt as active participants in the process.

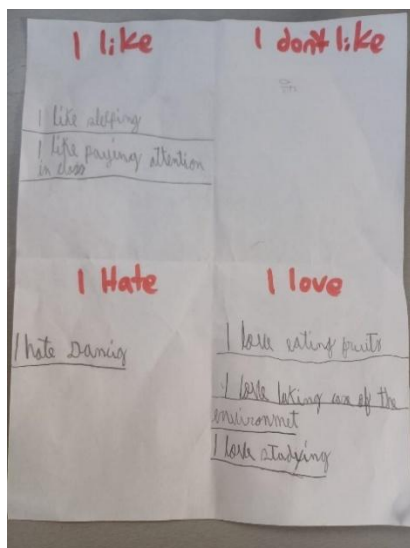


(Artifact #20, Third cycle: May 27th, 2025)

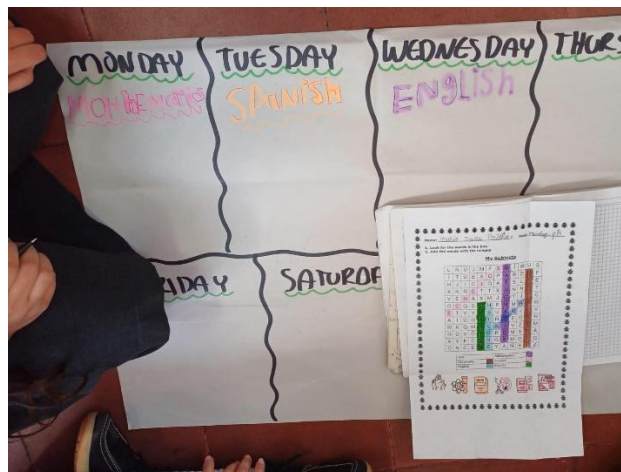


(Artifact #2, First cycle: October 30th, 2024)

As stated before, including students' opinions benefits the learning process. In the first photograph, a "bingo" activity was conducted to introduce vocabulary related to places in the city. In the second image, a game of dress and create a character is shown, as students randomly chose adjectives and clothing items. The task was to create a character using those words. Students seemed excited as they played the games, which was a good starting point as they began to recognize the words that they would need to complete the next activity.



(Artifact #6, first cycle: October 21st, 2024)



(Artifact #3, first cycle: September 11th, 2024)

In the previous images, there is evidence and how students were motivated to participate in the activities presented when their interests were the originating point, such as the artifact #6 where students were asked to fill a chart using preferences expressions using their own

preferences which facilitated the activity for them; additionally, in the artifact number 3 students were able to work together and think collectively in the creation of a community schedule where they had to create a schedule using their favorites subjects and think about the time to put each class.

Data revealed that students were eager to participate both individually and in groups when the activities involved their interests and the strategies matched their learning styles, fostering engagement and participation in activities that emerged from the picture books, connecting that source of language content and the acquisition of it and social topics with the responses and critical thinking of the students, enhancing by this the connection between the communicative aspect of the language and the possibility to explore complex and essential social issues in the classroom ensuring contextualized learning.

CHAPTER VI

This chapter presents the conclusions regarding this research project, considering the objectives and the data analysis conducted. Additionally, the research implications are discussed, highlighting the importance and requirements for the study's development. Finally, it presents the limitations that affected the project and outlines possible avenues for further research.

Conclusions

This research project looked to identify the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language. The research question that guided this research was, What is the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language? In relation to the previous question, two specific objectives were established. The first was to identify the role of contextualized picture books when used as a tool to engage young learners in EFL learning, and the second was to describe students' responses to the use of contextualized picture books to foster community awareness in an EFL classroom.

Bearing in mind the previous objectives, the data revealed that regarding the first objective the roles found were *Supportive Role of Picture Books in the Approach to EFL Learning* and *Discovering a Sense of Community While Reading*, Additionally, concerning students' responses data showed that the main responses were *Working Together to Achieve*

Knowledge in a Collaborative Environment and Improving Engagement and Participation in the EFL Classroom.

