

# BALANCED LITERACY IN LITERACY SKILLS

## Balanced Literacy Approach in Second Graders' English Literacy Skills

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A research study presented as a requirement to obtain the Bachelor's degree in Spanish and  
English

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**Note of acceptance**

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***To my family:***

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*Heidi Karolayn Esguerra,*

*Ian Daniel García, and*

*Frédéric Doucet.*

***And to my friend:***


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<b>2. Descripción</b>
<p>Trabajo de grado que expone el desarrollo de una investigación acción cuya meta es establecer la influencia del enfoque de literacidad balanceada sobre las habilidades de lectoescritura en estudiantes de segundo grado del colegio Prado Veraniego. Es una investigación educativa en la que se utiliza una estrategia pedagógica como base de la propuesta. Se utilizan diferentes actividades basadas en las etapas del enfoque de literacidad balanceada y se analizan las habilidades de escritura y de lectura de los estudiantes en la clase de inglés. Los resultados de este estudio demuestran que el uso de este enfoque beneficia a los estudiantes en términos de adquisición de vocabulario y desarrollo de habilidades de lectura escritura y conocimiento en fonética.</p>

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#### 4. Contenidos

En el capítulo uno se presenta la caracterización y descripción de la población, así como la delimitación del problema y la pregunta de investigación que es: ¿Cómo el uso del enfoque de literacidad balanceada forma las habilidades de lectoescritura de un grupo de estudiantes de segundo grado del colegio Prado Veraniego? También se muestran los objetivos generales y específicos del presente estudio.

Por otro lado, el capítulo dos presenta el estado del arte y el marco teórico que está compuesto por dos diferentes constructos: habilidades de lectoescritura y el enfoque de literacidad balanceada. Allí, se exponen algunos estudios que se centran en el mismo tema que se trabaja en esta investigación.

El capítulo tres muestra el diseño pedagógico y la metodología empleada en el presente estudio. Al igual que el tipo de estudio y las unidades de análisis diseñadas *a priori*.

El capítulo cuatro expone la intervención pedagógica propuesta para el desarrollo de actividades relacionadas con el enfoque a trabajar, así como una línea de tiempo que muestra paso a paso el número y fecha de actividades desarrolladas durante la intervención.


El capítulo quinto se centra en la recolección de datos para su posterior análisis.

Finalmente, el capítulo seis, muestra las conclusiones, limitaciones del estudio, implicaciones pedagógicas y recomendaciones para posibles investigaciones futuras que se centren en el uso del enfoque de literacidad balanceada.

#### 5. Metodología

El presente estudio es de carácter cualitativo y se desarrolló siguiendo los principios de la investigación-acción. En esa medida, el investigador asumió un rol activo dentro de la población sobre la que se centró la investigación, la cual estaba compuesta por un grupo de 33 estudiantes de grado primero del colegio Prado Veraniego, cuyas edades variaron entre los 5 y 7 años. El estudio se llevó a cabo durante el segundo semestre del año 2016 y culminó en el segundo semestre del año 2017.

En un principio, se desarrollaron una serie de observaciones en el aula de clase y se aplicaron pruebas diagnóstico para conocer el nivel de lengua de los estudiantes, así como las principales falencias en relación a la misma. Esto llevó al investigador a diseñar una propuesta pedagógica basada en el enfoque de literacidad balanceada, la cual ofrecía una

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serie de pasos para el desarrollo de las clases. Estos pasos se aplicaron a lo largo de la intervención pedagógica y durante todas las clases.

Finalmente, con el uso de instrumentos de recolección de datos, se recogió información valiosa que permitió al investigador analizar la información a través del uso de la metodología de triangulación, dando como resultado las conclusiones con las cuales finalizó el proceso.

**6. Conclusiones**

Las conclusiones de la presente investigación muestran que el uso del enfoque de literacidad balanceada potencia el aprendizaje de vocabulario relacionado con la lengua inglesa en los estudiantes. También, permite que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades de lectura y escritura que les ofrecen un acercamiento más significativo con la lengua. Por otro lado, en relación al desarrollo de la conciencia fonética en inglés, se concluyó que es necesario diseñar estrategias que se centren en el aprendizaje de fonemas de una forma más significativa y natural. Finalmente, cabe resaltar la eficacia de este enfoque en el desarrollo de las actividades de lectoescritura de los estudiantes.

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### Abstract

This document presents an action research project which studies the influence of the use of the Balanced Literacy Approach on the literacy skills of a group of second graders of Prado Veraniego School. It describes the pedagogical strategy used to develop this proposal. This study came as the result of an observation of a group of students which showed that their proficiency in the English language was quite low. Among the difficulties that the students presented, it was evident that they did not know any vocabulary in English. Hence, it was impossible for them to communicate in this language. The result of the study showed that this approach benefits students in terms of vocabulary acquisition, reading, and writing skills, as well as phonemic awareness.

*Key words: Balanced Literacy Approach, literary skills, writing, and reading.*

### Resumen ejecutivo

Este documento presenta una investigación acción que estudia la influencia del enfoque de literacidad balanceada sobre las habilidades de lectoescritura en estudiantes de segundo grado del colegio Prado Veraniego. También, describe la estrategia pedagógica que se usó para el desarrollo de esta propuesta. Este estudio parte de una observación a un grupo de estudiantes, la cual mostró un bajo desempeño en inglés. Dentro de las dificultades que los alumnos presentaron, fue posible encontrar que estos no poseían vocabulario en inglés lo cual les hacía imposible comunicarse a través de esta lengua. Los resultados del presente estudio mostraron que el uso de este enfoque beneficia a los estudiantes en términos de adquisición de vocabulario y desarrollo de habilidades de lectura escritura y conocimiento en fonética.

*Palabras clave: enfoque de literacidad balanceada, lectoescritura, lectura y escritura.*

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This first chapter presents the most relevant aspects with regard to the characterization of the population that participated in the research study, as well as a description of the rationale of the study, the justification, the statement of the problem, the research question, and the general and specific objectives of this research.

### **Characterization**

This section of the document focuses its attention on the following three aspects: First, the local context, which includes a brief description of the surroundings of the school. Second, the institutional context, in which it is possible to find a description of the PEI of the school, its mission, vision, and pedagogical model. Finally, a characterization of the population in terms of their cognitive, socio-affective, cultural, and linguistic characteristics.

#### **Context**

##### ***Local Context***

The IED Prado Veraniego is placed in locality number 11 Suba, in a social stratum 3 neighborhood of the north of the city of Bogotá, Colombia. The name of the neighborhood in which the school is located is also Prado Veraniego. It is a residential neighborhood although it has several stores such as bakeries, drug stores, car repair shops, and supermarkets. There is also a medical center close to one of the school buildings. The majority of the students who attend this school are from this neighborhood. However, some of them belong to other neighborhoods from the same locality, and for that reason, they have a bus which takes them to school. In conclusion, despite the type of stores and places surrounding the school, it is fair to say that the students are

not disturbed by noises from the street, and it allows them to have a peaceful and calm environment.

### *Institutional Context*

Regarding the institutional context, the school is divided into two branches: Branch A, in which students from fifth to eleventh grade attend class; and branch B, for students from pre-school to fourth grade. The second building is made up of two floors, which have several administrative offices, nine classrooms for all grades, a teachers' lounge, a soccer field, a nurse office, bathrooms for boys, girls, and teachers, a computer classroom, and a multipurpose room. Nevertheless, there is not an English laboratory for students to practice the language. The classroom for the group in which this study is centered (203) is located on the second floor of the building, it is a well illuminated space, and it has big windows and several lights on the ceiling. There are some posters on the walls with the alphabet in English, as well as one with the names of several animals. There is one T.V. in the classroom, a video projector, and a home theater. However, students do not use the home theater or the video projector since they are not yet functional.

The information about the PEI, the vision, and the mission of the school can be found in the "Manual de Convivencia" of the school. The name of the PEI is: "La comunicación con calidad hacia el desarrollo humano" (IED Prado Veraniego, 2015, p. 9). It focuses on education of values and communication. Also, in the "Manual de Convivencia", there are three aspects which define the profile of the students that this institution aims at educating: Intellectual autonomy, moral autonomy, and transforming leadership.

Moreover, the vision of the school is to position itself as an institution which prepares students committed to their human development and values, who can lead positive social change to enable a harmonious coexistence that allows the construction of a fair country. Regarding the

mission of the school, it is described as the generation and the strengthening of cognitive, social, and practical processes in the school community in order to educate competent human beings through communication, who are able to have a healthy coexistence. Finally, the pedagogical model of the school is a socio-cognitive one which describes learning and knowledge as social constructions which evolve according to experiences, allowing the maximum development of the interests and abilities of the student.

### *Participants*

The participants of this study, attend classes in the afternoons in branch B of the school, from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. with a thirty-minute recess. The group is composed of thirty-three students, eighteen girls and fourteen boys; their age range goes from six to seven; they are in grade 203 at Prado Veraniego School. However, there is a ten-year-old student with special cognitive needs.

In order to collect basic information about the students, the researcher used a series of instruments that included: Several observations using field notes (See appendix 1), an interactive survey, and a diagnostic test. All of these instruments were applied during the second semester of 2016. The goal of the interactive survey was to collect the students' names, ages, likes, and interests; it was named "*The passport.*" This survey was basically a passport designed by the researcher for the students to fill in with the information mentioned above (See appendix 2). When applying it, the researcher explained to the students that the passport which they received would allow them to visit five countries which represented a group of elements that the students might like such as: Cartoons, games, music, fairy tales, and technological gadgets. Depending on the choices made by the students, it was possible to build a general idea of their personal likes. Twenty-five students attended this activity, thirteen students selected the country of cartoons, and

ten selected the country of technology, which showed a special interest from the students towards these two topics.

With regard to the make-up of students' families, the majority of them lived with their mother and father. Nevertheless, six of them lived with a single mother, or with other members of their families (grandmothers, aunts, uncles, etc.). Five of these students were given up for adoption, therefore, they did not live with any relative, but instead they currently live in a care home which is in charge of their feeding, shelter, and education.

According to the classroom teacher, since the students had just started the reading and writing process, they had a visual learning style. Some of them did not know how to read or write yet (See field notes #2, comments: 19-22), which made the learning of a foreign language more difficult for them (See field notes #2, facts: 33-37). The classroom teacher commented that they seemed to enjoy activities in which they had to match or describe images, by following clear and simple instructions. Although there was only one student with cognitive limitations, some students suffered from the attention deficit disorder. Additionally, the observations made by the researcher showed positive results in terms of the socio-affective level in the classroom. It was clear to see that the students got well along with each other and there was not any kind of hostile environment.

### **Diagnosis**

The *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en lenguas Extranjeras*, designed by the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional*, which follows the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, shows that by the time students finish third grade, they must have reached an A1 level of proficiency of the English language. For that reason, it was necessary for the researcher to design a test to check the students' language levels (See appendix 3), in order to

identify their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, this section of the document presents a description of the language diagnosis and its results.

This test was intended to evaluate all the skills of the English language, and the communicative aspect. Twenty-six students developed the language diagnosis and four of them were absent that day, they had approximately two hours to do the test. The first part of the test was intended to evaluate speaking skills. Here, the researcher asked the students some key questions such as: What is your name? How old are you? How are you feeling? And what do you like to do? Not one of the students gave an answer to a single question. Instead, they seemed to be very confused and they asked about their meaning in Spanish.

In the second part of the test, the students were asked to match greetings and farewells with their meanings in Spanish, nobody got the answers right in this section and seven students did not complete them at all. In the third part of the test, students were asked to write three of the most common family members in English (mother, father, sister). Here, four students got all the answers right, sixteen of them got at least one answer correct and six students did not answer any of the questions correctly. In the fourth part, the students had to paint a geometric figure with the color that was indicated below it. In this section, fifteen students got all the answers right, eight of them painted at least half of the figures with the corresponding color correctly, and three students did not paint any of the figures.

In the fifth part of the test, students had to listen to the researcher and follow his instructions to put the corresponding number beneath the images of the parts of the body. None of the students got the answers right, and most of them showed that it was impossible for them to understand the words in English. In the sixth part, students were supposed to write the name of the numbers from one to ten. Eight students were able to write all the numbers correctly, four of them did not write any of the numbers and fourteen wrote at least one number correctly.

In the last part of the test, the students had to match seven animals with their corresponding name in English. Here, twenty-five students matched at least one animal with a name, but nobody got more than half of the answers right, while five students did not match any of the animals. While applying the language diagnosis, the researcher observed that most of the students seemed to be very confused when they had to listen, read, write, and speak in English, they also had some problems following instructions and some of them commented that they had some problems while writing and reading even in Spanish.

In conclusion, the diagnosis showed that students had not achieved the A1 level in proficiency of the English language. However, some of them had acquired basic vocabulary which helped them to solve some of the activities of the test; unfortunately, they seemed to have some issues while performing all skills, especially reading and writing due to the fact that some of them had not developed these competences in Spanish. The students were able to repeat some vocabulary but they were unable to communicate in English. Although they evidenced difficulties in all skills, writing and reading were the ones that had to be reinforced the most, because they represented a problem even in their native language.

### **Statement of the problem**

Taking into account the diagnosis and the field notes made in this group, it was possible to find out that most of the students had not accomplished the goals stated on the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras* for the first cycle. Although they were able to recognize some basic vocabulary, they still had problems when writing and reading in Spanish, and this problem was also presented in a bigger scale when the students read and wrote in English, due to the fact that they did not know the language and were in the initial stage of the foreign language learning.