In the first place, the primary interest in using contextualized and genuine language content by using picture books was to provide students with not only the social aspects of the stories but also with common structures put in a real context to improve the language learning process, data revealed that students' response towards the language content was effective as students were able to understand and use vocabulary and simple expressions in the tasks proposed to them; However there was a difficulty to use more complex or advanced structures which can be explained by the age of the children which is also a relevant aspect. Still, the development of students' language skills was a focal point in interpreting the results of this research. Also, the main environment aimed to create in the classroom was a collaborative space for children to interact and enhance social relations, as it was a common factor in many classes that students were not eager to work together, which posed problems of coexistence. In many classes, the activities were numbed by a lack of social strategies. It is important to recognize that these situations can occur every day when working with young learners; nevertheless, the frustration and negativity these issues cause in children's behavior are problematic, as they affect their social and emotional domains. In this problem, not only the activities but also the books were selected to prompt students to reflect on their roles in a community. Data revealed that students were able to analyze their roles and understand the importance of their classmates, as evidenced by improvements in the activity's processes and results.

In this sense, the activities planned not only were intended to resolve the coexistence issues but also to create a collaborative environment in the class.

Instead of answering and resolving all students' doubts or difficulties, the collaborative configuration of the activities allowed students to develop their own strategies and negotiate viable solutions to their problems. Data revealed that students began to create these dynamics, even when the teacher stepped in to guide and organize their ideas, or, in more complex cases, the teacher provided extra help; however, the students eventually finished their task. This environment fostered both community awareness and the use of English in collaborative settings, increasing students' safety and confidence.

Finally, as it was stated before, data revealed that the use of contextualized and appropriate materials for young learners, such as movies, videos, songs, and particularly picture books, enhances students' participation as they can easily connect their ideas and experiences with the stories portrayed which facilitates the connections which is reflected in the engagement and interest that students demonstrated at reading time and production time, as the evidence showed the continuous feedback from students.

In conclusion, the use of contextualized picture books plays an important role in improving students' language skills and their emotional, social, and interactive skills, fostering a safe and beneficial environment for the English as a foreign language class.

Implications

This section presents the implications that emerged from the implementation of the research project. In the first place, the EFL classroom context and strategies; then, the students who participated in the research project; the institution where the study took place; and, finally, the implications for the researcher.

First, it is important to recognize the role that EFL plays not only in schools but also in society at large, as everyday life lacks real-world scenarios for students to apply what they learn in the classroom. Given the structural issues this problem presents, EFL strategies must focus on providing students with real-world scenarios and materials to make learning meaningful. Thus, instead of providing content with a lack of connection with students' real life, it is necessary to consider meaningful resources that can contribute to creating a relationship with students' contexts improving their motivation towards language learning as they can understand easily the purpose of it, as it was revealed on the study. The use of picture books in the EFL classroom has already been a key material in the class; however as it was mentioned before, its use lacks a real connection with students' realities using picture books for the improvement of language skills, leaving behind the content that the stories could portray. This does not refer to choosing one option over the other but to be conscious of the importance of combining both to fulfill the developmental stages of young learners, since the language aspect and the social one are as important, this requires a careful, meaningful, and reflective action on the part of the EFL

teacher, who is not the center of the class but the guide that allows students to interact and learn according to their needs.

Now, considering the institution where the study took place, which was the Lorencita Villegas de Santos, it is necessary to highlight the efforts in increasing the number of hours that the English class has, which was a good way to increase the input that students received in class, nevertheless, it is necessary to identify the opportunities of improvement as one hour does not represent a significant change in students' usage of the language, it is important to determine that the course load of the subject is essential but if it is only in that space in which the language is used students cannot see a fundamental importance or significance in learning the foreign language, therefore, it is important to question what are the spaces and role that EFL occupy in the institution, not only a separated subject but a transverse axis into the education of future leaders as it is the aim of the school, considering that language learning is fundamental in the development of skills such as, communication, interculturality, critical thinking, problem solving and leadership.

Finally, as a pre-service teacher, the experience of working in this context, characterized by the situations previously mentioned, involved the implications of the study, which involved being aware of the students in their entirety, as it is considered that every student has the abilities and an incredible amount of background knowledge that could enhance the pedagogical practice. This is revealed when students may not appreciate the limitations of their context but still have the interest and ability to learn. By designing appropriate age materials and activities, the goal of motivating students and making them feel safe in the classroom is fundamental, as it ensures a healthy learning environment. At the same time, they progress through stages that must be carefully monitored. By analyzing the perspective that each child had in their learning process and their different learning styles it is possible to create a bond between them and to allow them to express and participate freely without leaving behind the goals that they had to achieve, moreover, the fundamental role that research has in the teaching practice and how it must be cross-cutting to each subject to guarantee that the process is always focused on improving in favor of enhancing the learning process of the students.