### **Rationale of the Study and Justification**

When students start their academic process, they have to face many challenges while developing their linguistic skills. In school, they have to learn how to read and how to write. In other words, in the first years of school, students must develop their literacy skills which include both reading and writing abilities. However, many times the development of these skills might represent a significant problem for them, due to the fact that it is the first time that they deal with the written language and its understanding.

The literacy skill has been defined in many different ways throughout the years. One of the first definitions was provided by the UNESCO, which describes literacy as the ability that human beings have to communicate and understand through the written text (UNESCO United Nations Educational, 2006). However, literacy is not only focused on the function of the language, but instead it aims at benefiting students in different aspects such as: Increasing their self-esteem, helping them in their education process, empowering them with their knowledge development and strengthening their social bonds through communication (UNESCO United Nations Educational, 2006). For those reasons, it is imperative for students to develop the literacy skill, due to that fact that it helps them to improve their command of the language, as well as their personal and social life.

It is important to highlight that literacy has been implemented by using diverse approaches. Nevertheless, there is an approach that might be the most appropriate for this study: The Balanced Literacy Approach. This approach perceives reading and writing learning as a process in which students follow some specific steps in order to learn how to read and write. The steps are presented in pairs in order to create a balance between the writing ability and the reading ability in the following way: First, loud reading and modelled/shared reading; second, shared reading and interactive writing; third, guided reading and guided writing; fourth,

independent reading and independent writing, and finally, word study. This process will be explained deeply in the second chapter of the inquiry.

Thus, the main purpose of this project was to provide students of grade 203 at Prado Veraniego School with tools that allowed them to improve their literacy skills through the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Approach, which had repercussions on the proper development of the PEI of the school, by preparing students to achieve the goals stated in that document. Also, taking into account that the main problem of the students was related to the literacy skill, the development of strategies which helped them to overcome that problem, gave them the chance to achieve a better proficiency in the English language and in their academic life. Furthermore, this project also aimed at helping students reach the objectives established by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN., 2006) which include: The recognition of basic vocabulary related to the topics: Family, places, games, and others, the understanding of short stories written in English and the exteriorization of thoughts and ideas using the English language, among others. For those reasons, this research was not only valuable for the students and the school but also for the country and the pedagogical community.

### **Research Question and objectives**

Taking into account the main problem of the students, this research study aimed at discovering how the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Approach shaped students' literacy skills. Hence, the research question of this study was: How are the literacy skills of a group of second graders at Prado Veraniego School, shaped when using the Balanced Literacy Approach?

Because of this, the principal objective of this research was:

- To explore how the students' literacy skills are shaped when using the Balanced Literacy Approach.

And the specific objectives were:

- To identify how the Balanced Literacy Approach affects the students' writing abilities.
- To analyze how the Balanced Literacy Approach affects the student's reading abilities.
- To recognize the impact that the Balanced Literacy Approach has on the phonemic awareness of the students.

The previous chapter offered an introduction to this research proposal, as well as a description of the local and institutional context, the participants of the study and their linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and socio-affective characteristics. It also provided a description of the main problem of the group, as well as the proposal to deal with it. On the other hand, the following chapter will describe the theoretical framework and the state of the art that supported the present project.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter presents two basic aspects in regard to the development of the research project.

Firstly, the state of the art, which shows some studies that have dealt with similar issues to the ones presented in this investigation. Secondly, a theoretical framework which serves as a support to this inquiry will be outlined.

### **State of the Art**

In order to provide a strong theoretical background to this study, it was necessary to develop a review of different types of research related to the development of literacy skills and the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Approach in the classroom. National and international data bases were consulted for this review.

At an international level, Shaw & Hurst (2012) conducted the study *A Balanced Literacy Initiative for One Suburban School District in the United States*. The participants of this piece of research were a group of 111 teachers in a suburban USA school district that worked from kindergarten to sixth grade. The main purpose of the project was to determine how these teachers employed the Balanced Literacy Approach in their classes. In conclusion, the researchers stated that all the teachers had knowledge related to the approach and they used it properly in the classroom. However, the most relevant finding in this study had to do with the description of reading and writing components as the main role in each level for the appropriate implementation of this approach. Thus, this research was helpful for the present study because it exhibits the relevance of reading and writing components when using the Balanced Literacy Approach in the classroom in order to develop literacy skills with students, regardless the level to which they belong.

To continue, in a second international study titled *Using Literacy Centers to Support a Balanced Literacy Program in a Pre-K Classroom* developed by Rowan (2016), with a group of Pre-schoolers, the researcher aimed at understanding the literacy centers as a complement of Balanced Literacy programs. This project produced worthy results in terms of the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Approach in the classroom. But most importantly, the researcher provided a large amount of lesson planning templates and materials. He also showed guidelines in relation to the management of literacy centers and the appropriation of the Balanced Literacy Approach. Therefore, this research was useful for the present study due to the fact that it presented a proper way to implement the Balanced Literacy Approach inside the classroom. Besides, the materials and planning templates provided by the researcher, served as a guideline for the creation of authentic material that focused on the specific characteristics and needs of Prado Veraniego School students.

The third study titled: *Effects of balanced literacy and skill-based programs on beginning reading achievements* was carried out by Carr (2007), and it focused on the effects of the implementation of a Balanced Literacy and skill-based program upon the reading achievements of a control-group of first graders in Maryland, U.S.A. The results of this inquiry showed that the use of a Balanced Literacy program had a positive effect on the students' reading achievements. It also showed better results in the students who used the Balanced Literacy program in comparison to those who used the traditional skill-based programs. Although this research focused specifically on writing skills, it was valuable for this study since it dealt with a similar population, as well as with the first stages of reading and writing learning processes, which were the main characteristics of these students.

A last international study is *Scaffolding emergent literacy skills in pre-kindergarten through writing instructions*, conducted by Thompson (2015), with a group of 147 pre-

kindergarten students. The main goal of this study was to improve literacy skills through the implementation of interactive reading and writing activities which included sociocultural storybooks. The results of this study showed a significant improvement in relation to reading, phonemic awareness, and sound and print knowledge. However, in regard to writing abilities, the improvements were insignificant. Furthermore, the students with special needs did not show any improvement in relation to their literacy skills.

The previous research was probably the most relevant for the present study, inasmuch as they both present similarities in terms of main and specific objectives. Although their approaches are not the same, both studies focused on writing, reading, and phonemic awareness as the main features of literacy skills. Additionally, in both cases, the activities focused their attention on the development of writing, reading, and phonemic awareness. However, there is also a significant difference in terms of the language, since unlike the students in Thompson's study, the population in this one, are native speakers of Spanish. It is also necessary to highlight the difference in ages between the students in the two studies as it can represent a relevant variable.

Despite the importance of international studies for the development of this project, it was absolutely necessary for the researcher to review some domestic ones, in order to find closer similarities in terms of context and population. Nevertheless, since the Balanced Literacy Approach has been commonly used in contexts where English is the mother tongue, the number of possible resources for this part of the project was reduced. The following two projects were both developed in the city of Bogotá, and although they both took place in bilingual schools, they offered trustworthy information.

Martínez (2010) carried out the study *Explicit and Differentiated Phonics Instruction as a Tool to Improve Literacy Skills for Children Learning English as a Foreign Language*. Based on the results of phonics instruction in mother tongue literacy development, this study aimed at

offering insights in relation to the benefits of phonics instruction in three features of the literacy skills of a group of first graders of a bilingual school in Bogota, Colombia: Reading comprehension, spelling, and written statements. The researcher concluded that explicit and differentiated phonic instructions improved reading comprehension and written production in EFL. Regarding spelling, it had positive effects only on the mother tongue. These results were useful for this inquiry, as the participants display similar characteristics and as it shows the effectiveness of phonics as a component of the Balanced Literacy Approach to improve literacy skills. Also, it shows the impact of the use of this approach on the writing skills of the students, which was one of the main objectives of the present study.

On the other hand, Díaz (2013) conducted the study: *English learners' ability to construct meaning and thinking skills implementing the Balanced Literacy Approach*. This action research intended to answer the question of what was uncovered about the learners' ability to construct meaning and thinking skills by the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Approach. The participants of this study were six and seven-year-old students from a Colombian bilingual school in the city of Bogotá.

The results of this project showed that children were able to use thinking skills, but the use of these depended on three elements: The previous knowledge of the topic that students had, the way in which strategies were delivered, and the use of sentence structures and vocabulary of the language. This inquiry was relevant for this research because it demonstrates how the Balanced Literacy Approach can be adapted to foster not only the development of thinking skills, but also other skills such as reading and writing (literacy skills).

This State of the Art shows that the Balanced Literacy Approach is taking a main role in L1 teaching and research. There is a gap in the research related to the benefits of this approach on EFL and ESL contexts because of the lack of studies with this kind of participants. Moreover, the

search of the repositories of several universities evidenced that the Balanced Literacy Approach is a novelty in Colombia. While several researchers have inquired in this field abroad, it is difficult to find studies related to this issue in the country. National studies deal only with one particular component of Balanced Literacy, but not with that construct as a whole.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The constructs for this research are twofold. The first one is the unit of analysis: *Literacy skills* and the second one is the strategy that is used to approach it: *The Balanced Literacy Approach*. In order to define these two concepts, there was a review of the different perspectives that revolve around them, followed by a selection of the most relevant ones for the development of this project.

#### **Literacy Skills**

A first notion of Literacy Skills is the one given by The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development which defines it as “the ability that people have to understand, use, and reflect on written texts to be able to develop academic potential, knowledge and goals in order to participate actively in society” (OECD, 2010, p. 37). This explanation highlights the significance of acquiring literacy skills which offers advantages to people, such as the ability to access and increase knowledge, but most importantly, it gives learners the opportunity to perform healthy social abilities. Thus, the adequate development of the literacy skills has a great impact on society in general.

On the other hand, Sosa and López (2002) state that literacy goes beyond the mechanical processes of reading and writing. They affirm that literacy learning involves all the elements of communication. The competence related to the construction of meaning comes as the result of the relevant literacy experiences that students have throughout their lives. As well as in the first

definition, this one also underlines the value of literacy skills in the construction of meaning that students must strengthen to function correctly in society.

Yusuf and Enesi (2012) contribute to the last description of literacy skills for this study. They explain it as the tool which allows the individuals to use the language to communicate and to build meaning through symbols in a formal context. Although this definition omits the relevance of literacy for the development of the basic abilities to function in a society, it shows the importance that literacy has for communication and for the management of the language which is necessary in all contexts: personal, academic, and work environment.

The three previous definitions contribute to this research in different perspectives. First, the OECD (2010) illustrates the necessity of the accurate learning of writing and reading as the bases for the construction of literacy skills. Second, Sosa and López's (2002) study focuses on the advantages that literacy skills represent for people, since they allow them to construct meaning and focus on society. Third, Yusuf and Enesi (2012) point merely at the communicative relevance of literacy skills.

This study combines the three definitions given by the authors. The researcher selects them due to the fact that they represent some of the most relevant aspects of literacy skills (such as writing and reading, the reinforcement of social abilities, and formal communication). It is worthy to take into account that this research took place in a classroom where English was not the mother tongue with second grade students who were starting their learning process. Therefore, focusing only on one of the aspects is detrimental for the other two.

In this sense, this project conceives literacy skills as the ability of writing and Reading within social interaction and formal communication. For that reason, its activities and objectives center on the assimilation of all these components.

### *Reading*

The process of reading involves a decoding of written words to create a mental image of the content that underlies the text. Nagy (1998) states that a high level of word-knowledge benefits the reading comprehension in those who learn a second language. The author rejects the use of only one method when addressing reading in the language classroom, and suggests that “neither method, taken by itself, is especially effective at improving reading comprehension” (p. 3). He defends the combination of two approaches: definitional and contextual. The former implies that the students memorize the form and meaning of isolated words and the latter enhances the understanding of a word depending on its context.

This combination associates to the mixture of phonics and whole language approach respectively and thus to the balance literacy approach. Trehearne (2003) explains that “Phonological awareness is the area of oral language that relates to the ability to think about the sounds in a word (the word’s phonological structure) rather than just the meaning of the word” (p. 117). In the second language classroom, the phonological awareness appears in the teaching of syllables and phonemes. With this knowledge, the learners are able to identify the sounds of new words. On the other hand, whole language is an approach that conceives reading as the comprehension of full texts instead of single words (Patzelt, 1995).

In both phonics and whole language, recognition is fundamental. Read (2000) defines recognition as the process of associating sequences of graphemes with ideas stored in the mind. He also establishes the difference between vocabulary knowledge and context of vocabulary use. Both issues involve recognition of words but the first one focuses on phonics and the second one in whole language approach.

### ***Writing***

Infante and Letelier (2013) sustain that writing can be a mechanical activity, a continuum of abilities or a gate towards more complex learning processes. The first one centers on coding words through linguistic signs for a functional purpose such as economic development or modernization. The second one gathers social and work competences as features of the writing process. The last one sees writing as a tool that is useful in the school and also in the performance of citizenship.

In any of the three approaches recall is a crucial element. Read (2000) describes recall as the process of eliciting words as a consequence of an internal and external stimulus. It implies the knowledge of formal characteristics of words, their meaning and their position within a sentence. However, recalling is not enough, the writing process also requires an organizational pattern which includes the organization of ideas, relationship between words, and accurate sentence structure (Muñoz, Gaviria and Palacio, 2006).

### **Balanced Literacy Approach**

In relation to the second construct, O'Day (2009) provides a first conception of the Balanced Literacy Approach as an educational strategy that points towards the fulfillment of the variety of students' needs while they face literacy instruction. It pays attention to all the issues that they deal with during this process. According to this, it is pertinent to mention that, in many cases, when students are developing the literacy skills, they overcome some problems that goes unnoticed and never get solved, which affect their language learning. For that reason, the Balanced Literacy Approach serves as a very useful strategy to avoid this inconvenience.