Limitations of the study

First, it is important to highlight the lack of material found not only in the school but also in public libraries. In this case, one of the main issues was finding the picture books in the previous places as there was no catalog or options to choose since the majority of the books were only focused on vocabulary or were not appropriate for the developmental stage of the students. Due to this situation the books were presented in a digital format, which allowed children to encounter with this material; however the physical contact with the books would improve the connection that they made with the stories, since seeing it in a tv screen could interrupt or difficulted the reading process.

On the other hand, the material that the students had which was the textbook, presented an interesting source of vocabulary or expressions; however, it did not offer real context for students and as it was mandatory to buy it, the fulfillment of those books was also mandatory and took many classes interrupting the process that was being carried out with students, in many cases the teacher could connect both contents or resources. However, it slowed down the implementation stage.

Finally, as a pre-service teacher one of the most important elements to carry out the research project is the support and guidance of the head teacher, in the first cycle of implementation the teacher was helpful and attentive fulfilling that role; however, as the year passed and the students were assigned to the other branch of the school the primary teacher also changed, unlike the previous teacher the attitude of the newest one was aggressive and hostile demonstrating rejection towards the research project, the pre-service teacher and the activities carried out, imposing her choices over the lesson plan which affected the development of the pedagogical proposal, moreover, in class she actively disregarded the explanations and comments of both the students and the preservice teacher, creating a sense of extreme control and discomfort, damaging the learning environment of the classroom.

Further Research

The research project achieved its goal by determine the impact of using contextualized picture books to construct community awareness in a first approach to English as a foreign language, which main results were the identification of the roles of contextualized picture books when they are used as a tool to approach young learners to EFL learning and the description of students' responses towards the use of contextualized picture books to foster community

awareness in an EFL classroom. This proposal was developed in the context of the school, students, and language level required, considering both the teacher's and students' perspectives and suggestions. However, even though the proposal aims to enhance the four language skills, reading and speaking demonstrated the most significant improvement. Considering this, an idea for further research could be to explore writing and listening as the main skills for promoting the use of contextualized picture books. Moreover, another interesting proposal might be to connect with other social struggles that young learners may encounter during EFL learning, as it is necessary to address all the domains involved in learners from this population.

In conclusion, a suggestion for further research could be to analyze how picture books can address diverse social problems in the EFL classroom and students' communities, making English not only a subject in school but also a tool for improving students' lives and everyday contexts. While also exploring alternatives to accessing this type of material in diverse school contexts.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Students Survey

2


 ¡Buenos días! Esta encuesta tiene como propósito conocerlas mejor, no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas, la intención es hacer su aprendizaje más agradable. Gracias por participar.
 

Luisa 201

1. ¿Qué edad tienes? 8 años

2. ¿Dónde naciste? valledupar

3. ¿Con quién vives? mamá, papa y hermano

4. ¿Dónde vives? 12 de octubre

5. ¿Tienes acceso a Internet en casa? si

6. ¿Con quién pasas la mayor parte del tiempo en casa? con mi mamá

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

8. ¿Te gusta el inglés? ☒ No ¿Por qué? es muy divertido

9. ¿Realizas alguna actividad en que uses el inglés? (Escuchar música, ver videos) ☒ No ¿Cuál? escuchar musica

10. ¿consideras importante aprender inglés? ☒ No ¿Por qué? para entender las canciones

11. ¿Has tomado clases de inglés fuera de colegio? ☒ No ¿Dónde? sala centro comercial squarula

12. ¿De las siguientes actividades en inglés, en cuales te consideras buena?

Escribiendo _____ Leyendo _____ Hablando ☒ Escuchando

¿Por qué? _____

13. ¿De las siguientes actividades en inglés, en cuales consideras que tienes que mejorar?