Additionally, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) describe the Balanced Literacy Approach as an approach that aims at helping students to understand and process an increasingly large number of challenging texts fluently. As in the first definition, this one shows the importance of this

approach as a strategy that allows students to overcome the difficulties that appear while facing written texts. Although these two conceptions focus on Balanced Literacy as a strategy to reduce failure when addressing texts, it is also well known for its capability to adapt in order to solve hindrances in different scenarios.

These authors list some of the characteristics of the Balanced Literacy Approach: it addresses the necessities of all learners, perceives the teachers as decision makers, is flexible, and is research-based. The Balanced Literacy Approach gives students the chance to engage in several reading and writing activities in order to help them to communicate more effectively by combining ideas from the whole language approach and phonics. The Metropolitan Nashville Public School (2012) affirms that in the Balanced Literacy Approach, the students follow some reading and writing stages.

The first stage involves *Loud reading* and *Modelled or Shared writing*. The teacher reads a selection aloud to the students. Then, they work together to write texts but only the teacher acts as the scribe. In the second stage, the activities are *Shared reading* and *Interactive writing*. Here, the teacher and students read and compose texts together and both write. The third stage includes *Guided reading* and *Guided writing*. The basic characteristic of this phase is that the students arrange themselves in small groups with similar needs and the teacher coaches them. The fourth stage covers *Independent reading* and *Independent writing*. In this part, students read and write texts of specific genre individually or in couples with a minor interaction of the teacher. The last stage consists of *word study* in which the teacher provides the students with chances to practice using their knowledge of phonemic awareness, letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, vocabulary, etc.

The previous chapter presented two fundamental aspects related to the development of this inquiry. Firstly, the theoretical framework and secondly, the state of the art, which shows

some studies and pieces of research that aimed at improving similar issues to the one presented herein. In order to respect the principles of the Balanced Literacy Approach, the researcher follows all the stages. However, some were rearranged and modified according to the students' proficiency and needs.

### Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter presents the type of research that was used in this study. It also describes the methodology for data analysis and the units of analysis. Finally, it characterizes the data collection instruments, the data collection procedures, and the ethical considerations.

#### Type of Study

This investigation used the Qualitative Research Approach, which is the type of research that focuses on understanding the reality of a social group in particular by living and feeling the experiences and the environment to which it belongs (Ely, 1991). The teacher-researcher of this project took advantage of this approach because it allowed him to “assume the nature of knowledge as subjective” (Carr & Kalmbach, 2010, p. 76). In other words, it allowed him to understand that knowledge and reality cannot be measured only quantitatively because they are affected by history and culture.

This project used the Action Research methodology, which is described as a collaborative and critical inquiry done by a researcher and the individuals of a specific population in order to address an issue of the community and its solutions (Ely, 1991). It means that those who belong to the community have an active role in the process of understanding their context, identifying their problem and giving a possible solution. Also, one of the main goals of action research is that the participants of the research (teacher, students, administrators, and parents) identify a problematic situation and try to find ways to change it and even to improve it through the implementation of a plan (Burns, 2010).

Action research has four steps which repeated during the study, it means that it was cyclical. The steps were: *planning*, *acting*, *observing*, and *reflecting* (Kemmis & McTaggart,

1988), they allowed the researcher to make sure if the plan was suitable or not. The present study was divided into cycles and therefore it followed the principles of action research.

### Units of Analysis

This project included two units of analysis: reading skills and writing skills. The first one includes two general aspects, phonics, that refers to consonant digraphs and consonants, and vocabulary, in which recognition is its core element. The second unit covered vocabulary and organization. The former focuses on recall and the latter on sentence structure. Table 1 describes the two units of analysis, their categories and subcategories, and the corresponding indicators.

Table 1Oh

#### *Description of the Units of Analysis*

<u>Units of Analysis</u>	<u>Categories</u>	<u>Subcategories</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
Reading skills	Phonics	Consonants	▪ I identify the pronunciation of the consonants <i>f, h, j, b,</i> and <i>v</i> .
		Consonant digraph	▪ I identify the pronunciation of the consonant digraph: <i>ph</i> .
	Vocabulary in reading	Word Recognition	▪ I understand the target vocabulary in English when I read it.
Writing Skills	Vocabulary in writing	Word Recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I am able to write words in English correctly.</li> <li>▪ I use the words in English to refer to the pictures in a text.</li> </ul>
	Sentence Organization	Sentence structure	▪ I use the structure subject, verb, complement when writing sentences about simple topics.

### Participants

The participants of this project were a group of Colombian second graders at Prado Veraniego School with an A0 level of proficiency in the English language. The group was composed of thirty students with ages from six to ten. The sampling was of eighteen participants

because that was the number of students that obtained permission from their parents to be part of the research.

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

The researcher used three instruments of data collection for this inquiry: field notes, surveys, and artifacts. The surveys were applied at the end of each cycle and the artifacts were collected every time that students produced something in English.

Concerning the first instrument, Van Mannen (1988) defines field notes as “gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field. They are composed well after the fact as inexact notes to oneself and represent simply one of many levels of textualization set off by experience” (p. 223). For this inquiry, field notes were written during every class to collect information about the students and about the dynamics of the class.

With respect to surveys, they are a set of fixed questions that can be administered by paper and pencil by an interviewer who follows a strict script (Harrell, 2009). They are also activities in which information about the common characteristics of a group of individuals are collected for a determined goal. In this research, surveys intended to collect information about the students’ perception on the activities and on their foreign language learning process.

Artifacts are described as “any kind of physical documentation that sheds additional light on your research question and topic” (Kalmbach & Carr, 2010, p. 78). In the present research, artifacts refer to all the physical products that students carried out in every activity, such as drawings and texts. These served to evaluate the advances of the students on the topic.

### **Data Analysis Methodology**

In order to ensure trustworthiness in the analysis of data, the teacher-researcher used triangulation of different data collection instruments (field notes, surveys, and artifacts) which

allowed him to obtain information from diverse points of view (Kalmbach & Carr, 2010). The researcher looked for repeated patterns in the three sources with the aim of establishing generalizations and valid conclusions.

### **Analytic Ethics**

Due to analytic ethics, the researcher handed a consent form (See appendix 4) to the parents of the participants. In this consent form the parents decided whether or not they accepted the involvement of their children in this study. All the information collected during the development of this research remained private and it was only used for academic purposes. Seventeen parents gave permission to their children to be part of the project and the information used for the analysis came only from them.

### **Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention**

This chapter provides a clear description of the pedagogical approach, the vision of language and learning; the stages of the intervention, the timeline and the significance of the results regarding this project.

#### **Pedagogical Approach**

As it has been mentioned previously in this document, the pedagogical approach that supported this research is the Balanced Literacy Approach (O'Day, 2009). This approach combines elements from the phonics and the whole language approach to balance the literacy learning process, and it is divided into steps whose main purpose is to help students throughout the process, as it was explained in the theoretical framework of the present paper. Besides, as the principal goal of the PEI of the school is to develop communication in the students, this approach was appropriate since it takes into account the value of communication while developing literacy skills.

On the other hand, the visions of the language within this project were two. In the first place, language was seen from a functional perspective. According to Vera, Chapetón, and Buitrago (2016, In press) in the functional perspective, language is perceived as an instrument that helps students to acquire some pragmatic goals. By developing pragmatic competence of the language, the students are able to communicate with others efficiently. Taking into account that this project intended to develop communication in the students, the previous vision of the language was necessary in here. In second place, in this research, language is considered as a means of self-expression for the students, as it allowed them to express their emotions, feelings, and interests.

With respect to the vision of learning, the experiential learning and the role of affect were the two main guidelines. The first is a naturalistic form of learning which requires two important factors: the use of language for communicative purposes and the exposure of input in the language that is being learned. Keyton (2011) explains communication as the process through which individuals transmit information and reach common understanding of each other. The second guideline implies that the learning activities are affected by the cognitive, psychological, and experiential characteristics of the students and that their relationship with the materials influence their perception of a class (Vera et al., 2016). This one was vital for this project because it takes into account the student's personal issues and experiences to select the materials and activities designed in here.

### **Cycles of Intervention**

The pedagogical intervention was divided into three cycles that used a book as the main tool for the activities. Each of them received the name of the corresponding book: *A House for a Mouse* (Fry, Uzzell & Jacobs, 2014), *I See Colors* (Mustard seed books, 2011) and *All about Apples* (Zogovic, 2011). The three cycles followed the principles of the Balanced Literacy Approach and covered all the topics of the school curriculum. Also, the students used a notebook and a portfolio to register and file the activities of every class.

Concerning the first cycle, the curriculum of the school proposed five topics: *greetings*, *imperatives*, *the family*, *the school*, and *the house*. The researcher implemented reading and writing activities that connected the topics with the book during six lessons. Besides, he designed an additional lesson to work particularly on the phonemes /dʒ/ and /h/. The students got used to filing their worksheets in the portfolio and to the stages of the Balance Literacy Approach. Table 2 shows the objectives, resources, and topics of the first cycle.

Table 2

*Lessons of the First Cycle*

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Resources</u>
1 Welcome to the club!	Introduction to English class	To help students get acquainted with the dynamics of the class.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
2 Hello, Friend!	Greetings	To introduce the basic forms of greetings and help students identify the rules of their use.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
3 Hands up!	Imperatives	To make students identify the communicative context in which –commands- are used and their goals.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
4 This is my family!	Members of the family	To encourage students to share their family cores and acquire basic vocabulary of the topic.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
5 Show me your house!	Parts of the house	To identify vocabulary regarding the topic and share information about the students' houses. To implement the first book.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser and flashcards. Book: <i>A house for a mouse.</i>
6 I love my school!	Parts of the school	To learn basic vocabulary regarding the topic and to express personal likes.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
7 I like that sound!	Phonemes /dʒ/ and /h/	To recognize the correct pronunciation of the two phonemes and their characteristics.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, flashcards, songs, and videos.

In the second cycle the topics were five: the *parts of the body*, *the animals*, *common expressions*, *the numbers*, and *the colors*. Moreover, the researcher designed a class to work specifically with the consonant digraph *ph* and the consonant *f*. Every class followed the stages of the Balanced Literacy Approach, as in the first cycle. Table 3 shows the objectives, resources, and topics of the second cycle.

Table 3

*Lessons of the Second Cycle*

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Resources</u>
1 Give me a hand!	Parts of the body	To learn the importance of hygiene and to get vocabulary about the topic.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
2 Domestic cat and wild tiger!	Animals	To learn the difference between farm animals and wild animals.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
3 May I go to the bathroom?	Common expressions	To help students identify basic expressions for requests.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
4 How old are you?	Numbers	To make students understand the importance of numbers and to explain the basic structure to ask about age.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
5 The rainbow!	Colors	To work with the second book and to help students recognize the different colors in English.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards. Book: <i>I See Colors</i> .
6 I like that sound too!	Consonant digraphs /ph/ and consonant <i>f</i> .	To recognize the sound of each phoneme and their differences.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, flashcards, songs, and videos.

For the third cycle, the students worked on the following topics: *the fruits, the days of the week, personal pronouns, verb be*. As in the first two cycles, the researcher implemented a class centered in the phonemes /b/ and /v/. Furthermore, all the lessons followed the stages of the approach and the corresponding book of the cycle. Table 4 shows the objectives, resources, and topics of the third cycle.

Table 4

*Lessons of the Third Cycle*

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Resources</u>
1 I respect you, you respect me!	Verb to be	To explain professions and occupations.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
2 Oranges and apples!	Fruits	To recognize the importance of a healthy diet and to learn vocabulary related to the topic.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards. Book: <i>All about Apples</i> .
3 He is my teacher!	Personal pronouns	To recognize the importance of respecting each other.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
4 From Monday to Sunday!	Days of the week	To identify the difference between school days and weekends.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, and flashcards.
5 I also like that sound!	Phonemes /b/ and /v/	To recognize the correct pronunciation of the two phonemes and their characteristics.	Portfolio, worksheet, colors, pencil, eraser, flashcards, songs, and videos.

**Timeline**

The total number of lessons for the pedagogical intervention was nineteen. Table 5 contains the schedule of its implementation. It shows the three cycles and the dates of each lesson.

Table 5

*Timeline*

Cycle	Lesson	Date
First Cycle	1. Welcome to the club!	February 16 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	2. Hello, Friend!	February 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 2017
	3. Hands up!	March 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 2017

	4. This is my family!	March 9 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	5. Show me your house!	March 16 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	6. I love my school!	March 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 2017
	7. I like that sound!	March 30 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
Second Cycle	1. Give me a hand!	April 6 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	2. Domestic cat and wild tiger!	April 19 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	3. May I go to the bathroom?	April 26 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	4. How old are you?	May 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 2017
	5. The rainbow!	May 17 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	6. I like that sound too!	May 24 <sup>th</sup> - 2017
Third Cycle	1. I respect you, you respect me!	August 9 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	2. Oranges and apples!	August 16 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	3. He is my teacher!	August 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 2017
	4. From Monday to Sunday!	August 30 <sup>th</sup> – 2017
	5. I also like that sound!	September 6 <sup>th</sup> – 2017

## Chapter 5: Data analysis

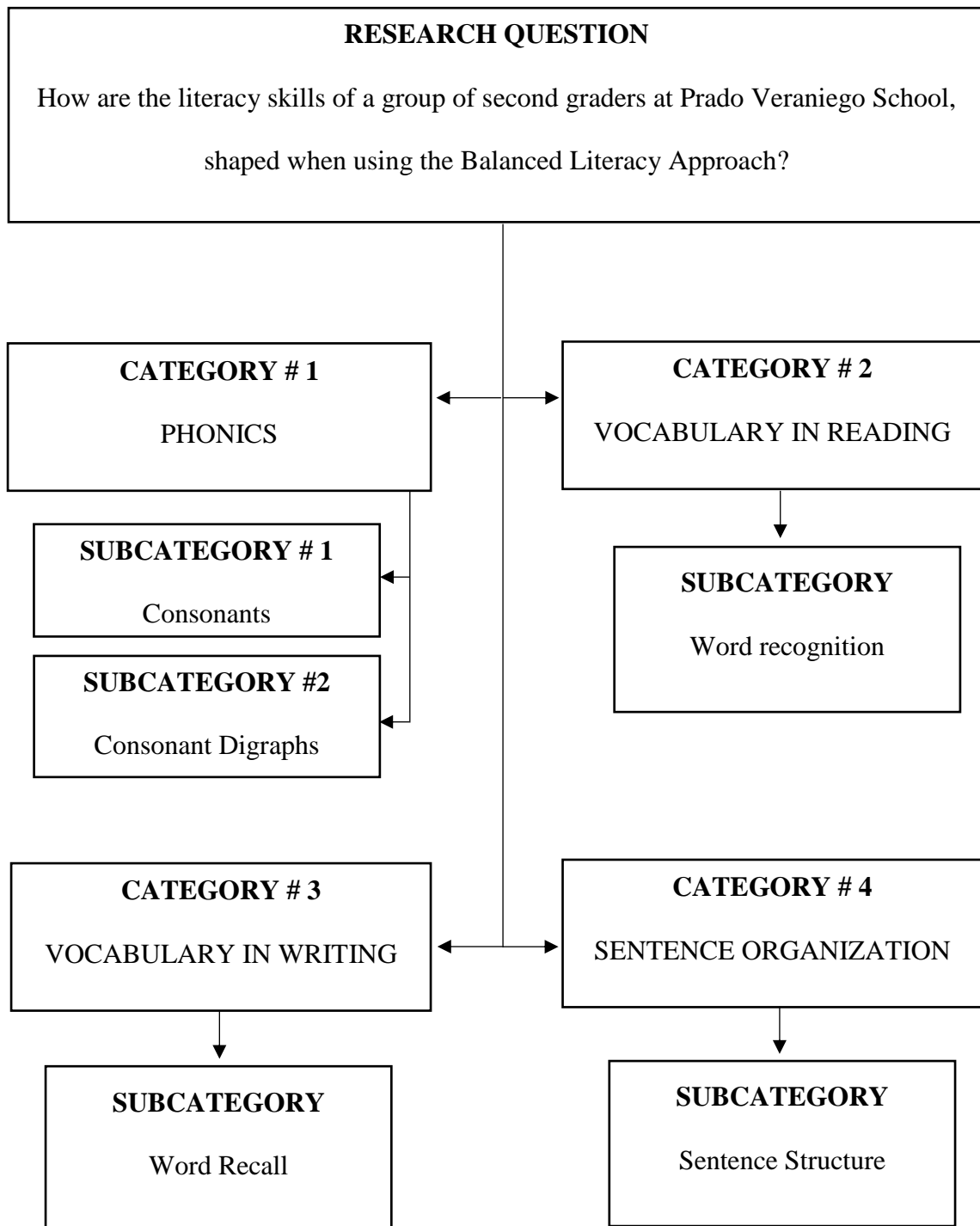
This chapter presents the steps followed by the researcher during the data collection process. It also displays the analysis of the data, as well as the findings of each subcategory and its corresponding indicators.

### Data collection

The data collection process for this research started in February, 2017 and finished in September, 2017. The researcher used three different data collection instruments: survey, field notes, and artifacts, in order to be able to develop the process of triangulation and give validity and reliability to the study. Each of these instruments offered a different perspective for the data analysis. The survey offered the students' perspective regarding the pedagogical intervention, the field notes focused on the researcher's point of view as an observer, and the artifacts offered a real evidence of the use of English in the classroom for its later analysis.

Regarding the data analysis, the teacher developed an analysis of the categories selected a priori: *phonics*, *vocabulary in reading*, *vocabulary in writing*, and *writing organization* which help to build the theoretical framework of the study. Therefore, he used the inductive method of analysis. He also used the triangulation method in order to have data from different sources. The analysis began with the field notes, in which the researcher assigned a different color for each category: yellow for *phonics*, blue for *vocabulary in reading*, red for *vocabulary in writing*, and green for *writing organization* (See appendix 5), and continued with the comparison between the field notes, the survey, and the artifacts in order to create patterns related to each one of the categories.

The following figure presents the research question, the categories, and the subcategories for the present research, which are also analyzed one by one below:



*Figure 1*

Here, the researcher presents the analysis of each category, using information from the three data analysis instruments and displays each one of the indicators in order to determine if the research objectives of this study were achieved or not.

**Category 1: Phonics**

The first category of the present study is *phonics* which focuses on the students' ability to recognize and identify the difference in the sound of some specific letters and letter combinations in English. The arbitrary nature of letter-sound correspondences usually represents a problem for young learners which might lead them to fail during this learning process (SNW Department of Education and Training 2009).

For this reason, the researcher designed a strategy in order to facilitate it. The strategy consisted of teaching letter and letter combinations separately, which generated two subcategories: *consonants* and *consonant digraphs*. During the pedagogical intervention, these subcategories were presented to the students throughout the use of nursery rhymes, songs, and videos.

***Subcategory 1: Consonants***

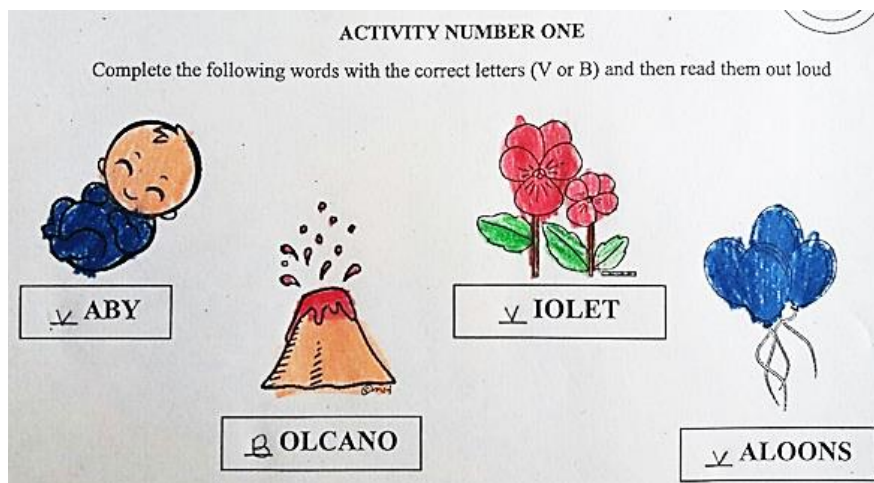
The indicator for this subcategory is: *I identify the pronunciation of the consonants f, h, j, b, and v*. The activities related to this indicator were mainly nursery rhymes and videos which the teacher presented alongside with the vocabulary through the use of flashcards. Also, the students had some worksheets in which they had to complete words with the corresponding letter and to circle some words that the teacher mentioned. The triangulation of data analysis showed that the students identified the sound of the consonants *h, j, and f*. However, some of them were not able to fully understand the difference in sounds between the consonants *b* and *v*. The following field notes' excerpts bear out the previous information.

<p># The teacher asked all the students to read the flashcards: jet, hamburger, jump, jellyfish, hamster, hen, jaguar, house, hand and jacket. Most of them did it accurately. Just a few students had problems with the correct pronunciation but when it happened, their classmates helped them to correct their mistakes. When completing the first activity of the worksheet, the students worked together and did not ask questions about the letter that they must use to complete the words. In the listening activity, students circled the correct words without asking questions to the teacher.</p>	<p># Some students were confused by the difference in pronunciation between the letter <i>b</i> and <i>v</i>. They asked several questions about the sounds. When working on the first activity of the worksheet, students did not ask many questions. When completing the second activity of the worksheet students asked again about the difference in sounds between <i>b</i> and <i>v</i> and some of them made some mistakes in the worksheet. They asked each other and the teacher about the images that they had to circle.</p>
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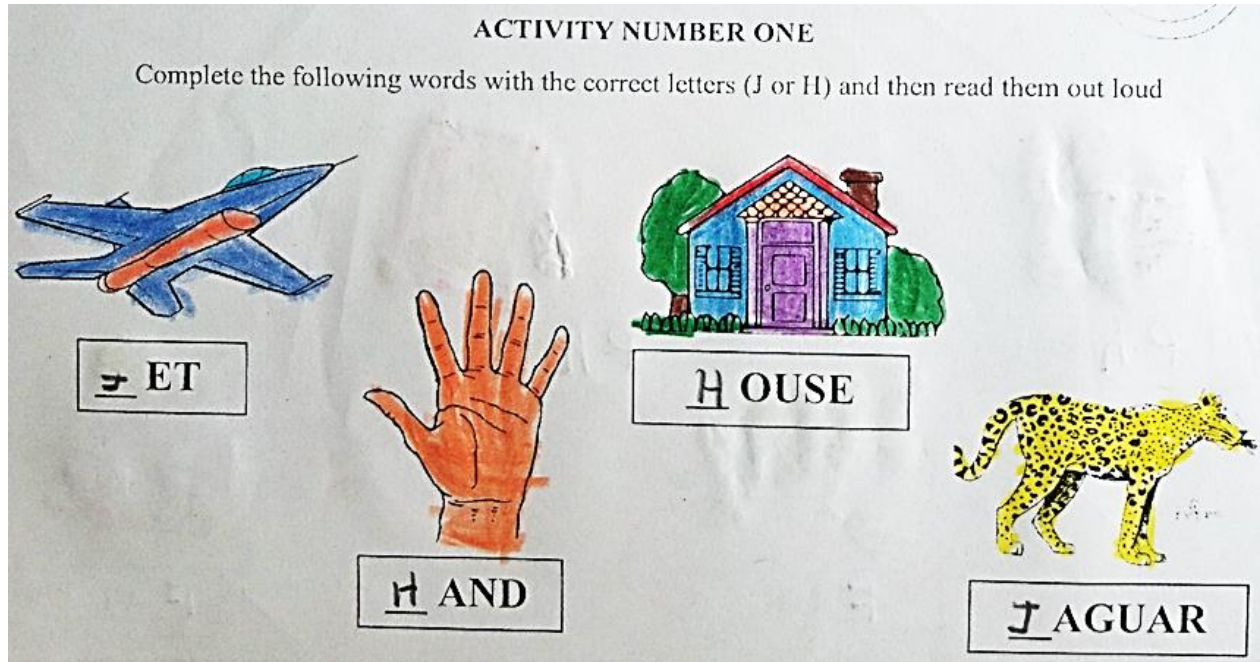
Field Notes No. 1. March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Field Notes No. 2. September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

On the other hand, the artifacts show students’ production regarding the worksheets focused on the topic: phonics. Here, it is possible to notice that some of them had problems to identify the difference between *b* and *v*, which did not happen in the worksheet for the letters *h* and *j*.

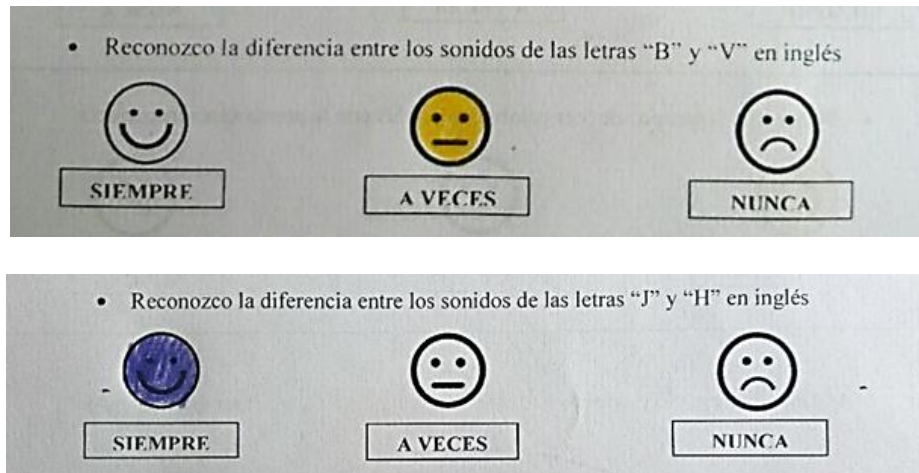


Artifact No. 1 Tony’s production, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017



Artifact No. 2 Tony’s production, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Also, the survey applied in order to know students’ perception about phonics learning showed the same pattern. Although they were capable of identifying the difference between *j* and *h*, it did not always happen with the consonants *b* and *v*.



Survey No. 1 Tony’s production. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

This difference between the proper understanding of the sound of the consonants *j* and *h* and the incorrect one between *b* and *v* is the result of the lack of a corresponding similar sound

between Spanish and English. In other words, students were able to identify the sound of the letter *h* in English because of its similarity with the letter “j” in Spanish, and the letter *j* in English with the letter “y” in Spanish. However, since the letters *b* and *v* are pronounced in the exact same way in the Spanish language, this represented a challenge for the students since they are native speakers of Spanish who are learning English (Canale, 2012).