Escribiendo ☒ Leyendo _____ Hablando _____ Escuchando

¿Por qué? _____

14. ¿Te gusta leer en tu tiempo libre? ☒ No ¿Qué te gusta leer? para saber escribir

15. ¿Te gusta jugar? ☒ No ¿Qué tipo de juegos? atrapadas

16. ¿Cómo prefieres trabajar? ☒ Solo En grupo _____ ¿Por qué? no me gu

ANNEX B: Diagnostic Test

Prueba Diagnóstica

Name: AYLIN IVANNA ZULUAGA

1. Connect the image with the actions.

Which of these actions do you do at school? _____

2. Read the parts of the body and put it in the right space.

Ear
Hand
Foot
Mouth
Eye
Stomach
Knee

3. Read the story and organize the images with numbers.

Lily wakes up at 6:00 am. She goes to the bathroom, brushes her teeth, and washes her face. Then, she eats breakfast with her mom. After that, she goes to school and learns with her friends. Finally, she comes back home, talks about her day with her mom, and goes to bed.

READY TO SCHOOL TIME	BREAKFAST TIME	GET UP TIME	BATHROOM TIME
1	2	4	3

ANNEX C: Teacher's Interview Sample

Teacher' Interview #1 Name of the Interviewer: Wilmar Andrés Linares Uruña Teacher interviewed: Luz Nidia Chingate Murillo Date:		
#	Teacher's answers	Comments
11	¿Cómo promueve el ambiente de aprendizaje? ¿Cómo hace que las niñas tengan esa motivación en el aula, específicamente hablando de inglés? Bueno, se trabaja en recursos audiovisuales, se trabaja en recursos auditivos, generalmente en las niñas que no cuentan con el con sus televisores inteligentes en el aula. Se generan, digamos, como el proceso específicamente de segundo, por ejemplo, el proceso, el trabajo en el libro, que ella las motiva muchísimo, los procesos de y el refuerzo del <u>listening</u> que permite a través de la página del libro hacer. Entonces digamos que esos son los principales recursos.	The teacher promotes a positive learning environment by using a variety of resources, including audiovisual and auditory materials, as well as incorporating movement and music into the lessons. She also makes sure to connect with the students on a personal level and creates a safe and supportive environment where they feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. How does the teacher motivate the girls to learn English? The teacher motivates the girls to learn English by making the lessons fun and engaging. She uses a variety of activities that appeal to their different learning styles, and she is always patient and encouraging. She also helps the students to see the relevance of English to their own lives, which makes them more interested in learning it. Specific examples of how the teacher promotes a positive learning environment and motivates the girls to learn English • Uses a variety of resources: The teacher uses a variety of resources, including audiovisual and auditory materials, as well as incorporating movement and music into the lessons. This helps to
12	A ellas les gusta mucho cantar porque vienen cantando desde jardín, les encanta cantar, les gusta mucho todo lo que tiene que ver con el movimiento de su cuerpo, pues obviamente por las edades de las niñas, específicamente las de segundo, les gusta mucho moverse, les gusta mucho escuchar que su docente les hable en inglés, porque ellas, aunque sienten que no entienden muchas cosas, saben que entienden muchas cosas. Sí. Entonces digamos que es un acto inconsciente. Entonces, si yo le digo "please tie your shoe" pues ella no sabe específicamente que dice ata tu zapato, pero ya sabe que es una instrucción que indica que debe atar su zapato cuando ellas, por ejemplo, deben solicitar un permiso para salir del aula al baño, Entonces "Teacher may I go to the bathroom please" eso hace que ellas generen un, digamos que un proceso de acercamiento con el inglés, sin que sea como	

ANNEX D: Field Notes

Name	Wilmar Andrés Linares Urueña
Place	Colegio Femenino Lorencita Villegas de Santos I.E.D Sede B
Date	March 14 th 2024 – 9:50 am – 11:50 am

Field Diary #1	
Population	- Nineteen (19) students between 7 and 9 years old - Group 201 - Citizenship and democracy class and English class

#	Description	Observer Comments
1	The classroom is organized in two different spaces by separating the classroom in two, the first one was near the screen and the second one was near the whiteboard where the students' desks were organized in rows.	- The different environments in the classroom can offer a dynamic environment for learning not only desks in rows but an open space can change the social relations and learning process. - The students demonstrate an active participation, an understanding of the relation of the topics of the class and the real life and a positive attitude towards their own doubts. - The use of audiovisual content seems to be a good way to engage the students.
2	The class starts with the intervention of the teacher of Citizenship and democracy, she asked "what is democracy?" while the students were sitting on the floor, a student answer correctly and then the teacher mention a previous activity in which the characteristics of the topic were discussed.	
3	Then, the teacher continued asking questions related to democracy and connecting them with the Colombian context; for example, "What is the government of our country like?", the majority of the students raise their hand in order to participate.	
4	After the questions the teacher play two videos on the screen related with the topic a song and a short story, when the videos finished the teacher asked for examples related to the information of the videos; for example, "what are your obligations as a student?"	
5	When the students answered all the questions the teacher told them to sit on their desks, they stood up and sat down on their desks, then the teacher out the date on the board and started making a dictation about the duties of a citizen, all the students wrote down the information.	

ANNEX E: Lesson Plan Cycle 1

Lesson Plan 1.

LESSON PLAN #1: Discovering Me! - My day, Your day

Lesson Plan: 1 – My day, Your day	Session: 1	Time: 50 minutes
Cycle: 1 – Discovering Me!	Grade: 201	Institution: Liceo Femenino Lorencita Villegas de Santos
Date: September 2nd 2024		
English Teacher: Luz Nidia Chingate Murillo Pre-service Teacher: Wilmar Andrés Linares Urueña		
Language Contents: • Days of the week • Scholar routines • Likes and dislikes		

Objectives:
• Students will learn basic routines and language related to the days of the week. • Students will identify information in common with their classmates (likes and dislikes) • Students will be able to express their routines using simple sentences.

Time	Procedures
5 minutes	The teacher greets the students and asks them which is their favorite day of the week and why Warm Up: knowing the days of the week.
15 minutes	To start the class, the students will watch a video, Annex 1 , about the days of the week. The videos will be watched another 2 times, one practicing pronunciation and the last one dancing in the video. Getting to know the topic
25 minutes	To continue the class, the students will be organized in a circle formation. The teacher will say, “On Mondays I [action] and show the mimic of an activity (e.g., run, clean, draw). The students will have to guess the actions, then they will have to do the same, pick a card, and mimic in order for their classmates to guess the actions. On [day of the week] I do [action]
5 minutes	Presenting Community To start the reading, the teacher presents both the name of the book, Annex 2 , and the cover to start guessing what the book is about now, the teacher introduces a key Word (Community), which is the Main topic of the book, accompanied by the topic of routines and responsibilities. The reading of the book will be in a group and aloud, the teacher will ask some questions related to the events of the book, starting to influence the reflection on the importance of community. Group Reflection The teacher will ask the students what was the thing that they liked most about the story, and all the things mentioned by the students will be used in the final reflection.

Annexes

Annex 1:



Annex 2:



ANNEX F: Focus Group Cycle 1

Focus Group Interview #1		
Cycle 1	Grade: 201	Institución: Lorencita Villegas de Santos
Date: November 13th, 2024		
• ¿Qué opinas de los cuentos ilustrados? - S- A: Esta como bien, a mi me encanto porque dibuje bien - S- B: estaban muy chéveres y aprendimos mucho - S- C: aprendimos sobre que cada persona tiene su forma de ser - S- D: y son muy divertidos los libros - S- A: demasiado • ¿Recuerdas algún cuento ilustrado trabajado en clase? - S- A B: de la vela - S- C: la niña que no quería comer, porque le daba pena - S- B: De los pollitos - S- D: a mi me encanto el de la velita porque también me gustó mucho - S- C: el de los pollitos también estuvo muy bueno - S- B: si estaba bueno el de los pollitos • ¿Qué temas trabajados en clase recuerdas? - S- A: I like, I don't like, I hate, I love - S- B: Can, can't - S- B: Animals - S- A: Emociones - S- C: Food, comida • ¿Cómo te sentiste al trabajar en grupo con tus compañeros mientras leíamos los cuentos? - S- A: feliz y aprendimos muchas cosas - S- D: que cada uno tiene diferentes ideas y nos ponemos de acuerdo, aprendemos a trabajar en equipo - S- B: Y son divertidas las actividades cuando estamos en pareja y podemos saber cosas de las otras niñas • ¿Aprendiste algo con los cuentos ilustrados? - S- C: la empatía el respeto, el amor - S- A: ayudar a los demás el respeto también y la empatía - S- D: Respeto amor empatía ayuda • ¿Ustedes mencionaron ayuda a los demás, recuerdan una palabra importante que trabajamos? - S- A: Respeto - S- B: Grupo - S- C: Una comunidad • ¿Qué recuerdan de la comunidad? - S- D: La de la familia, la del colegio • ¿Qué opinan de la comunidad? - S- C: Para estar en contacto de los demás y aprender cosas sobre los demás • ¿Hay algo en los libros o en las actividades que te gustaría cambiar o mejorar? - S- A: No - S- D: Algo más con el cuerpo - S- C: de deporte, físicamente - S- B más de inglés que me encanta el inglés - S- A: Cantar, bailar • ¿Recuerdas algún momento especial o algo que aprendiste de tus compañeros durante las actividades? - S- B: cuando trabajamos en equipo • ¿Recuerdan alguna actividad? - S- C: cuando hicimos las velitas - S- C: cuando estábamos en el patio chiquito de allá que jugamos a buscar la ficha - S- D: Lo de las materias - S- A: la de en grupo que debemos ayudar a buscar todo		