***Subcategory 2: Consonants digraphs***

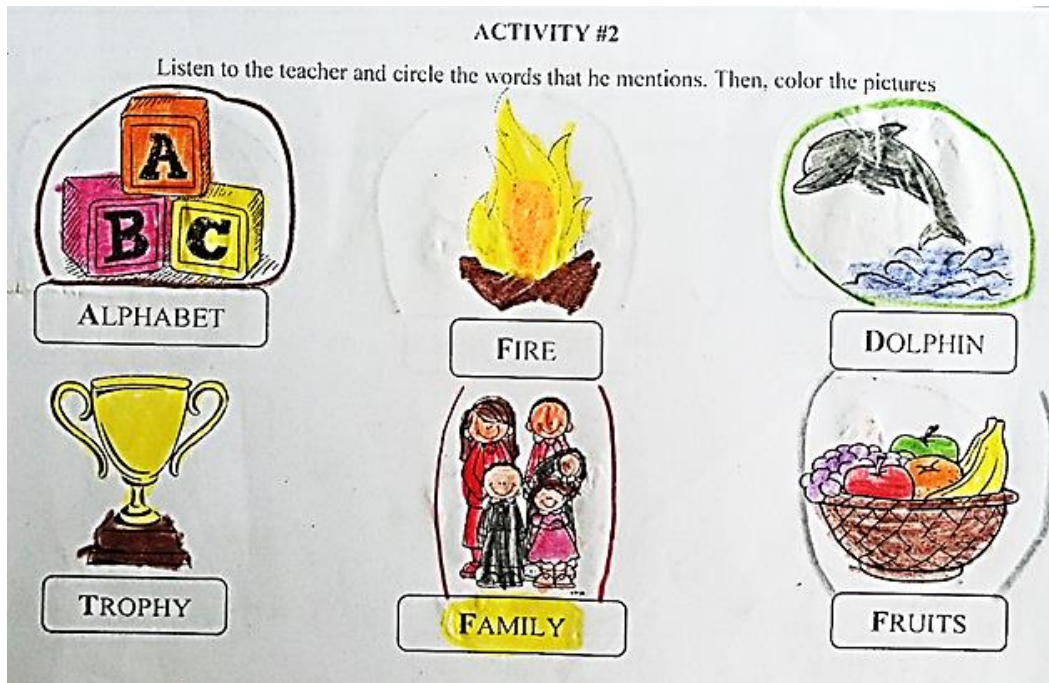
The indicator for this subcategory is: *I identify the pronunciation of the consonant digraph: ph*. The activities used for the development of this subcategory were the same ones used in the first one. However, the teaching of the consonant digraph was parallel to the teaching of the consonant *f*. The researcher decided to work with them together taking advantage of the similarity between the sounds, in order to explain the concept of correct spelling in English. Here, it is necessary to highlight the importance of phonics instruction because it allowed the students to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to recognize words and their correct spelling when writing (SNW Department of Education and Training, 2009).

The data analysis showed that the students could identify the difference between the consonant digraph *ph* and the consonant *f* when writing words. And they also understood that spelling is an important aspect in English as it is in Spanish. The following excerpt from field notes is an evidence of this.

#	During the development of the first activity in the worksheet, the students asked why the combination of <i>p</i> and <i>h</i> sounded like an <i>f</i> in English. Then the teacher explained that sometimes one sound can be created with different letters and he gave the example of the letters <i>b</i> and <i>v</i> in Spanish. The students understood, and they completed the worksheet without making mistakes.
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Field Notes No. 3. May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

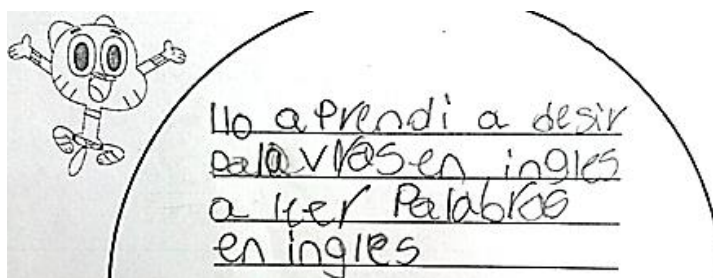
The following excerpts from artifacts show that the students completed the tasks correctly and they did not manifest any kind of inconvenience while developing them.



Artifact No. 3. Peter's production. May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The previous listening activity showed that the students were able to recognize that there is no difference in sound between the consonant digraph *ph* and the consonant *f*, but at the same time they were able to understand that in this case, one sound can be represented in two different ways. Thus, Peter was able to identify the words pronounced by his teacher without getting confused by the spelling.

Furthermore, the survey showed a positive perception of the students about the learning of the pronunciation of this consonant digraph, reinforcing the idea that they fully understood the topic.



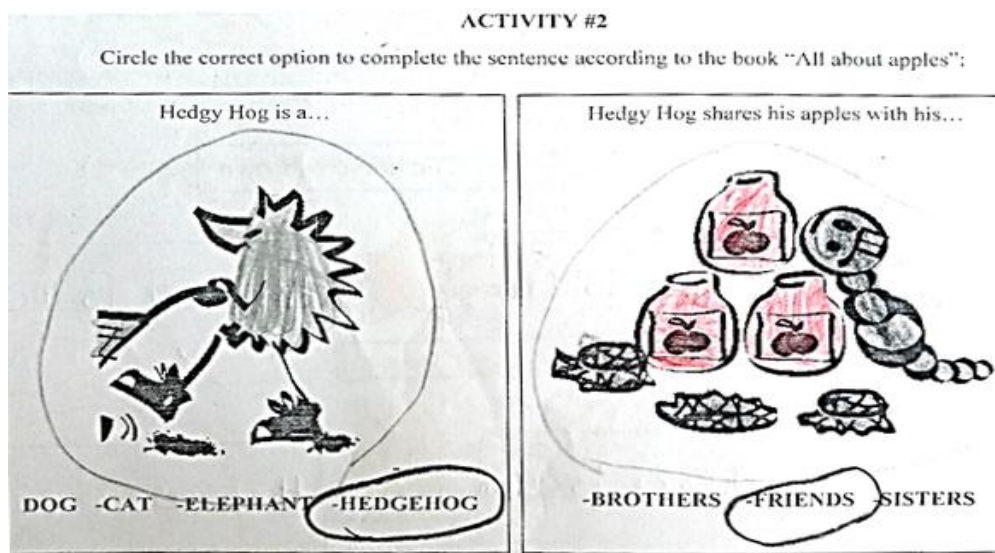
Survey No. 1. Kate's survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### Category 2: Vocabulary in reading

The second category in this research is *vocabulary in reading*. The main focus in this category was the importance of vocabulary in reading. Since the students were still working on their first language, it was imperative that for the acquisition of the foreign language they had contact with lots of vocabulary. Since the students of this research were native speakers of Spanish, it was necessary to teach them lots of vocabulary in order to give them the chance to acquire the necessary knowledge for the correct understanding of the texts they read (Hanson & F.M. Padua 2011). This category focuses mainly on word recognition, therefore, that is its subcategory.

#### *Subcategory: Word recognition*

The indicator for this category is: *I understand the target vocabulary in English when I read it*. The activities for this subcategory were applied throughout the entire pedagogical intervention, three books were used for this, as well as several worksheets. In order to assess the students in this category, they had to develop a big number of activities in which the teacher presented some vocabulary and they had to draw it or explain it to their classmates.



Artifact No. 4 Tina's production. August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

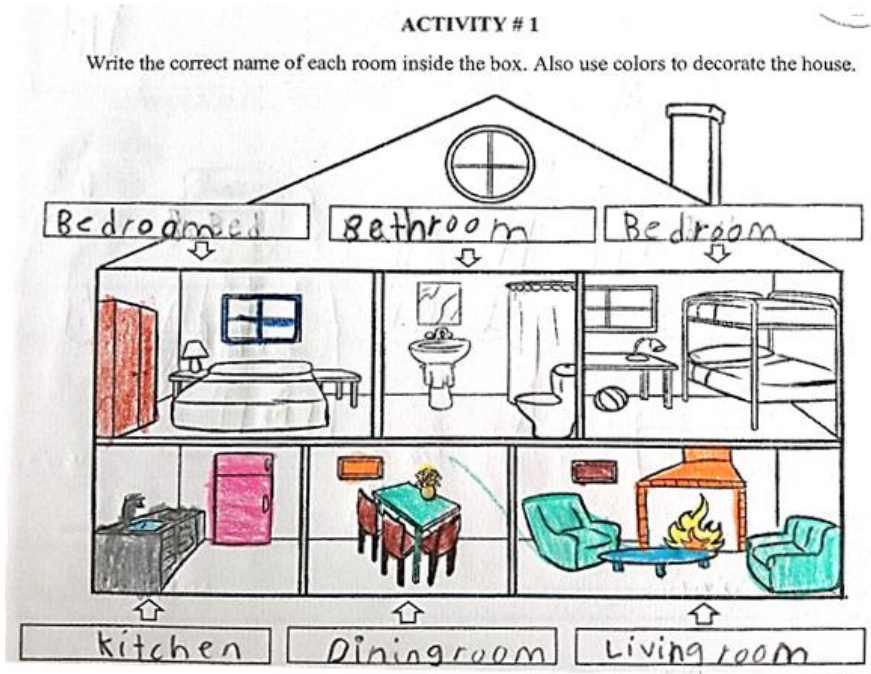
When teaching vocabulary about colors, the teacher implemented the book *All about apples* by Vanja (2011). One of the activities required the students to recognize some of the vocabulary presented in the book by circling it in a worksheet. The following excerpt illustrates the activity.

#	<p>After presenting the vocabulary related to fruits, the teacher asked students to go to the board individually to answer questions about their colors. The children were able to use the correct color in each of the situations. When he asked, “What color is the apple?” the student answered “red”.</p> <p>T: “What color are the grapes”</p> <p>S1: Purple.</p> <p>T: “What color is the banana?”</p> <p>S2: “Yellow”</p> <p>T: “What color is the pear?”</p> <p>S3: “Green”</p>
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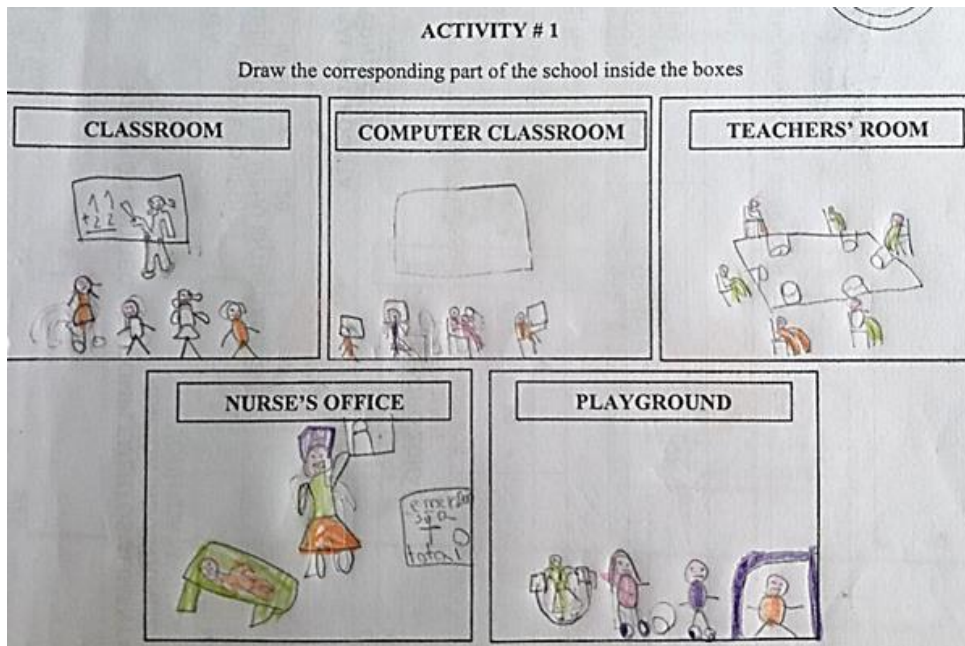
Field notes No. 4. August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017

After the reading of the book, the students recognized vocabulary related to the story and they developed the ability to remember previous vocabulary and to apply it to the new topics. During the development of an activity related to fruits, the teacher asked students about their corresponding colors and they managed to remember most of them.

The use of vocabulary helped students understand the activities easily, and after some time, they were able to recognize the instructions of the worksheets when they read them by themselves, which showed that the exposure to vocabulary and the memorization of some key words represented a benefit for their correct comprehension of written instructions and words (Nagy 1998). The following artifacts exemplifies what was previously mentioned.

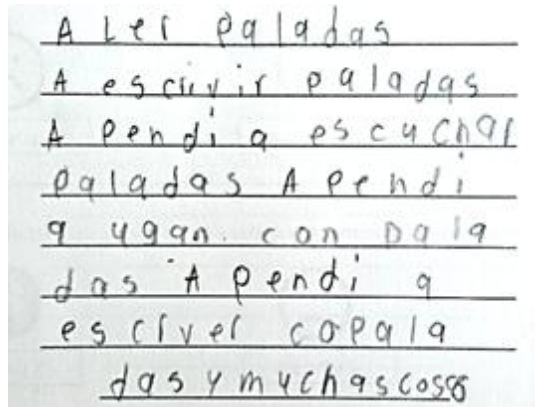


Artifact No. 5. Fiona's production. March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



Artifact No. 6. Fred's production. March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

Regarding the students' perception on their abilities to read vocabulary in English, when analyzing the surveys, it was possible to see that they felt comfortable and had the ability to understand it.



Survey No 1. Billy's survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The previous excerpt shows the answer of a student to the question “What do you think you learnt during the English classes? His response shows that he is capable of reading words in English. The evidences above show that students acquired the ability to read and identify vocabulary in English.