ANNEX G: Consent Form

	FORMATO		
	AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES Y DE MENORES DE EDAD		
	Resolución 767 de 18 de junio 2018		
FOR009GSI	Fecha de Aprobación: 18-06-2018	Versión: 01	Página 1 de 2

AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES

_____, identificado con C.C. ☐ C.E. ☐ No. _____, expedida en _____, declaro que he sido informado por **LA UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL** (en adelante la **UPN**), identificada con NIT. 899.999.124-4, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá y sede principal en la calle 72 No. 11 – 86 de Bogotá, que, de conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 y el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* disponible en la página web www.pedagogica.edu.co, actuará como Responsable del tratamiento de mis datos personales¹, necesarios para el cumplimiento de la misión de la **UPN**, obtenidos a través de canales y dependencias institucionales y que podrá recolectar, almacenar, usar, actualizar, transmitir, transferir y poner en circulación o suprimirlos, mediante el uso de las medidas necesarias para otorgar seguridad a los registros, evitando su adulteración, pérdida, consulta, uso o acceso no autorizado o fraudulento incluso por terceros.

Que tratándose de datos sensibles² y de menores de edad no está obligado a autorizar su tratamiento, salvo las excepciones consagradas en la ley o que medie su consentimiento expreso. Que es de carácter facultativo responder a las preguntas que traten de datos sensibles o menores de edad.

Mis derechos como titular del dato son los consagrados en la Constitución y la Ley, especialmente el derecho a conocer, actualizar, rectificar y suprimir mi información personal, así como el derecho a revocar el consentimiento otorgado para el tratamiento de datos personales en los casos en que sea procedente. Las inquietudes o solicitudes relacionadas con el tratamiento de mis datos personales, pueden ser tramitadas a través del e-mail: quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada e inequívoca a la **UPN** para tratar mis datos personales de acuerdo con el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* y para los fines relacionados con su Misión.

Leído lo anterior, manifiesto que la información para el Tratamiento de mis datos personales la he suministrado de forma voluntaria y es veraz, completa, exacta, actualizada, comprobable y comprensible.

FIRMA

Nombre: _____

Identificación: _____

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² Son **datos sensibles** aquellos que afectan la intimidad del Titular o cuyo uso indebido puede generar su discriminación, tales como aquellos que revelen el origen racial o étnico, la orientación política, las convicciones religiosas o filosóficas, la pertenencia a sindicatos, organizaciones sociales, de derechos humanos o que promuevan intereses de cualquier partido político o que garanticen los derechos y garantías de partidos políticos de oposición, así como los datos relativos a la salud, a la vida sexual, y los datos biométricos (Art. 5° Ley 1581 de 2012, art. 3° Decreto 1377 de 2013).

	FORMATO		
	AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES Y DE MENORES DE EDAD		
	Resolución 767 de 18 de junio 2018		
FOR009GSI	Fecha de Aprobación: 18-06-2018	Versión: 01	Página 2 de 2

AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES DE MENORES DE EDAD

_____, identificado con C.C. ☐ C.E. ☐ No. _____, expedida en _____, representante legal del menor _____, identificado con T.I. ☐ NUIP ☐ No. _____, declaro que he sido informado por **LA UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL** (en adelante la **UPN**), identificada con NIT. 899.999.124-4, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá y sede principal en la calle 72 No. 11 – 86 de Bogotá, que, de conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 y el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad*, disponible en la página web www.pedagogica.edu.co, actuará como Responsable del tratamiento de mis datos personales¹, necesarios para el cumplimiento de la misión de la **UPN**, obtenidos a través de canales y dependencias institucionales y que podrá recolectar, almacenar, usar, actualizar, transmitir, transferir y poner en circulación o suprimirlos, mediante el uso de las medidas necesarias para otorgar seguridad a los registros, evitando su adulteración, pérdida, consulta, uso o acceso no autorizado o fraudulento incluso por terceros.

Que tratándose de datos sensibles¹ y de menores de edad no está obligado a autorizar su tratamiento, salvo las excepciones consagradas en la ley o que medie su consentimiento expreso. Que es de carácter facultativo responder a las preguntas que traten de datos sensibles o menores de edad.

Como representante legal del menor, debo velar por los derechos consagrados en la Constitución y la Ley sobre sus datos, especialmente el derecho a conocer, actualizar, rectificar y suprimir información personal, así como el derecho a revocar el consentimiento otorgado para el tratamiento de datos personales del menor, en los casos en que sea procedente. Las inquietudes o solicitudes relacionadas con el tratamiento dichos datos, pueden ser tramitadas a través del e-mail: quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co

La Universidad garantiza la confidencialidad, libertad, seguridad, veracidad, transparencia, acceso y circulación restringida de los datos y se reserva el derecho de modificar su Política de Tratamiento de datos personales en cualquier momento. Cualquier cambio será informado y publicado oportunamente en la página web.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada e inequívoca a la **UPN** para tratar los datos personales del menor que represento, de acuerdo con el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* y para los fines relacionados con su Misión.

Leído lo anterior, manifiesto que la información para el Tratamiento de los datos personales del menor de edad que represento, ha sido suministrada de forma voluntaria y es veraz, completa, exacta, actualizada, comprobable y comprensible.

FIRMA

Nombre: _____

Identificación: _____

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Cuestionario final - Evaluación del proyecto

Nombre: [REDACTED] Curso: 3al Edad: 9

- ¿Qué parte del proyecto te pareció más interesante?
 - ☐ Leer los libros
 - ☐ Hacer actividades en grupo
 - ☒ Dibujar, pintar o crear
 - ☐ Hablar con mis compañeros
 - ☐ Otra: _____ ¿Por qué? porque me gusta
- ¿Cuántos libros recuerdas haber trabajado en el proyecto? ¿Recuerdas sus nombres?
 la mina que pinta
- ¿Recuerdas los temas e historias que se presentaban en los libros? ¿Qué recuerdas?
 los profesiones
- ¿Fue fácil o difícil entender los libros? ¿Tu comprensión mejoró a lo largo del proyecto?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - ¿Por qué? porque me paresi fas il u sel in
- ¿Crees que aprendiste algo nuevo durante el proyecto?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - ¿Qué? aprendi las profesiones
- ¿Cambió algo en la forma en la que ves a tus compañeras o tu salón después del proyecto?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - Si respondiste "sí", ¿qué cambió? cambio la forma de ver a mis compañeras
- ¿Te gustó trabajar en grupo con otras estudiantes?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - ¿Por qué? porque cada una se ayuda a la otra
- ¿Cómo te sentiste durante las actividades del proyecto?
 bien
- ¿Aprendiste algo sobre comunidad?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - ¿Qué? que todos somos iguales
- ¿Piensas que tú puedes ayudar a mejorar tu comunidad?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No
 - ¿Por qué? porque se puede ayudar a los demás
- ¿Crees que mejoraron tus habilidades en cuanto al inglés? ¿Cuáles y Por qué?
 hablando en ingles
- ¿Crees que trabajar en grupo te ayudó a aprender más inglés?
 - ☒ Sí ☐ No ¿Por qué?
 - porque cada una le enseña a la otra
- ¿Qué cambiarías o mejorarías del proyecto si lo hicieras otra vez?
 Nada

ANNEX I: Artifacts (Example of Artifact, Collage using magazines about family vocabulary)



ANNEX J: Voice recording.**Voice recording #11 Cycle 2**

1	S1: I make discover
2	S2: experiments?
3	S1: yes yes....
4	T: What is this profession?
5	All students: veterinarian
6	T: Are you sure?
7	All students: Scientist
8	S3: I move objects and bricks
9	S4: (Intelligible)
10	T: Can you repeat that?
11	S4 and S3: Let's build a house
12	T: What is this profession?
13	All students: constructor
14	S5: I take care of pet
15	S6: yes..?
16	S5: Give medicine
17	T: What is this profession?
18	All students: veterinarian
19	S6: Hello... How are you?
20	S7: Hello... your hair is beautiful...
21	S7: I'm stylist, help you check your hair...
22	S6: Thank you...