### **Category 3: Vocabulary in writing**

The third category for this research is *vocabulary*. As its name indicates, this category focuses mainly on the importance of written vocabulary in the English learning process. Taking into account that the students of this research had not had the opportunity to interact with English as a foreign language, the researcher simplified the writing process for the students by reducing it to the creation of small sentences and the use of target vocabulary. For that reason, the subcategory in this part is word recall.

#### ***Subcategory: Word recall***

The indicators for this subcategory are two: *I am able to write words in English correctly* and *I use the words in English to refer to the pictures in a text*. As in the reading category, the activities related to this one were developed and applied throughout the entire pedagogical intervention. Their focus was written production at two levels: correct spelling and written

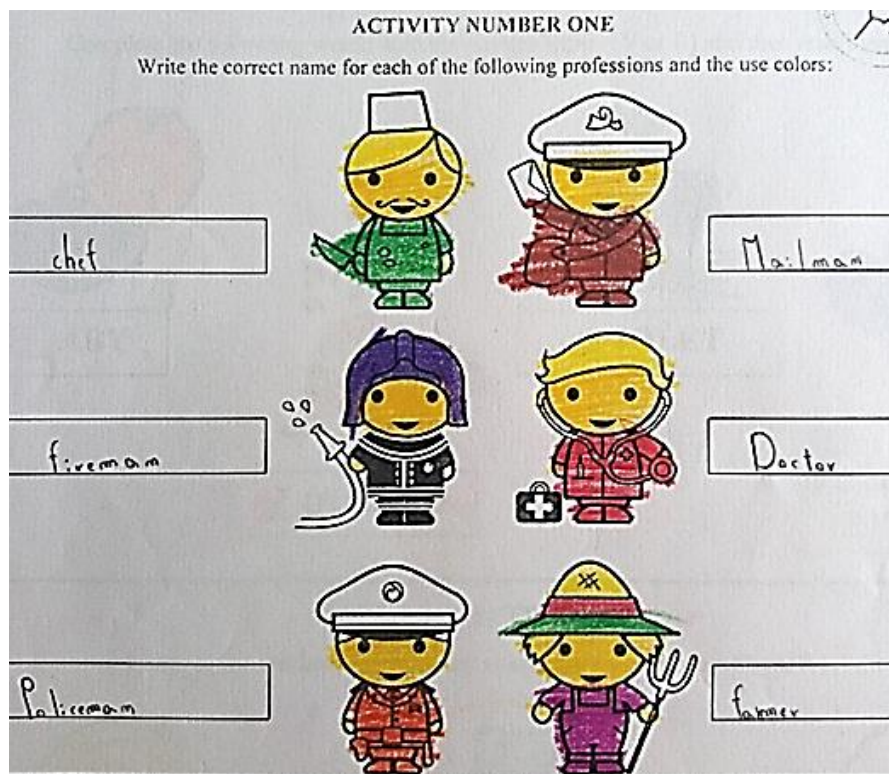
production. They also considered the necessity of the appropriate writing development, which serves as the basis for the creation of the ability to organize ideas on a paper (Monaghan 2007).

The analysis of the data regarding this category, showed that students developed the ability to recognize the corresponding words of the pictures that were presented to them. However, they had some small issues regarding spelling, which was a problem evidenced in their mother tongue as well. The following field notes excerpt exemplifies the mistakes.

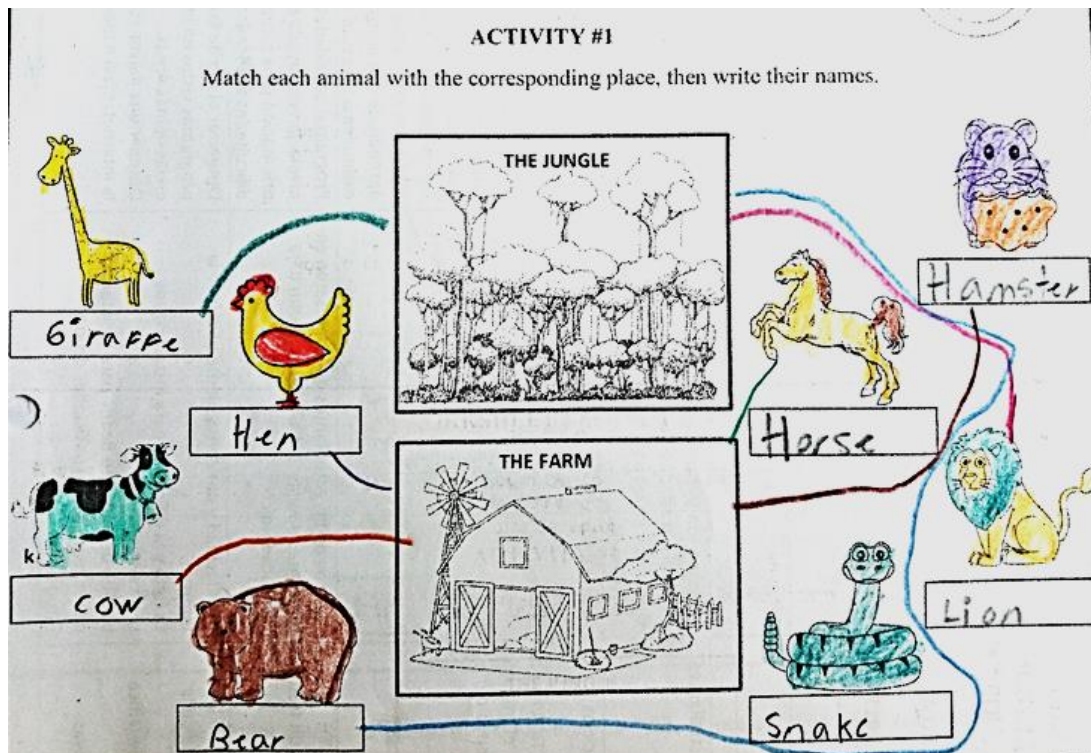
#	The teacher walked around the classroom to check the students' advance on the worksheet and he identified some spelling mistakes in the students' production. Some students raised their hands to ask questions to the teacher about the spelling rules.
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Field notes No. 4. August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017

The excerpts below show some examples of activities in which the students had to write words using images as examples. The students did not show any problems while working on this type of activities.

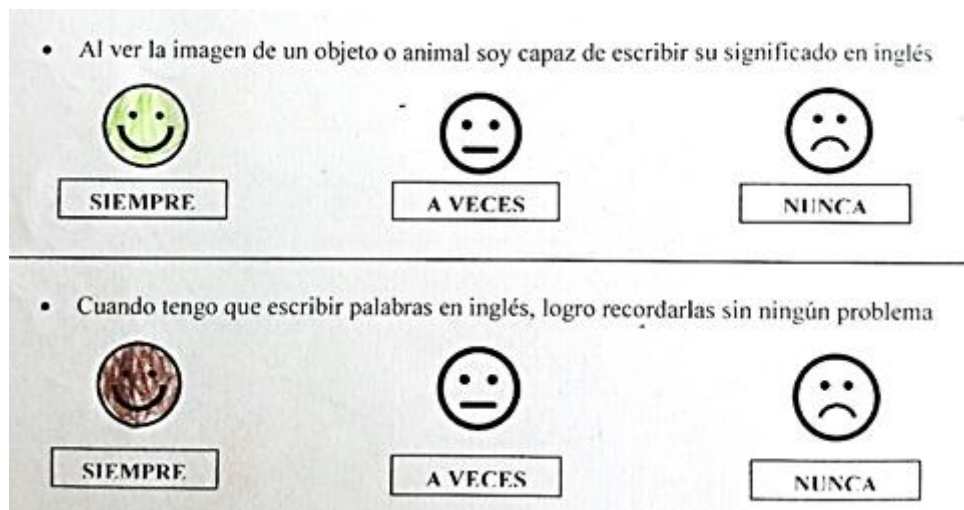


Artifact No. 7. Tom's production. August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

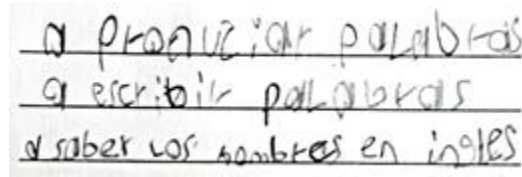


Artifact No. 8. Crystal’s production April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

On the other hand, the students’ perception about their ability to recall words when seeing an image seemed to be positive. They believed they were able to write words in English properly. As it is shown in the next excerpt of surveys.



Survey No. 1. David’s Survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



Survey No. 1. David's Survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

In the examples above, it is possible to notice that the student found these writing exercises easy to complete and understand. These pieces of artifacts, surveys, and field notes, show that students acquired the ability to recall some target vocabulary previously taught in class when they faced an external stimulus, which is one of the main characteristics of the writing ability (Read 2000).

#### **Category 4: Sentence organization**

The last category of analysis for this research is about *Sentence organization*. Whitaker (2009) gives a clear description of the different instances of academic writing, but also focuses on the order in which texts must be written, their main characteristics, and the planning and drafting of a text. However, due to the wideness of this topic, the ages, and academic level of the students, the researcher decided to narrow the topic. Therefore, he focused on a subcategory which is more appropriate for this population: *sentence structure*.





#### ***Subcategory: Sentence structure***

This topic was covered throughout the entire pedagogical intervention and was also developed with the writing activities that focused on target vocabulary. The sentence structure was presented by focusing on the pragmatic use and not on grammar. For this reason, the students learnt how to describe some images in a text and also to tell their ages and names. Although the students learnt how to manage the sentence structure subject, verb and complement, they continued making some mistakes regarding spelling. The results of the analysis in this category

showed that the students developed the ability to write sentences in a proper way, this can be corroborated in the following artifact excerpts:

**ACTIVITY #1**



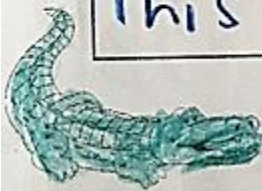
Answer to the following questions using the correct number

<b>HOW OLD IS PATTY?</b>  <b>FOURTEEN</b>	<b>HOW OLD IS JHON?</b>  <b>FOURTY-FIVE</b>
Patty is 14 years old	Jhon is 45 years old
<b>HOW OLD IS FRED?</b>  <b>TWENTY-FOUR</b>	<b>HOW OLD IS LUCY?</b>  <b>THIRTY-SIX</b>
Fred is 24 years old	Lucy is 36 years old






Artifact No. 9. Joshua's production. May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

**ACTIVITY #2**

Answer: what are these animals? Use the phrase "This is a..."

	→	This is a Tiger
←		This is a sheep
	→	This is a crocodray

Artifact No. 8. Dan's production April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

IS	This-is-a-EYE	 EYE
IS NOT	This-is-not-a-HAND	 HAND
IS	This-is-a NOSE	 NOSE
IS NOT	This-is-not-a FOOT	 FOOT
IS	This-is-a-EAR	 EAR

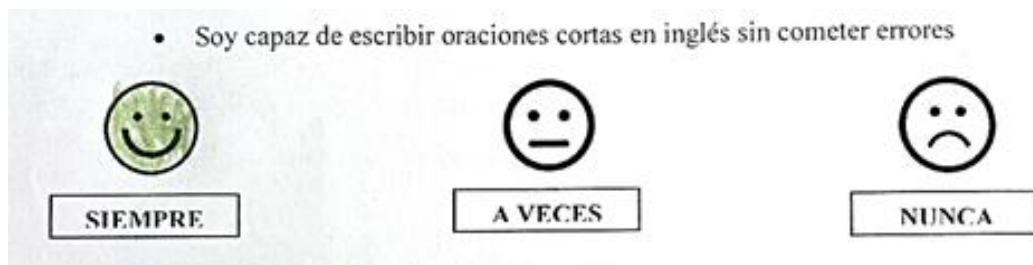
Artifact No. 10. Donovan’s production. April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The field notes designed by the teacher showed that during the sentence writing activities the students followed the given examples and had the ability to answer to simple questions such as “How old are you?”

#	<p>After the presentation of the vocabulary regarding the numbers. The teacher wrote the following sentences on the board “He is... years old” next to the image of a boy. Then, he took the flashcard which had the number fifteen written on it and put it in the sentence.</p> <p>Afterwards, he asked the question “How old is he” and the students answered, “He is fifteen”. Then he asked the same question to the students and they answered in the correct way, following the formula “I am.... Years old”</p>
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Field notes No. 5. May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

On the other hand, the students’ perception on their ability to write short sentences was positive. As it is evident in the following survey excerpts:



Survey No. 1. Agatha’s Survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

a Recordar palabras  
a pronunciar frases  
a saber que es inglés  
y sabe que el inglés es supe

Survey No. 1. Tim's Survey. September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

To conclude the analysis of this category, it is necessary to say that the students showed a special interest in sentence writing because it offered them the opportunity to communicate in English using more than just one word. They developed the capacity to recognize the order of the sentences and also to write them in a clear way, making them understandable for the possible reader which is one of the most important characteristics when working with writing (Whitaker 2009).

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The following chapter offers an answer to the research question of the present project: How are the literacy skills of a group of second graders at Prado Veraniego School, shaped when using the Balanced Literacy Approach? Also, it presents the limitations, the pedagogical implications in relation to the use of this approach and some recommendations for further research in this field.

To be able to answer the research question, it was necessary for the researcher to analyze the three specific objectives. In relation to the first one, it was possible to see that students developed the ability to recognize certain target vocabulary when reading in English. The type of activities carried out in class, which followed the principles of the Balanced Literacy Approach, allowed the students to internalize certain commands that helped them to understand written instructions used throughout the pedagogical intervention.

Furthermore, since this approach combines different aspects from the Whole Language Approach and Phonics, it offered the opportunity to use short stories that the teacher read to students in the classroom. Therefore, he served as a guide for them to develop their own reading skills. During these sessions, the kids were able to interact not only with isolated words, but with entire stories written in English. In the end, the kids developed the ability to read and understand short sentences in this foreign language.

Regarding the second specific objective, the researcher noticed a significant advance in the students' writing abilities. By the end of the pedagogical intervention, the students had the capacity to write words and short phrases in English without using a dictionary. As in the first objective, the writing activities based on the Balanced Literacy Approach allowed the teacher to serve as a guide for students to reinforce their writing skills in a language that they did not know.

The use of the *interactive writing* as one of the main tools in this approach, helped the students to work on the spelling component which was one of the main challenges at the beginning of the intervention. However, in the end, students did not evidence problems while facing English writing activities in the classroom, due to the fact that the different stages of the Balanced Literacy Approach gave them the opportunity to work with the written language using different topics.

With respect to the last specific objective, it is possible to affirm that students expanded their knowledge about phonics in English. Since this was the students' first encounter with English as a foreign language, the pronunciation of some sounds was completely new for them. This component of the Balanced Literacy Approach represented a challenge for the students in some cases inasmuch as they had never had the chance to work with English phonemes. However, by using this approach, the researcher had the opportunity to introduce a number of phonemes for students to work with.

Although students had certain issues with the pronunciation of some of the phonemes, in general terms they understood the difference in sounds between some consonants and consonant digraphs and they had a first close up with this wide topic. Additionally, the type of activities presented in the classroom, allowed students to get involved with some new information about the English language.

To sum up, the analysis of the specific objectives gave an answer to the research question of the present project, by showing that the literacy skills of the group of second graders at Prado Veraniego School improved with the use of the Balanced Literacy Approach activities, in terms of reading, writing, and phonemic awareness.

Although the Balanced Literacy Approach has not been commonly used in Colombia for English teaching as a foreign language, its components and steps make it easy for future

researchers to structure the class work and focus on the students' needs in terms of their literacy skills. Also, its lack of use also adds the value of novelty for future implementation in teaching. The number of activities related to this approach is wide and they can be easily adapted depending on the needs of the population.

### **Limitations**

With the regard to the limitations of this research, it is possible to mention that the lack of use of this approach in teaching English as a foreign language represented a problem for the researcher, since it restricted the source of information and bibliography. It also forced the researcher to apply significant changes in order to adapt this approach to the necessities of the population in which the research took place, due to the fact that it was the first time that the students worked with the English language.

Another limitation for this project was the elevated number of students. Although one of the goals of the researcher was to follow each of the students' processes individually and assess them according to their needs, the number of individuals in the classroom was so high that it made it impossible for him to focus on their individual needs. However, since the Balanced Literacy Approach allowed to do pair and group work, the researcher could identify some basic needs of the groups. However, it would have been more valuable if the researcher had had the chance to follow the process of each student individually.

### **Pedagogical implications**

In terms of resources, materials, and lesson planning, the Balanced literacy approach offers a wide number of activities to develop in the classroom. However, taking into account the need of the population in which this project focused, it was necessary to design several worksheets related to each of the topics proposed in the school's curriculum. Therefore, future researchers must be willing to design material depending on the environment and needs of the

students. In terms of resources, the school allowed the researcher to use its technological devices which facilitated the presentation of activities, especially the ones related to phonics due to the fact that they needed to be presented through videos and nursery rhymes. For this reason, future researchers may face some problems if they do not have technological resources.

Finally, in terms of lesson planning, the Balanced Literacy Approach offers a set of steps which have been mentioned several times before. These steps facilitate the creation of lesson plans regardless the kind of topic that has to be presented to the students. In other words, the design of lesson plans did not represent a challenge for the researcher and it might be the same for future researchers.

### **Further research**

Since the Balanced Literacy Approach is such a wide approach, it could possibly help future researchers to work with the classroom environment and social interaction among the students. These two topics were not covered in the present study due to the lack of time and resources in the school. However, due to the fact that this approach allows the researcher to interact with books, it could be taken as an advantage in order to introduce some stories that focus on topics such as friendship, the value of love and responsibility, among others. These are some components that must be covered in the majority of classrooms, especially with young learners who are not just developing their writing and reading abilities, but also their abilities to interact with other human beings.

A possible recommendation for future teachers would be to implement more components related to the development of students' phonemic awareness. Although this research attempted to cover that component completely, in the end it was obvious that the students needed more time to process the information and more input in regard to phonics. Therefore, future researchers should

pay close attention to this issue in order to avoid having problems and to entirely fulfill the students' needs.

As a last recommendation, it is important to get the parents to be more involved in the academic process of the students. For the researcher, it was quite difficult to interact with the parents and to let them know which topics needed to be reinforced with each student. Due to the fact that this English learning process of reading and writing can represent a challenge for the students, it is absolutely necessary that parents help and support their children throughout this process in order to guarantee its success.

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### Appendix 1: Sample of Field Notes

#	<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Field notes # 2. Observer: Fernando Level: first grade. <b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 1:30 to 2:30.  <b>COMMENTS</b></p>
	<p>The class starts at 1:30 The class starts with the teacher-researcher greeting the students. The teacher-researcher explains to the students that they will receive some photocopies in English and that they will have to solve the questions that they find there, he also explains them each part of the document that they have to solve. The teacher-researcher hands the photocopies to each student. Then, he explains that the document is a survey. The teacher ask the students to write their names on the survey and to start answering the questions. The students raise their hands whenever they have a doubt. Many students rise their hands and call the teacher to ask him to explain them the questions of the survey (the survey is written in English). Many students do not advance in the development of the survey until the teacher is next to them to help. The students raise their hand to ask for the meaning of most of the words in the survey. Students take a long time before handing the survey to the teacher. When the class is almost over. One of the students raise her hand and say: S1 “Yo no entiendo nada de lo que dice” Several other students agree and raise their hands to ask more questions. S2 asks: “Qué significa fish” The teacher answers that he cannot help them and he tells them to answer only the things that they know. The students take more than fifty minutes to complete the survey.</p>	<p>The students answer in Spanish and they seem excited about the class, because they smile and cheer the class.</p> <p>The students seem to be confused about what they have to do.</p> <p>Students seem to be very confused and apparently, they do not understand the questions because they are written in English. Some students do not know how to read or write.</p> <p>Apparently the students do not know most of the vocabulary of the survey and they let the teacher know it.</p>

**Appendix 2: Survey**

The following survey was presented at the beginning of the pedagogical introduction in order to collect basic information about the students and write the characterization of the group.

Colombian Passport



Name: LUZ ANGELE

Age: 8

Country: CAR TOUNG TECHNOLA

Colombian Passport



Name: Juan Pablo Gutierrez

Age: 7

Country: CAR TUN-MAGICA-TECHNOLA

## Appendix 3: Diagnostic test



Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.  
Language diagnosis.  
Estudiante: Luis Fernando Esguerra Huertas.  
Grado: primero.  
Colegio: Prado Veraniego I.E.D



Hola, este examen fue diseñado para medir tu nivel de inglés y el de tus compañeros. Debes seguir las instrucciones de cada pregunta y si tienes alguna duda, puedes levantar tu mano y llamar a tu profesor para que te ayude. Esto no es una evaluación y por lo tanto no se calificará. Responde sólo lo que sepas y ¡Diviértete!

## PRIMERA PARTE:

Completa la siguiente información:

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
- I like \_\_\_\_\_.



## SEGUNDA PARTE:



Une con líneas de colores los saludos y despedidas en inglés con sus correspondientes traducciones al español.

Ejemplo:

Hello \_\_\_\_\_ Hola.

\*Ahora es tu turno:

- Good bye
- Good Morning
- Good afternoon
- Good night

Adiós  
Buenas noches  
Buenos días  
Buenas tardes

**TERCERA PARTE**

Escribe la traducción al español de las siguientes palabras en inglés. **Ejemplo:** Mother = Mamá.

\*Ahora es tu turno:

Father= \_\_\_\_\_ Brother= \_\_\_\_\_ Sister= \_\_\_\_\_



**CUARTA PARTE**

Colorea las siguientes figuras con el color que se indica debajo de cada una.



YELLOW

GREEN

ORANGE

PINK

BLUE

PURPLE

RED



**QUINTA PARTE**

Escucha atentamente las oraciones que dirá tu profesor. Enumera las partes del cuerpo en el mismo orden en que tu profesor las pronuncie.



\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**GN** 

**SEXTA PARTE**

Escribe el nombre en inglés de cada uno de los siguientes números. Ejemplo:

**1 = one**

- Ahora es tu turno:

2 = \_\_\_\_\_ 5 = \_\_\_\_\_


3 = \_\_\_\_\_ 6 = \_\_\_\_\_ 7 = \_\_\_\_\_



9 = \_\_\_\_\_ 8 = \_\_\_\_\_


10 \_\_\_\_\_




**SÉPTIMA PARTE**

Une con una línea cada animal con su correspondiente nombre en inglés.




 **FISH**  **DOG**

 **CAT**  **DUCK**

 **MOUSE**  **CHICKEN**  **COW**

GRACIAS POR TU AYUDA ☺

**Appendix 4: Consent Form**

	<b>FORMATO</b>	
	<b>CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN INVESTIGACIONES ADULTO RESPONSABLE DE NIÑOS Y ADOLESCENTES</b>	
Código: FOR025INV	Versión: 01	
Fecha de Aprobación: 02-06-2016	Página 60 de 83	

Vicerrectoría de Gestión Universitaria  
Subdirección de Gestión de Proyectos – Centro de Investigaciones CIUP  
Comité de Ética en la Investigación

En el marco de la Constitución Política Nacional de Colombia, la Ley 1098 de 2006 – Código de la Infancia y la Adolescencia, la Resolución 0546 de 2015 de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional y demás normatividad aplicable vigente, considerando las características de la investigación, se requiere que usted lea detenidamente y si está de acuerdo con su contenido, exprese su consentimiento firmando el siguiente documento:

**PARTE UNO: INFORMACIÓN GENERAL DEL PROYECTO**

<b>Facultad, Departamento o Unidad Académica</b>	Facultad de Humanidades: Departamento de Lenguas.		
<b>Título del proyecto de investigación</b>	Balanced Literacy Approach in second graders' English literacy		
<b>Descripción breve y clara de la investigación</b>	La presente investigación busca reconocer la influencia del uso del enfoque de alfabetización balanceada sobre las habilidades de lectoescritura en estudiantes de grado primero del colegio Prado Veraniego. Para lo cual se realizarán actividades de aula relacionadas con este enfoque con el fin de recolectar datos concernientes a las mismas y poder llegar a una conclusión sobre el uso de este enfoque.		
<b>Descripción de los posibles riesgos de participar en la investigación</b>	Los riesgos de esta investigación son los mismos de la realización de cualquier otra clase. Los estudiantes no se verán expuestos a ningún peligro inminente.		
<b>Descripción de los posibles beneficios de participar en la investigación.</b>	Dentro de los beneficios, es posible que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades para mejorar su proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, lo cual les aportará de manera positiva en su vida escolar.		
<b>Datos generales del investigador principal</b>	Nombre(s) y Apellido(s):		
	Nº de Identificación: 1014222896	Teléfono:	3137333535
	Correo electrónico: fernandoah24@hotmail.com		
	Dirección: Calle 132A 89-50 BLOQUE 10 – APTO 414		

**PARTE DOS: CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO**

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ mayor de edad, identificado con Cédula de Ciudadanía N° \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, con domicilio en la ciudad de \_\_\_\_\_ Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono y N° de celular: \_\_\_\_\_ Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_

Como adulto responsable del niño(s) y/o adolescente (s) con:

Nombre(s) y Apellidos: \_\_\_\_\_

Tipo de Identificación \_\_\_\_\_

N° \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Autorizo expresamente su participación en este proyecto y

**Declaro que:**

1. He sido invitado(a) a participar en el estudio o investigación de manera voluntaria.
2. He leído y entendido este formato de consentimiento informado o el mismo se me ha leído y explicado.
3. Todas mis preguntas han sido contestadas claramente y he tenido el tiempo suficiente para pensar acerca de mi decisión de participar.
4. He sido informado y conozco de forma detallada los posibles riesgos y beneficios derivados de mi participación en el proyecto.
5. No tengo ninguna duda sobre mi participación, por lo que estoy de acuerdo en hacer parte de esta investigación.
6. Puedo dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin que esto tenga consecuencias.
7. Conozco el mecanismo mediante el cual los investigadores garantizan la custodia y confidencialidad de mis datos, los cuales no serán publicados ni revelados a menos que autorice por escrito lo contrario.
8. Autorizo expresamente a los investigadores para que utilicen la información y las grabaciones de audio, video o imágenes que se generen en el marco del proyecto.
9. Sobre esta investigación me asisten los derechos de acceso, rectificación y oposición que podré ejercer mediante solicitud ante el investigador responsable, en la dirección de contacto que figura en este documento.

Como adulto responsable del menor o adolescente autorizo expresamente a la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional utilizar sus datos y las grabaciones de audio, video o imágenes que se generen, que reconozco haber conocido previamente a su publicación en: \_\_\_\_\_

En constancia, el presente documento ha sido leído y entendido por mí, en su integridad de manera libre y espontánea. Firma el adulto responsable del niño o adolescente,

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Nombre del adulto responsable del niño o adolescente: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N° Identificación: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Firma del Testigo:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Nombre del testigo: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N° de identificación: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaración del Investigador:** Yo certifico que le he explicado al adulto responsable del niño o adolescente la naturaleza y el objeto de la presente investigación y los posibles riesgos y beneficios que puedan surgir de la misma. Adicionalmente, le he absuelto ampliamente las dudas que ha planteado y le he explicado con precisión el contenido del presente formato de consentimiento informado. Dejo constancia que en todo momento el respeto de los derechos el menor o el adolescente será prioridad y se acogerá con celo lo establecido en el Código de la Infancia y la Adolescencia, especialmente en relación con las responsabilidades de los medios de comunicación, indicadas en el Artículo 47.

En constancia firma el investigador responsable del proyecto,

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Nombre del Investigador responsable: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N° Identificación: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 5: Field Notes

The following field notes present the excerpts that were used in the data analysis in chapter five, they also display more information about the pedagogical intervention.

	<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Field notes: March 30<sup>th</sup> –2017 Observer: Fernando Esguerra. Level: Second grade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
	<p>The class starts at 2: 35 p.m. with the presentation of a video with vocabulary related to the phonemes <i>h</i> and <i>j</i>. After the presentation of the video, the teacher shows some flashcards with some of the words that were presented in the video and he reads them out loud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students in couples to play a game. In the game, the first student of each couple named five flashcards and the second one pasted them on the board. Then, The teacher ask all the students to read the flashcards: jet, hamburger, jump, jellyfish, hamster, hen, jaguar, house, hand and jacket. And most of them do it accurately. Just a few students have problems with the correct pronunciation but when it happens, their classmates help them to correct their mistakes. When completing the first activity of the worksheet, the students work together and do not ask questions about the letter that they must use to complete the words. In the listening activity, the students circle the correct words without asking questions to the teacher. The students play a game in which they have to identify some words that the teacher pronouns.</p>	<p>The class is a little delayed, because apparently some of the students still need to finish some activities from the previous class.</p> <p>The students seem to like the game because they smiled and are excited.</p> <p>A few students seem to be confused about the difference in sound between the consonants.</p>

	<p>In the second part of the worksheet, the students work in small groups with no problems. Once the At the end of the class the teacher asks the students to draw their favorite word that starts with each letter learnt in class, they write the words The class finishes at 5:30.</p>	
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	<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Field notes: September 6<sup>th</sup> –2017 Observer: Fernando Esguerra. Level: Second grade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
	<p>The class starts at 2:30 with the projection of two different videos. Then the teacher pastes some flashcards about the vocabulary related to the consonants <i>v</i> and <i>b</i>. Then the teacher reads the vocabulary out loud to help the students notice the differentiation between the two consonants. Then, he selects some students to go in front of the classroom to pronounce the vocabulary of the flashcards. After, the students play a game in couples. One of them has to pronounce on the words in the flashcards and the other one has to point at it. However, Some students are confused by the difference in pronunciation between the letter <i>b</i> and <i>v</i>. They ask several questions about the sounds. When working on the first activity of the worksheet students do not ask many questions. When completing the second activity of the worksheet the students ask again about the difference in sounds between <i>b</i> and <i>v</i> and some of them made some mistakes in the worksheet.</p>	<p>The class starts on time and there are no problems. The students seems to be happy about the projection of the videos.</p> <p>The students seem to like the game but they look concerned about the pronunciation of the consonants.</p>

	<p>They ask each other and the teacher about the images that they have to circle.</p> <p>While developing the worksheet the students write and read target vocabulary with no apparent problems.</p> <p>At the end of the class, the teacher asks the students to share with their parents what they learnt during the class.</p> <p>The class finishes at 2:30</p>	
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	<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Field notes: May 24<sup>th</sup> –2017 Observer: Fernando Esguerra. Level: Second grade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
	<p>The class starts at 2:30 p.m. The teacher shows three videos with vocabulary about the consonant <i>f</i> and the consonant digraph <i>ph</i>. The students watch the videos.</p> <p>Once the videos are over, the teacher pastes some flashcards on the board with vocabulary about the video.</p> <p>Then, he selects some students to go on the board and read the flashcards out loud.</p> <p>After, the students play a game in which they have to recognize the words that the teacher pronounces.</p> <p>Once this activity is over, the students start working with the worksheet.</p> <p>During the development of the first activity in the worksheet, the students ask why the combination of <i>p</i> and <i>h</i> sound like an <i>f</i> in English. Then the teacher explains that sometimes one sound can be created with different letters and he gives the example of the letters <i>b</i> and <i>v</i> in Spanish. The students understand and they complete the worksheet without making mistakes.</p>	<p>The students seem to be excited about the use of videos in the class as they did in previous classes.</p> <p>When the students make some mistakes about pronunciation, the teacher helps them to correct them.</p>

<p>Then, the students complete the second part of the worksheet and hand it to the teacher. As homework, the students must find 10 words that use the consonant <i>f</i> and the consonant digraph <i>ph</i> and write them in their notebooks. The class finishes at 5:20</p>	<p>The class finishes earlier today because the students have to practice for a future presentation.</p>
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<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Field notes: August 26<sup>th</sup> –2017 Observer: Fernando Esguerra. Level: Second grade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
<p>The class starts at 2:30 p.m. The students are divided in five groups and each group has to create the perfect breakfast for them. They have to use colors and pencils to draw each of the ingredients of their favorite breakfast using fruits. Then, each group presents their work to their classmates. The teacher introduces the topic “fruits” using flashcards. He asks questions about their eating habits and whether or not they eat fruits in a regular basis. They share information about the fruits that they like and the ones that they do not like. After presenting the vocabulary related to fruits, the teacher asks the students to go to the board individually to answer questions about their colors. The children are able to use the correct color in each of the situations. When he asked “What color the apple?” the student answered “red”. T: “What color are the grapes” S1: Purple. T: “What color is the banana?” S2: “Yellow”</p>	<p>The majority of the students use colors in their drawings. But some of them, do not.</p> <p>The students are used to this kind of vocabulary presentation due to the fact that the teacher presents it in the same way every class, following the principles of the Balanced Literacy Approach.</p>






<p>T: "What color is the pear?"                  S3: "Green"</p> <p>After, the teacher presents the book for the class "All about apples" by Vanja. The book is projected for all the student and the teacher reads it out loud, using gestures when necessary to help students understand.</p> <p>In order to practice reading, the teacher asks the students to read the book again, he randomly picks some students to serve as guides for the shared reading of the book, and all students read with him.</p> <p>Then, the students work in small groups to read the instructions the two activities of the worksheet. After, they write the answers as the worksheets requests it, the teacher supervises the work of every group to help them when they need it.</p> <p>As homework, they have to practice the vocabulary.</p> <p>The class finishes at 5:30.</p>	<p>The students seem to be interested in the book because they pay close attention to the story while the teacher reads it.</p> <p>While the students work in the worksheet, The teacher walks around the classroom to check the students advance on the worksheet and he identifies some spelling mistakes in the students' production. Some students raise their hands to ask questions to the teacher about the spelling rules</p>
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<p>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.                      Field notes: May 3<sup>rd</sup> –2017                      Observer: Fernando Esguerra.                      Level: Second grade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACTS</b></p>	<p>Observation time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
<p>The class starts at 2:30 p.m. It starts with a small review of the previous topic (Body Parts). To make it possible, the teacher shows the students pictures of an animal (spider) and a monster, then he asks questions about the pictures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How many legs does the spider have?</li> <li>-How many eyes does the spider have?</li> <li>-How many feet does the spider have?</li> <li>-How many heads does the monster have?</li> </ul>	<p>In this activity, the students reinforce previous knowledge and have the opportunity to practice the precious topic.</p>

<p>Then, the teacher introduces the topic “numbers” using flashcards and asks the students about the importance of them. Afterwards, he mentions that numbers are important to ask about people’s ages, he gives an example about himself to introduce the grammar of the class:</p> <p>-How old is the teacher? -The teacher is 25 years old.</p> <p>After the presentation of the vocabulary regarding the numbers. The teacher writes the following sentences on the board “He is... years old” next to the image of a boy.</p> <p>Then, he takes the flashcard which had the number fifteen written on it and puts it in the sentence.</p> <p>Then, he asks the question “How old is he” and the students answer “He is fifteen”.</p> <p>Then he asks the same question to the students and they answer in the correct way, following the formula “I am.... Years old”</p> <p>After that, the students are divided into two groups. The teacher gives some sentences for the students to read, example: Jonhy is seventeen years old, the students have to write the correct number on the board, the first student who writes it correctly wins a point for his/her group.</p> <p>When the activity is over, the students work in the worksheet and the teacher supervises their work.</p> <p>The class finishes at 5:30.</p>	<p>The students seem to enjoy this competences in the classroom, as they did with some previous ones.</p>
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**Appendix 6: Worksheet samples**


The following worksheet was used to work with vocabulary in reading and vocabulary in writing during the intervention developed on May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2017.

<b>WORKSHEET #7: NUMBERS</b>			
Date: _____		Name: _____	
<b>ACTIVITY #1</b>			
Answer to the following questions using the correct number			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOW OLD IS PATTY?</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">FOURTEEN</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOW OLD IS JHON?</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">FOURTY-FIVE</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOW OLD IS FRED?</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">TWENTY-FOUR</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOW OLD IS LUCY?</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">THIRTY-SIX</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>		
<b>ACTIVITY #2</b>			
Write the correct name of each number			
<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>43</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>

**Appendix 7: Worksheet sample**

The following worksheet sample was used to work with phonics during the intervention developed on May 24<sup>th</sup> – 2017.

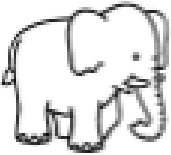
**PHONICS WORKSHEET: PH AND F**




Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY NUMBER ONE**

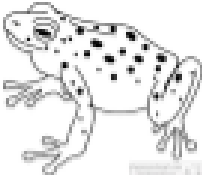
Complete the following words with the correct letters (F or PH) and then read them out loud



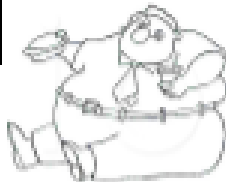
**ELE \_\_\_ ANT**



**\_\_\_ OTOGRAPH**



**\_\_\_ ROG**

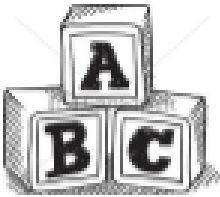


**\_\_\_ AT**


---

**ACTIVITY #2**


Listen to the teacher and circle the words that he mentions. Then, color the pictures




**ALPHABET**




**FIRE**




**DOLPHIN**



**TROPHY**



**FAMILY**



**FRUITS**


**Appendix 8: Worksheet sample**

The following worksheet sample was used to work with sentence organization as well as with vocabulary in writing during the intervention developed on April 6<sup>th</sup> – 2017.

**WORKSHEET # 6: ANIMALS**

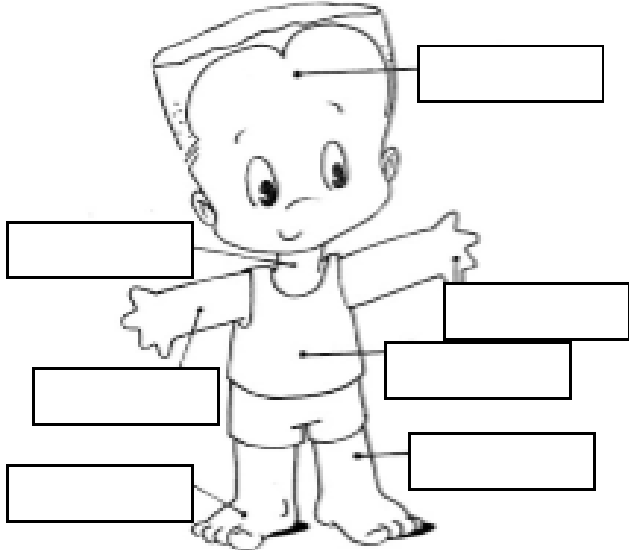
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_








**ACTIVITY #1**

Write the correct body parts in the boxes


















**ACTIVITY #2**

Write sentences using the phrases: "this is a..." or "this is not a..." as indicated by the teacher




IS			EYE
IS NOT			HAND
IS			NOSE
IS NOT			FOOT
IS			EAR

### Appendix 9: Final survey




The following is a sample of the survey taken by the students at the end of the third cycle in order to know their personal opinion about their performance during the entire pedagogical intervention.

<b>ENCUESTA</b>			
<p>¡Hola querido estudiante! En esta encuesta deberás responder unas preguntas cortas. Por favor trata de ser lo más honesto posible. Selecciona la opción que consideres más apropiada, pintando la carita correspondiente.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Carita feliz: Siempre    Carita seria: A veces    Carita triste: Nunca</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconozco la diferencia entre los sonidos de las letras "B" y "V" en inglés</li> </ul>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SIEMPRE</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">A VECES</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">NUNCA</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconozco la diferencia entre los sonidos de las letras "F" y "H" en inglés</li> </ul>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SIEMPRE</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">A VECES</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">NUNCA</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconozco el sonido de la combinación de letras "PH" en inglés cuando lo veo escrito</li> </ul>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SIEMPRE</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">A VECES</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">NUNCA</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al ver la imagen de un objeto o animal soy capaz de escribir su significado en inglés</li> </ul>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SIEMPRE</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">A VECES</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">NUNCA</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cuando tengo que escribir palabras en inglés, logro recordarlas sin ningún problema</li> </ul>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SIEMPRE</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">A VECES</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">NUNCA</div>

• Soy capaz de escribir oraciones cortas en inglés sin cometer errores

		
<b>SIEMPRE</b>	<b>A VECES</b>	<b>NUNCA</b>

• Pienso que soy capaz de leer palabras en inglés con la pronunciación correcta

		
<b>SIEMPRE</b>	<b>A VECES</b>	<b>NUNCA</b>

En el siguiente círculo escribe lo que crees que aprendiste durante las clases de inglés:

