

IMPROVING ORTHOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, IN FIRST
GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH PHONEMIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

María Fernanda Reyes Parra

UNIVERSIDAD ICESI

Cali, Colombia

2018

IMPROVING ORTHOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, IN FIRST
GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH PHONEMIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

BY

MARÍA FERNANDA REYES PARRA

Submitted to the Escuela de Ciencias de la Educación of
Icesi University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master in TEFL

Research Advisor

Cristina Peñafort Camacho

Improving orthography in English as a Foreign Language, in first grade students
through phonemic awareness activities

MARÍA FERNANDA REYES PARRA

ICESI UNIVERSITY

COLOMBIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
1. RESEARCH PROBLEM	7
1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	7
1.2. PROBLEMATIC SITUATION	8
1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION	10
2. OBJECTIVES	11
2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES	11
2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	11
3. JUSTIFICATION	12
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
4.1 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	17
4.2 PHONEMIC AWARENESS	17
4.3 EARLY LITERACY.....	19
4.4 WRITING IN EARLY AGES	21
5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	22
5.2 PARTICIPANTS	24
5.3 INSTRUMENTS	25
5.4 PROCEDURE	28
6. RESULTS.....	41
7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	60
8. CONCLUSIONS	63
BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES	65

LIST OF GRAPHS

	Page
Graph 1: Stages During The Project	25
Graph 2: Stages And Instruments Used Per Stage	30
Graph 3: Centers' Organization With English Skills' Topic	32
Graph 4: Scrapbook Activities	44
Graph 5: Portfolio Activities	45
Graph 6: 1 st Exam Analysis	46
Graph 7: 2 nd Exam Analysis	47
Graph 8: Back Activity 1 st Time	47
Graph 9: Back Activity 2 nd Time	48
Graph 10: Back Activity 1 st And 2 nd Time Comparison	49
Graph 11: Balloon Activity 1 st Time	49
Graph 12: Balloon Activity 2 nd Time	50
Graph 13: Balloon Activity 1 st And 2 nd Time Comparison	51
Graph 14: Clapping Activity 1 st Time	51
Graph 15: Clapping Activity 2 nd Time	52
Graph 16: Clapping Activity 1 st And 2 nd Time Comparison	53
Graph 17: Nonsense Words Activity 1 st Time	53
Graph 18: Nonsense Words Activity 2 nd Time	54
Graph 19: Nonsese Activity 1 st And 2 nd Time Comparison	55
Graph 20: Divide In Boxes Activity 1 st Time	55
Graph 21: Divide In Boxes Activity 2 nd Time	56
Graph 22: Divide In Boxes Activity 1 st And 2 nd Time Comparison	57
Graph 23: 3 rd Exam Analysis	58
Graph 24: 1 st , 2 nd And 3 rd Exam Comparison	59
Graph 25: Activity: 5 Writing Sentences	60

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Writing Continuum	21
Table 2: Steps For The Action Research Method	26
Table 3: Interviews' Answers	61

IMPROVING ORTHOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, IN FIRST GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH PHONEMIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

ABSTRACT

The current research has the purpose of identifying, how through the implementation of some phonemic awareness activities in English as a foreign language on students of 1st grade in a private bilingual school, it was possible to change and improve the way students wrote. Based on some important concepts like phonemic awareness in English and the early literacy development in English as a foreign language, this research had the following purposes: first to collect important information about how the students were developing the writing skill in English as a foreign language in their daily routines, through different activities and second to provide an insight, about different meaningful phonemic awareness activities in English, that could help teachers to work with first grade students, that are dealing with their first approach to the writing skill in English and have some issues about how to develop the skill. The methodology in this project was of action research type, because through different observations and interventions, it was possible to identify and analyze the way students wrote in English in first grade, in order to organize and also implement some phonemic awareness activities in English. Moreover, through the classroom based action research it was possible to promote the use of phonemic awareness activities in English in order to improve and change the students writing process in the foreign language, and to face the different academic challenges. The results of this research show relevant findings related to the phonemic awareness intervention, creating new possibilities to understand the way students develop their writing in English and also showing new possibilities to improve or change the process.

Key words: Phonemic awareness, early literacy, writing ability in english.

INTRODUCTION

In first graders besides the importance of oral language performance in the foreign language, it is essential to begin to familiarize with literacy, being the starting point in the learning process. Most of first-grade teachers identify the relation between phonemic awareness and reading development in English. This research is different because it looked for the relation between phonemic awareness and writing development in English, trying to give an answer based on the question: how can literacy in the foreign language be directly related to phonemic awareness?

One thing is to be literate and other, is to understand literacy first in order to become literate, "To be literate is to teach children not merely to read, but also to write, speak, listen and think in ways that enhance understanding of basic concepts and subject areas knowledge" (Manzo & Manzo, 1995, p.4) and literacy; "A tool with which our values, attitude, aspirations, opinions, dreams, goals and ideas about the world are constructed, shared, represented, reconstructed and deconstructed" (Laurie, Jones & McLachlan, 2007, p.32). Both concepts have their biggest development and impact in first grade, where learners are able to create meaningful situations, in order to interpret the world and get involved in their own realities, even if they are just children. To be literate is often confined to reading and writing, but it is much broader. It includes talking, listening, viewing and drawing, as well as analyzing everything and participate in social organized activities to construct meaning and understand the world. This study involves literacy in terms of some writing aspects (ortography) and phonemic awareness development in English, to achieve the literacy goal.

Based on the fact that students need to be competent readers and writers in order to go beyond in the academic fields, it is important to find an approach that allows them to accomplish that goal. Phonemic awareness plays an important role in reading and writing development in English. The following pages describe carefully how the relation among phonemic awareness and some aspects related to ortography inside of the writing development in English could be, in order to develop early literacy in English as a foreign language.

This research was developed in a private bilingual institution located in Cali, with 25 first graders that were not enjoying the different writing activities that they had to develop in their English classes and showed low interest when they had to be involved in the process. As a result of students' lack of interest to write or share ideas using words, it was necessary to find a strategy that would motivate and also change students' lack of interest, starting from the fact that learning to write in English is not simply about learning how to generate a written text. It is about learning how to create meaning through texts Myhill (2011) and most important, it is about understanding how children express their writing making scribbles and other marks in order to communicate; in conclusion, where words and writing itself mean more than just letters. Instead of writing without meaning, teachers need to encourage and support children's attempts to make personal meaning from school-based writing practices and ensure that they are active participants in their own learning process (Cremin & Myhill, 2011; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

The study begins gathering the writing activities developed by each student through the academic year in the different subjects taught in English (English, Social studies and Science) until the end of May 2017. The course of the research also implied that the writing aspects identified in the activities were analyzed and based on that analysis the phonemic awareness strategy emerged. The instruction of phonemic awareness in English was accompanied by detailed observations about the implementation, the process and the results obtained afterwards.

The key to literacy in any language is reading development. That is the reason why this important concept was developed through the research, specifically the influence reading has over writing development and how both skills are related and developed over phonemic awareness in English. This research is relevant for the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language field, because most of the literature and research about the early literacy prove the relation among reading and phonemic awareness, but this study found a strong relation between writing development in English as a Foreign Language and phonemic awareness strategy in order to improve some aspects in the writing skill in early literacy.

1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This research project took place in a private bilingual school located in a high social strata area in the city of Cali, Colombia. This is a private bilingual school with more than 500 students with ages ranging from 9 months to 19 years old and more than 70 teachers. The school is considered a top range school in the city and in the country. According to the Colombian school ranking it has been in the top 5 according to the Saber test ¹

The project within the school allows external people to see a division of preschool, primary and secondary levels. According to the project of the school, the preschool called "Philos Kids" is a space created for children to be happy from the development of communicative skills, mathematics, personal-social, knowledge of the natural-social and spiritual world from Nursery to 1st Grade from the pleasant exploration of the world that it encourages scientific thinking, the desire to learn and the integral development of being. A playful pedagogy using the methodology of 'Play-Work', learning Centers and classroom projects where children able to start the acquisition of English as a foreign language by early immersion.

At the primary level the aim is to promote the socialization of children, promote their incorporation into culture and society, as well as to contribute to the progressive autonomy of action in the environment.

The curriculum of this section is organized in areas and subjects taught by specialized teachers with extensive experience in the educational field, teachers assume a

¹ The ICFES exam, currently Saber 11, is a standardized test. The test is administered prior to graduation in Colombian high schools final year, 11th or 12th. It can be taken as many times as a student sees fit. The test is thoroughly developed and published by the ICFES. The exam, evaluates five subjects; Critical Reading, Math, Social Studies, Science and English. Each subject mostly consists of several multiple option questions with four possible answers and between one and three open questions, except English which has no open questions and the multiple option questions can have between three and eight possible answers. The ICFES test is nationally recognized as the most important test since it qualifies students according to their actual academic skills and therefore it can affect the possibilities that a student might have to be accepted in Public and Private Colleges.

participative methodology and a personalized teaching that is adapted to the different learning rhythms in each one of the boys and girls. The proposal is based on work by tasks, learning centers, classroom projects, classes about different subjects and corners. The second English language is promoted through work by projects that are guided by tasks, keeping meeting points between the following subjects: Science, Social Studies, ICT (Information and Communications Technology), English and Reading and Writing in English. There are no purposes or a specific area to work on the ability to manipulate individual sounds within words in English, nor in nursery even in eleventh grade. Although the learning of English as a foreign language is more important than the mother tongue learning because is a bilingual school in a foreign country where the mother tongue is Spanish, it is common to see how students are able to acquire the foreign language through other kind of strategies far from phonemic awareness.

This work seeks to develop the communicative skills of the language in contexts of great interest for children based on their own interests and needs, obtaining authentic written and oral products in English as a foreign language. Likewise, through an early partial immersion, children acquire a kind of bilingualism, promoting the ability to see the world in a more open way, creating other ways of thinking and knowing the cultures of other countries. On the other hand, oral production in English is stimulated through an institutional project called Yes, We Can! in which students feel the need to speak in the foreign language not only in the classroom but also in experiential situations until they achieve it spontaneously. Children live their process of bilingualism in a natural and conscious way. The process is evaluated periodically.

Likewise, having largely consolidated their bilingual process in English, they have access to a third language: French, from grades 6 to 9. This proposal seeks to provide greater richness not only linguistically but also culturally to the students, since from their cultural linguistic enrichment they may have greater opportunities in the academic, professional and social spheres.

1.2 PROBLEMATIC SITUATION

Children go through certain phases of writing development from preschool through their entire academic life when they are learning English, but it is in first grade where learners should be encouraged to start their writing process properly using what they know about letter sounds in order to adopt those sounds and then construct their own writing in English. The previous statement is one of the most important reasons to work on phonemic awareness in English with children in this research. It was clear that first graders (the participants) had a lack about letter sounds awareness in English and tended to write the way they understood or interpreting what they listened. Based on the fact that they are children and taking into consideration the second language writing continuum, students were doing what they had to do according to their age, but they needed to start to change the way they were expressing using written language in order to face the different literacy challenges, at the same time they were accomplishing the goal of the common core standards in the second language. It is important to mention that nowadays our students are preparing everyday in their classrooms, to face the different academic challenges and to know how to write in a foreign language is one of the biggest confrontations.

Students supposed to know how to express their ideas using the three kinds of writing: Opinion, informative and narrative, Kelmon (2018). But the problem with first graders was that they didn't write or enjoyed to write in their English class.

At the beginning of the school year with first graders (September 2016), teachers were wondering: Why do the students were not writing in English easily? Why didn't they enjoy writing in English? How was the way they were writing in English before first grade? And to find an answer to those questions became into the biggest challenge. After the all school year observing, working and finally intervening through phonemic awareness activities in English inside of the class with children, it was possible to find an answer saying that most of the students, lacked of phonemic awareness in English since the beginning of their writing process, these means in their previous grade (kindergarten).

Children did not know how letters sounded or how to rhyme, blend or segment words and teachers needed to understand the different stages of children writing process in order to look for the strategy that allowed them to improve their writing ability in English and also became aware of their own process. Phonemic awareness showed up at the end of the first stage (April 2017), being the possibility to understand the sense of writing in English in order to improve some writing aspects or change them.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study aims at working on phonemic awareness activities in order to improve first graders ortography inside of the writing process in English as a foreign language.

Hence the research question is: How to improve ortography inside of the writing skill in English as a foreign language through phonemic awareness implementation?

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE: To improve orthography in English as a foreign language in one group of first grade students in a private bilingual school in Cali.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ To characterize the writing process in the foreign language (L2) in first-grade in a private bilingual school.
- ✓ To describe the writing aspects used by first graders in their English learning process as a foreign language.
- ✓ To implement phonemic awareness activities to help teachers to improve orthography in English as a foreign language.

3. JUSTIFICATION

This masters report intends to help some primary teachers to rethink the way they understand and manage the writing process in children, forgetting how important is the role of phonemic awareness skill in early literacy in English as a foreign language. Taking into consideration how unaware are children about what is happening deeper with words, it is important to concentrate on recognize and understand sounds in order to read, write and be competent to face the different roles in society and most important “to belonging, being and becoming” The Australian government department of education (2009). Based on the statement that “Children who become poor readers entered 1st grade with little phonemic awareness” Juel (1988), it is possible to conclude that participants entered 1st grade being poor writers too, as result of their lack of knowledge about phonemic awareness specifically their knowledge about sounds in English.

To support the above statement about phonemic awareness importance in order to develop writing skill in English, there are some authors that pointed out relevant ideas to highlight in this study for a long time ago proving that phonemic awareness implementation provides basis to create a meaningful writing process in English:

“The relationship between letters and sounds consequently, is a factor in learning to read and write” Scholes (1998)

“It is generally assumed that the combination of actions and sounds can help children develop multi-sensory clues for recognizing and reproducing phonemes” The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011)

“Segmenting and blending individual sounds within words is the most difficult level of phonological awareness and has a strong correlation to learning to read and write” (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg & Beeler, 1998).

According to Martinez, Coyle, & De Larios. (2015) in their case study Pre-school children’s production of sibilant phonemes in English: developing phonemic awareness through multi-sensory teaching, they worked on a study that aims to find out whether teaching English sibilant phonemes to children could influence their acquisition of

these sounds and their motivation during the teaching sessions, the participants belonged to a school in Spain with children at the age of five, a context very similar to the Colombian one.

Their findings show how children improved their ability to understand the sound-letter correspondences in order to become competent readers and writers in the foreign language and also conclude how harmful could be if learners do not have specific phonemes in their own repertoire, because they tend to increase difficulty in the production of those sounds in their foreign language skills like writing.

In the context of Colombia, following what the authors Vega & Vargas (2015) mention in his article Phonological awareness: A step in English language development; it was possible to identify how it is so common to observe that most of the schools in the country, tend to reduce the importance of phonology training, even if teachers try to implement different kind of strategies in order to achieve the foreign language goal, the results obtained in children when they pass year over year without the phonological awareness training, are not the best ones in terms of writing in English.

This research has the main purpose of work on writing ability in English to manipulate individual sounds within words (phonemic awareness) in order to solve some problems with first grade students that were not performing in class and tended to feel confused when they had to develop a written activity in English.

Teachers have the responsibility to create strategies that allow meaningful changes; this research intends to change teachers' misunderstandings, in terms of their expectations about what they want to see in their students writing performance in English, and what they supposed to do according to their ages and processes being in first grade. This research provides teachers and students with tools to be competent writers in the foreign language using phonemic awareness as the tool to achieve it. At the end of the research the beneficiaries are going to be the students, the teachers and the society. In other words, teachers and future professionals need to face the learning process as a result of effective and enriching ways to teach, in this specific case to teach the writing ability in English through the implementation of phonemic awareness.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Phonemic awareness is a component of phonological awareness, this refers to the knowledge about words in terms of the individual sounds in order to segment, blend or manipulate those individual sounds in different words Osewalt (2014). To know how to read and write is directly related to phonemic awareness development in early ages and there are several factors that determine writing successful when there is sufficient and meaningful instruction in phonemic awareness since early childhood.

Phonemic awareness facilitates the reading process in early ages and that is a fact that most studies can prove easily, but how is the influence of the phonemic awareness inside the writing process in English? Or how essential is phonemic awareness instruction inside early literacy development in the foreign language? There are some important concepts directly related to phonemic awareness, which need to be well developed in order to understand it, as well as the importance of writing in real academic contexts. Some concepts include, phonological and phonemic awareness' differences, phonemic awareness and writing development, supporting writing development in early ages and early literacy.

In the present research study, phonemic awareness and writing development in English inside early literacy is investigated. How can phonemic awareness be developed in 1st grade students in order to improve their writing skills in English? is the most important question. The following literature review attempts to demonstrate and give support to understand and find a possible answer to this question.

Marylin Jager Adams in her book *Phonemic awareness in children* provides teachers interesting information to understand better first, the different phonological rules and based on that construct the relation among phonemic awareness and reading and writing development in the foreign language. The book gives teachers and also students specific instructions to work with the material and design activities that can be used effectively to help children develop phonemic awareness. Through the implementation of the activities mentioned in her book it is possible to follow a developmental sequence of students growth in literacy.

Based on the statement about phonological awareness' importance, made by Adams (1998) "A student's level of phonological awareness at the end of kindergarten is one of the strongest predictors of future reading success, in grade one and beyond", emerges the phonemic awareness question of how important is this concept in order to improve the writing skill in English, instead of the reading ability. The phonological awareness concept opens the branch of understanding about the importance of phonemic awareness in early literacy.

It is important to take into consideration what is phonological awareness and the different levels of phonological awareness in order to understand and work on phonemic awareness implementation, that is why Trehearne (2000) established a comparison among phonological awareness and phonemic awareness that allows teachers and learners to relate both concepts and give them a functionality in real contexts. According to the author "phonological awareness is the ability to listen inside a word" (Trehearne, 2000, p.117), this means that phonological awareness goes beyond the meaning of words, because it offers the chance to relate sound-letter knowledge with literacy itself (reading and writing), giving sense to those words that are more than just letters written on a paper, that students have to read. The understanding about phonological awareness, opens the knowledge about the second and most important concept to this research; the phonemic awareness. According to the author, phonemic awareness is directly related to hearing and reproducing individual sounds in a word (sound awareness) allow learners to play with sounds.

To understand phonemic awareness and its purpose or relevance in early writing in the foreign language, there are some important authors who can elucidate and support the connection.

Reutzel (2015) addressed two specific questions to guide the article and also to understand the importance of phonemic awareness better; first, who needs handwriting these days? and second, why is letter-name learning so important? He answered these two questions saying that children need to practice handwriting from the start of their literacy process, but through the phonemic awareness instruction,

based on blending, segmenting and manipulating phonemes. According to the author the phonemic awareness instruction needs to take into account teachers' role, because they are the ones who have the responsibility to provide students with enough tools to have a good start in their process, in order to progress and eventually become successful in reading and writing. In his article, Reutzel (2015) summed up saying that "Early literacy instruction sets the stage for all later literacy progress" but in order to succeed it is important to understand handwriting relevance and its relation with phonemic awareness first.

Gutierrez (2017), looked at how writing is directly related to two main aspects, phonological and phonemic awareness. According to Gutierrez point of view, the oral skill in the foreign language and its relation to written language in English changes the early literacy progress and it is possible through interventions using different strategies related to sounds; strategies like phonemic awareness.

Based on the previous statements, both concepts (phonological and phonemic awareness) are predictors for reading and writing successfully in the foreign language, but to what extent is it possible to understand the real importance of phonemic awareness in order to become successful in writing?

It is clear that phonemic awareness is a predictor of reading successfully (decoding process) but what about the writing process (encoding)? It is a fact that children who have well-developed phonological awareness, when they face sounds and letters working together (printed), they become successful, but how is the process in early literacy in order to become that knowledge effective when students are older?

There is a gap between phonemic awareness as one of the most important elements inside of the process to understand and to develop phonological awareness and there is a lack in terms of studies supporting how important phonemic awareness is inside of phonological awareness. That is becoming in a clear misunderstanding because in fact some students may have difficulty at the early literacy because phonemic awareness is developed in a reciprocal (hand-in-hand) relationship where learning how

to read is develop at the same time that learning about how to write. According to (González, Cuetos, Vilar & Uccira, 2015, p.2) “Despite the importance of phonological awareness presence in learning written language, there is a clear imbalance in favor of the number of studies designed for the study of reading compared with those which consider the implications that are present in the development of phonological awareness in learning to write” this assertion confirms the gap between phonemic awareness in terms of studies that support the relation and importance with writing in English.

The most important concepts in this study are going to be described below, in order to have a better understanding of the relation between phonemic awareness and writing development. The relevant concepts described below are: Phonological awareness, Phonemic awareness, Early literacy and writing skill in early ages in English in order to identify if the main purpose of this research was accomplished.

4.1 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

To highlight the phonological awareness concept and his importance in order to become good writers the

Based on Rosado (2018) “Children at the early stages of writing use several strategies to convey meaning” , they tend to follow a developmental path as they become conventional writers. When the authors mention the concepts “conventional writers”, that make part of the last writing stage, where students are able to recognize not just sounds but also relate those sounds with letters in order to create words in English. Phonological awareness is one of the strongest predictors of future reading and also writing success in any language, refers to a deep understanding of the sound structure of language and is the ability that allow learners at the end of their early literacy process, to recognize how many words are in a sentence, segment and blend words, understand the concept of rhyming, recognize and generate rhyming words, isolate the beginning or ending sounds in words, segment and blend sounds in a word with three sounds, change a sound in a word to make a new word in familiar games and songs

Adams (1998). The phonological awareness term is used to explain several levels of metalinguistic skills (Lane, Pullen, Eisele & Jordan, 2002) like:

The Word level- refers to the ability to isolate individual words from speech flow.

The Syllable level- refers to the ability to blend and segment chunks within words.

The Rhyme level- refers the ability to manipulate intra-syllabic units.

The Phoneme level- refers the ability to manipulate individual sounds within words.

It is important to point out that students need phonological awareness in order to discover more about how letters and sounds are related in the foreign language, instead of listen and try to connect with their own language, they are able to segment the sounds and then match them with known letters in English in order to impact the way students perform in the skill.

There are different levels of phonological awareness within words: Phonemic awareness is one of those components described bellow:

4.2 PHONEMIC AWARENESS

It doesn't exist a specific definition of phonemic awareness. The term is just one component of phonological awareness. It is the insight that every spoken word can be conceived as a sequence of those little speech sounds represented by letters Dougherty & McKenna (2006). There is one author that mentions in his work one important concept that probably provides the strongest element to understand the problem when there is a lack of phonemic awareness or a misunderstanding in the phonemic awareness implementation, the reciprocal relationship. It is common to see how some students may have difficulty because phonemic awareness appears to develop in a reciprocal relationship with learning to read and as result in writing too, Goswami (2000). These means that phonemic awareness implementation appears at the end of the English language process, when students believe they already know how to pronounce and manage each sound, and not at the beginning of the process

when they are able to create and understand better those English sounds. However, in order to benefit from phonemic awareness, it is important to design and also implement activities related to words and play in English at the same time in order to isolate, segment and blend; that is the only way they could be able to create meaning through writing based on sounds understanding, having sufficient exposure to the phonemic awareness ability.

When students have enough exposure and instruction into phonemic awareness activities, they benefit in the complex levels of metalinguistic skills and that could improve or at least change progressively the component of the reading and writing process in the foreign language. There are effective techniques for developing phonemic awareness in class and being aware about those techniques and the individual sounds inside of words guarantees successful in the writing process. Based on what Adams (1998) mentions, the effective techniques and how each one can help in order to improve the writing skill in English are:

Sound matching- helps students to identify beginning and ending sounds.

Sound sort- helps student's development of letter-sound knowledge.

Scavenger hunt- help to identify particular sounds identifying sounds through images.

The previous techniques are accompanied among a lot of meaningful activities that show qualities not only regarding the development of reading but into de writing process in English.

It is important to mention, how the notion of phonemic awareness is a factor in the acquisition of literacy skills in the foreign language. There are a lot of assertions that show the positive correlations between phonemic awareness and reading skill, but there is not enough information about the writing process and phonemic awareness, in fact the definition of writing is misguided and focused into other types of strategies to be improved.

4.3 EARLY LITERACY

Taking into consideration what Roskos, Christie & Richgels (2003) asked; What early literacy instruction should children receive? Head (cognition) or heart (motivation) or both? It is necessary to emphasize how nowadays, the society is responsible of the early literacy instruction, because of the great expectations they focused on children. Today, the most important in order to be competent and in terms of early literacy is to provide children welcoming environments, in which learn how to read and write in the foreign language is a meaningful process.

Children are closer to literacy of what people can believe, young children grasp of print as a tool for making meaning and as a way to communicate orally and written language. Young children need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing; and they need oral language to help them learn about both (Genlott and Gronlund, 2013).

In order to become literate, there are certain kind of teaching strategies like rich teacher talk, the storybook reading, the alphabet activities, the support for emergent reading and the phonological awareness activities, that are essential to the effective early literacy instruction. The phonological awareness activities, provide experiences that increase children's awareness of the sounds of language, with the main purpose of read and write. What children have to know about literacy in terms of content is what reading and writing can do, to name and write alphabet letters, to hear rhymes and sounds in words, to spell simple words, to recognize and write their own names and to listen to stories for meaning, if that is what they are doing, it could say that according to the writing continuum (Table 1) students are performing suitably according to their age, and most important means, that in the future they are going to be competent readers, writers and speakers in English.

Table 1. Writing Continuum

The next table shows what students need to do according to the different stages they pass through their writing process in the foreign language. A writing continuum is one

of the best ways to help our students become stronger writers. A writing continuum helps students to understand exactly what they need to do to improve.

WRITING CONTINUUM

Preconventional Ages 3-5	Emerging Ages 4-6	Developing Ages 5-7	Beginning Ages 6-8	Expanding Ages 7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Relies primarily on pictures to convey meaning. 📖 Begins to label and add "words" to pictures. 📖 Writes first name. 📖 Demonstrates awareness that print conveys meaning. 📖 Makes marks other than drawing on paper (scribbles). 📖 Writes random recognizable letters to represent words. 📖 Talks about own pictures and writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Uses pictures and print to convey meaning. 📖 Writes words to describe or support pictures. 📖 Copies signs, labels, names, and words (environmental print). 📖 Demonstrates understanding of letter/sound relationship. 📖 Prints with upper case letters. 📖 Mixes letters to sound. 📖 Uses beginning consonants to make words. 📖 Uses beginning and ending consonants to make words. 📖 Pretends to read own writing. 📖 Sees self as writer. 📖 Takes risks with writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes 1-2 sentences about a topic. 📖 Writes names and familiar words. 📖 Generates own ideas for writing. 📖 Writes from top to bottom, left to right, and front to back. 📖 Uses upper and lower case letters. 📖 Experiments with capitals. 📖 Experiments with punctuation. 📖 Uses growing awareness of sound segments (e.g., phonemes, syllables, rhymes) to write words. 📖 Spells words on the basis of sounds without regard for conventional spelling patterns. 📖 Uses beginning, middle, and ending sounds to make words. 📖 Begins to read own writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes several sentences about a topic. 📖 Writes about observations and experiences. 📖 Writes short nonfiction pieces (simple facts about a topic) with guidance. 📖 Chooses own writing topics. 📖 Reads own writing and notices mistakes with guidance. 📖 Revises by adding details with guidance. 📖 Uses spacing between words consistently. 📖 Forms most letters legibly. 📖 Uses phonetic spelling to write independently. 📖 Uses simple words and some high frequency words correctly. 📖 Begins to use periods and capital letters correctly. 📖 Shares own writing with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes short fiction and poetry with guidance. 📖 Writes a variety of short nonfiction pieces (e.g., facts about a topic, letters, lists) with guidance. 📖 Writes with a central idea. 📖 Writes using complete sentences. 📖 Organizes ideas in a logical sequence in fiction and nonfiction writing with guidance. 📖 Begins to recognize and use interesting language. 📖 Uses several pre-writing strategies (e.g., web, brainstorm) with guidance. 📖 Listens to others' writing and offers feedback. 📖 Begins to consider suggestions from others about own writing. 📖 Adds description and detail with guidance. 📖 Edits for capitals and punctuation with guidance. 📖 Publishes own writing with guidance. 📖 Writes legibly. 📖 Spells most high frequency words correctly and moves toward conventional spelling. 📖 Identifies own writing strategies and sets goals with guidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes about feelings and opinions. 📖 Writes fiction with clear beginning, middle, and end. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language with guidance. 📖 Writes organized nonfiction pieces (e.g., reports, letters, and lists) with guidance. 📖 Uses strong verbs, interesting language, and dialogue with guidance. 📖 Seeks feedback on writing. 📖 Revises for clarity with guidance. 📖 Revises to enhance ideas by adding description and detail. 📖 Uses resources (e.g., thesaurus and word lists) to make writing more effective with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. 📖 Publishes writing in polished format with guidance. 📖 Increases use of visual strategies, spelling cues, and knowledge of word parts to spell correctly. 📖 Uses commas and apostrophes correctly with guidance. 📖 Sets criteria for effective writing to set own writing goals with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Begins to write organized fiction and nonfiction (e.g., reports, letters, biographies, and autobiographies). 📖 Develops stories with plots that include problems and solutions with guidance. 📖 Creates characters in stories with guidance. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language. 📖 Begins to experiment with sentence length and complex sentence structure. 📖 Uses leads and endings with guidance. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, and similes with guidance. 📖 Uses dialogue with guidance. 📖 Uses a range of strategies for planning writing. 📖 Adapts writing for purpose and audience with guidance. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) with guidance. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others about own writing with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar with greater precision. 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, and spell checkers) to edit with guidance. 📖 Develops criteria for effective writing in different genres with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes persuasively about ideas, feelings, and opinions. 📖 Creates plots with problems and solutions. 📖 Begins to develop the main characters and describe detailed settings. 📖 Begins to write organized and fluent nonfiction, including simple biographies. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including reasons and examples with guidance. 📖 Uses transitional sentences to connect paragraphs. 📖 Varies sentence structure, leads, and endings. 📖 Begins to use descriptive language, details, and similes. 📖 Uses voice to evoke emotional response from readers. 📖 Begins to integrate information on a topic from a variety of sources. 📖 Begins to revise for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, spell checkers) to edit independently. 📖 Submits and publishes writing in polished format independently. 📖 Begins to use complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) appropriately. 📖 Begins to set goals and identify strategies to improve writing in different genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes in a variety of genres and forms for different audiences and purposes independently. 📖 Creates plots with a climax. 📖 Creates detailed, believable settings and characters in stories. 📖 Writes organized, fluent, and detailed nonfiction independently, including biographies with correct format examples. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including supportive reasons and examples. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, similes, and imagery to enhance ideas independently. 📖 Begins to use dialogue to enhance character development. 📖 Incorporates personal voice in writing with increasing frequency. 📖 Integrates information on a topic from a variety of sources independently. 📖 Constructs charts, graphs, and tables to convey information when appropriate. 📖 Uses pre-writing strategies effectively to organize and strengthen writing. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Includes edition in revision strategies. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others on own writing independently. 📖 Uses complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) with increasing accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes organized, fluent, accurate, and in-depth nonfiction, including references with correct bibliographic format. 📖 Writes cohesive, fluent, and effective poetry and fiction. 📖 Uses a clear sequence of paragraphs with effective transitions. 📖 Begins to incorporate literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphors, personification, and foreshadowing). 📖 Weaves dialogue effectively into stories. 📖 Develops plots, characters, setting, and mood (literary elements) effectively. 📖 Begins to develop personal voice and style of writing. 📖 Revises through multiple drafts independently. 📖 Seeks feedback from others and incorporates suggestions in order to strengthen own writing. 📖 Publishes writing for different audiences and purposes in polished format independently. 📖 Internalizes writing process. 📖 Uses correct grammar (e.g., subject/verb agreement and verb tense) consistently. 📖 Writes with confidence and competence on a range of topics independently. 📖 Penetrates through complex or challenging writing projects independently. 📖 Sets writing goals independently by analyzing and evaluating own writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes about feelings and opinions. 📖 Writes fiction with clear beginning, middle, and end. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language with guidance. 📖 Writes organized nonfiction pieces (e.g., reports, letters, and lists) with guidance. 📖 Uses strong verbs, interesting language, and dialogue with guidance. 📖 Seeks feedback on writing. 📖 Revises for clarity with guidance. 📖 Revises to enhance ideas by adding description and detail. 📖 Uses resources (e.g., thesaurus and word lists) to make writing more effective with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. 📖 Publishes writing in polished format with guidance. 📖 Increases use of visual strategies, spelling cues, and knowledge of word parts to spell correctly. 📖 Uses commas and apostrophes correctly with guidance. 📖 Sets criteria for effective writing to set own writing goals with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Begins to write organized fiction and nonfiction (e.g., reports, letters, biographies, and autobiographies). 📖 Develops stories with plots that include problems and solutions with guidance. 📖 Creates characters in stories with guidance. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language. 📖 Begins to experiment with sentence length and complex sentence structure. 📖 Uses leads and endings with guidance. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, and similes with guidance. 📖 Uses dialogue with guidance. 📖 Uses a range of strategies for planning writing. 📖 Adapts writing for purpose and audience with guidance. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) with guidance. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others about own writing with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar with greater precision. 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, and spell checkers) to edit with guidance. 📖 Develops criteria for effective writing in different genres with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes persuasively about ideas, feelings, and opinions. 📖 Creates plots with problems and solutions. 📖 Begins to develop the main characters and describe detailed settings. 📖 Begins to write organized and fluent nonfiction, including simple biographies. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including reasons and examples with guidance. 📖 Uses transitional sentences to connect paragraphs. 📖 Varies sentence structure, leads, and endings. 📖 Begins to use descriptive language, details, and similes. 📖 Uses voice to evoke emotional response from readers. 📖 Begins to integrate information on a topic from a variety of sources. 📖 Begins to revise for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, spell checkers) to edit independently. 📖 Submits and publishes writing in polished format independently. 📖 Begins to use complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) appropriately. 📖 Begins to set goals and identify strategies to improve writing in different genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes in a variety of genres and forms for different audiences and purposes independently. 📖 Creates plots with a climax. 📖 Creates detailed, believable settings and characters in stories. 📖 Writes organized, fluent, and detailed nonfiction independently, including biographies with correct format examples. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including supportive reasons and examples. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, similes, and imagery to enhance ideas independently. 📖 Begins to use dialogue to enhance character development. 📖 Incorporates personal voice in writing with increasing frequency. 📖 Integrates information on a topic from a variety of sources independently. 📖 Constructs charts, graphs, and tables to convey information when appropriate. 📖 Uses pre-writing strategies effectively to organize and strengthen writing. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Includes edition in revision strategies. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others on own writing independently. 📖 Uses complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) with increasing accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes organized, fluent, accurate, and in-depth nonfiction, including references with correct bibliographic format. 📖 Writes cohesive, fluent, and effective poetry and fiction. 📖 Uses a clear sequence of paragraphs with effective transitions. 📖 Begins to incorporate literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphors, personification, and foreshadowing). 📖 Weaves dialogue effectively into stories. 📖 Develops plots, characters, setting, and mood (literary elements) effectively. 📖 Begins to develop personal voice and style of writing. 📖 Revises through multiple drafts independently. 📖 Seeks feedback from others and incorporates suggestions in order to strengthen own writing. 📖 Publishes writing for different audiences and purposes in polished format independently. 📖 Internalizes writing process. 📖 Uses correct grammar (e.g., subject/verb agreement and verb tense) consistently. 📖 Writes with confidence and competence on a range of topics independently. 📖 Penetrates through complex or challenging writing projects independently. 📖 Sets writing goals independently by analyzing and evaluating own writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes about feelings and opinions. 📖 Writes fiction with clear beginning, middle, and end. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language with guidance. 📖 Writes organized nonfiction pieces (e.g., reports, letters, and lists) with guidance. 📖 Uses strong verbs, interesting language, and dialogue with guidance. 📖 Seeks feedback on writing. 📖 Revises for clarity with guidance. 📖 Revises to enhance ideas by adding description and detail. 📖 Uses resources (e.g., thesaurus and word lists) to make writing more effective with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. 📖 Publishes writing in polished format with guidance. 📖 Increases use of visual strategies, spelling cues, and knowledge of word parts to spell correctly. 📖 Uses commas and apostrophes correctly with guidance. 📖 Sets criteria for effective writing to set own writing goals with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Begins to write organized fiction and nonfiction (e.g., reports, letters, biographies, and autobiographies). 📖 Develops stories with plots that include problems and solutions with guidance. 📖 Creates characters in stories with guidance. 📖 Writes poetry using carefully chosen language. 📖 Begins to experiment with sentence length and complex sentence structure. 📖 Uses leads and endings with guidance. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, and similes with guidance. 📖 Uses dialogue with guidance. 📖 Uses a range of strategies for planning writing. 📖 Adapts writing for purpose and audience with guidance. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) with guidance. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others about own writing with guidance. 📖 Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar with greater precision. 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, and spell checkers) to edit with guidance. 📖 Develops criteria for effective writing in different genres with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes persuasively about ideas, feelings, and opinions. 📖 Creates plots with problems and solutions. 📖 Begins to develop the main characters and describe detailed settings. 📖 Begins to write organized and fluent nonfiction, including simple biographies. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including reasons and examples with guidance. 📖 Uses transitional sentences to connect paragraphs. 📖 Varies sentence structure, leads, and endings. 📖 Begins to use descriptive language, details, and similes. 📖 Uses voice to evoke emotional response from readers. 📖 Begins to integrate information on a topic from a variety of sources. 📖 Begins to revise for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, spell checkers) to edit independently. 📖 Submits and publishes writing in polished format independently. 📖 Begins to use complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) appropriately. 📖 Begins to set goals and identify strategies to improve writing in different genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes in a variety of genres and forms for different audiences and purposes independently. 📖 Creates plots with a climax. 📖 Creates detailed, believable settings and characters in stories. 📖 Writes organized, fluent, and detailed nonfiction independently, including biographies with correct format examples. 📖 Writes cohesive paragraphs including supportive reasons and examples. 📖 Uses descriptive language, details, similes, and imagery to enhance ideas independently. 📖 Begins to use dialogue to enhance character development. 📖 Incorporates personal voice in writing with increasing frequency. 📖 Integrates information on a topic from a variety of sources independently. 📖 Constructs charts, graphs, and tables to convey information when appropriate. 📖 Uses pre-writing strategies effectively to organize and strengthen writing. 📖 Revises for specific writing tasks (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). 📖 Includes edition in revision strategies. 📖 Incorporates suggestions from others on own writing independently. 📖 Uses complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) with increasing accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Writes organized, fluent, accurate, and in-depth nonfiction, including references with correct bibliographic format. 📖 Writes cohesive, fluent, and effective poetry and fiction. 📖 Uses a clear sequence of paragraphs with effective transitions. 📖 Begins to incorporate literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphors, personification, and foreshadowing). 📖 Weaves dialogue effectively into stories. 📖 Develops plots, characters, setting, and mood (literary elements) effectively. 📖 Begins to develop personal voice and style of writing. 📖 Revises through multiple drafts independently. 📖 Seeks feedback from others and incorporates suggestions in order to strengthen own writing. 📖 Publishes writing for different audiences and purposes in polished format independently. 📖 Internalizes writing process. 📖 Uses correct grammar (e.g., subject/verb agreement and verb tense) consistently. 📖 Writes with confidence and competence on a range of topics independently. 📖 Penetrates through complex or challenging writing projects independently. 📖 Sets writing goals independently by analyzing and evaluating own writing.

4.4 WRITING IN EARLY AGES

Taking into consideration the different academic challenges nowadays, starting in the school and ending at the university, it is important to mention that according to students performance in the different abilities in the foreign language; the biggest challenges are related to improve the writing ability. "Writing is an important part of child's early literacy development" Robinson (2003). In preschool and kindergarten classes, children are taught to read and write alphabet letters, to recognize and use letter sounds, and to put these skills together to produce their own narrative. Writing is viewed as an essential competency that supports academic learning and provides a means for demonstrating what has been learned (Alberta education, 2000 & Manitoba education, 2011).

Teachers tended to focus more on children's overall development, creating portfolios of children's drawings and scribbling instead of emphasize on motivate students to learn, providing opportunities to read and write about their own experiences, in fact there are some reviews of research that indicate at least three critical content categories in early literacy: oral language comprehension, phonological awareness, and print knowledge (Senechal, LeFreve, Colton & Smith, 2000). The real problem with those categories is that teachers are not taking into account them to go beyond in the writing instruction in the foreign language and that is the reason why the literacy instruction itself is part of a misunderstanding and the results in terms of reading and writing are not the best ones. In English literacy, written language is harder to learn than oral, because learning how the alphabetic writing system works requires extra work, for instance as children gain experience with real writing and meaningful practices about that, their knowledge about language and communication will improve, but to achieve that goal it is necessary to influence positively the process, teachers must cultivate their dispositions (curiosity, desire, play) to actively explore into the different practices that enrich literacy in the foreign language.

Early literacy should be based on playing, because a literacy-enriched play environment exposes children to valuable print experiences and let them practice

narrative skills Christie and Roskos (2003), and most important because of the benefits, that learn through playing brings. If teachers want to give the society successful readers and writers, it is important to transform the instructional practice to teach consistently and carefully, how to read and write in the foreign language.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was developed using classroom-based action research method. Action research because through different observations, it was possible to identify writing problems, analyzed them and also organized and implemented the phonemic awareness activities in English, in order to help first grade students to foster participation and improve their writing process. Based on the different types of research, this study can be categorized into a qualitative and descriptive research also. It is descriptive because Its goal is not limited to the collection of data, but to the prediction and identification of the relationships that exist between two or more variables; in this specific case among writing aspects without phonemic awareness and writing aspects with phonemic awareness, and also because through the collection of data it was possible to analyze the results, in order to extract generalizations that contribute to knowledge and help to achieve the aims of the main objectives.

In order to achieve the main of this study, three analyses were carried out: Firstly, on the aspects used by students to write in the different instruments to collect the data; secondly, on teacher's practices in the classroom with children to identify how they performed with the phonemic awareness activities implementation; and thirdly, on children changes in their writing in English at the end of the process and after phonemic awareness implementation ended.

At the beginning of the school year (September 2016) the first-grade team (teachers and assistants) had a meeting after one month of characterization with children. During that month, different activities were implemented in order to identify how the students performed in their writing ability. The main topic in the meeting was one common concern; children did not like the kind of activities that were related to develop the writing skill, they showed attitudes that clearly evidenced demotivation and that was affecting their level of English. It was necessary to look for a strategy in order to help the students to learn, improve and enjoy writing in the foreign language.

The next two graphs show first, the order in the 4 stages where the project was developed and what happened in each stage during the process and the second graph shows the steps with the corresponding cycle that was developed following the action research method:

Graph 1. Stages During The Project

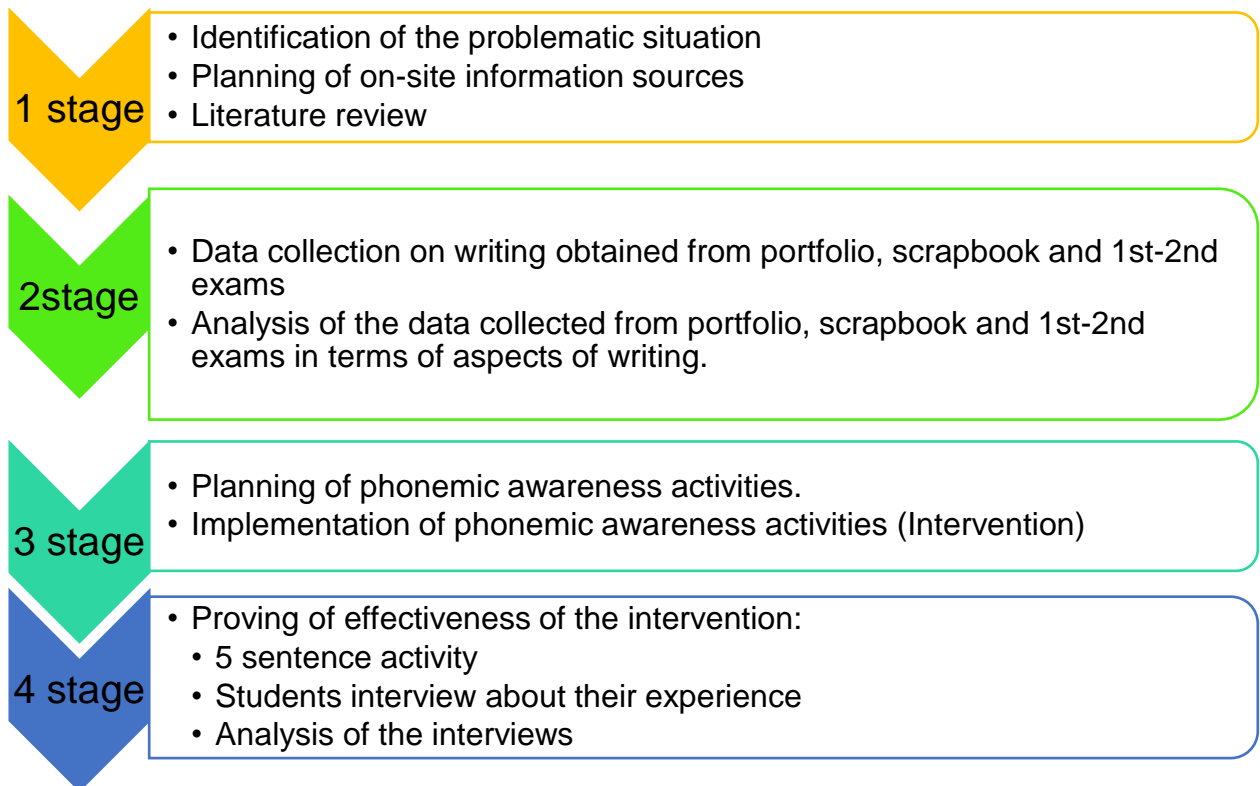


Table 2. Steps for the action research method

IDENTIFICATION	REFLECTION	REFLECTION	COLLECT AND ORGANIZE DATA	PLAN	ACT AND OBSERVE	REFLECTION
Sitting to dialogue with colleagues about problems with first grade students, just to find the problem, not to work with teachers.	What the teacher was doing in class? How teacher was developing the class? (Reflection about teachers' practices) before to start.	How students were writing? Students didn't want to write. Identification through some writing activities.	From three different types of assesment.	Interpret data and imagine a possible solution or a way forward. (Phonemic awareness, possible solution).	Monitor what was made (phonemic awareness implementation and interviews after each implementation)	Review and evaluate the modified action (Third exam and 5 sentences activity analysis, interviews' reflection).

5.2 PARTICIPANTS

This research took place with 1 of the 5 first grade courses in a private bilingual school in high social strata. The participants for this research study were 25 first grade children between the ages of 5 to 7 years old (11 boys and 14 girls). The school is located at the south of the city where just the little ones studied. 5 teachers and 2 assistants participated indirectly helping one teacher to choose the phonemic awareness activities to implement with children in class.

The homeroom teacher was in charge of observing the needs and likes of students and based on that, then she looked for the phonemic awareness activities to implement during one month. She has a diploma in Modern languages in Spanish, English, French and 8 years working with early grades, teaching the different languages. She was in charge of designing the different activities in the main subjects (English and Project (Science, Social studies)).

5.3 INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used in this research were the following:

1. Scrapbook
2. Portfolio
3. Exams: for the first period, for the second period and for the third period
4. 5 Phonemic Awareness Activities
5. Interviews
6. Logbook

The description about what is each instrument is described below:

1. **Scrapbook:** It is a method of preserving, presenting, arranging personal and family history in the form of a book, box, card. A typical scrapbook includes photographs, printed media, and artwork. Scrapbook albums are often decorated and frequently contain extensive journaling. Buckler (2006) says that there is one thing that all good scrapbook pages do: they tell a story. A scrapbook is a story and scrapbooking is storytelling at a precious, personal level. It is organizing moments of the past so people have meaning for future generations. It is a recognition that events make up lives, and the scrapbook it is a celebration of living. Embodied in every scrapbook page is a celebration of life, a moment or moments captured that are especially unique to a person or family. People who used scrapbooks today are preserving yesterday for tomorrow. The most important characteristic to take into account about scrapbooks is that most of the artifacts presented in the scrapbooks are reflecting on written or verbal documentation.
2. **Portfolio:** It is a systematic collection of student's work and related material that depicts a student's activities, accomplishments, and achievements in one or more school subjects. The collection should include evidence of student's reflection and self-evaluation, guidelines for selecting the portfolio contents, and criteria for judging the quality of the work. Based on teachers' experience it could say that portfolios help students to illustrate their talents, represent their writing capabilities, and tell their stories of school achievement. It is more than an

evaluative tool for presenting a person's developmental growth: it is the tool that in fact concentrate teachers' attention on student's work.

3. **Exams:** An exam is a way to assess, intended to measure a test-taker's knowledge, skill, aptitude, or classification in many other topics (e.g., beliefs). An exam may be administered verbally, on paper, on a computer, or in a confined area that requires a test taker to physically perform a set of skills. Is a test of a student's knowledge or skill in a particular subject. Exams vary in style, rigor and requirements. Stevenson (2010).
4. **5 Phonemic Awareness Activities:** These are didactic exercises focused on developing consciousness about sounds and how important is knowledge about that in order to become competent readers and writers. The activities chosen for this study were: Rhyme awareness and construction- back activity, syllable blending- balloon activity, syllable segmenting- clapping, syllable manipulation- nonsense words and finally sound and word discrimination- divide in boxes. The activities were chosen based on the different phonology levels described by Adams (1998).
5. **Interviews:** Can be defined as a qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind the experiences of the participants. According to Boyce & Neale (2006) the interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, to further investigate their responses.
6. **Teacher's log:** Through this instrument it is possible to document experiences, it helps to follow children development observing and registering their abilities, emotions, interactions, ideas and knowledge. It is the instrument that organizes the most relevant details in real experiences that occur inside of classroom.

The writing aspects that were taken into consideration to analyze in the portfolio, the scrapbook and the first and second exams in their English classes were the following:

1. **Isolated words:** Students tended to use words that were not related to the main topic, they just wrote those words because were the ones that they knew in English.
2. **Copy from the board:** Students copied the same words or expressions that they saw on the board to answer teacher's questions or to express their ideas or thoughts.
3. **Organize words:** Students wrote what they wanted to express syntactically correct.
4. **Repetition:** Through the different activities students wrote using the same expressions or words, they already memorized. They adopt the same words several times in the assessment activities.
5. **Misspelling:** Students tend to write the words they were asked for, incorrectly because they wrote them as they listened when they ask.
6. **Drawings to support ideas:** Students tended to use drawings instead of words to express their ideas or answer teacher's questions, because they did not have enough knowledge about words in their vocabulary.
7. **Free production:** Some students express their ideas or answer teacher's questions using their own words without misspelling and also implementing the use of new words that they had in their vocabulary, they were able to write full sentences.
8. **Use of Spanish and English together:** Students tend to write words and sentences combining Spanish and English.
9. **Use of Spanish:** Students understood teacher's questions in English, but they had a lack of English vocabulary and that is the reason why when they answered the different activities, it was common to see how they used words or sentences in Spanish.
10. **Coherence:** Sometimes the words or sentences students use didn't have enough elements to understand what they wanted to express, actually those words didn't have any sense.

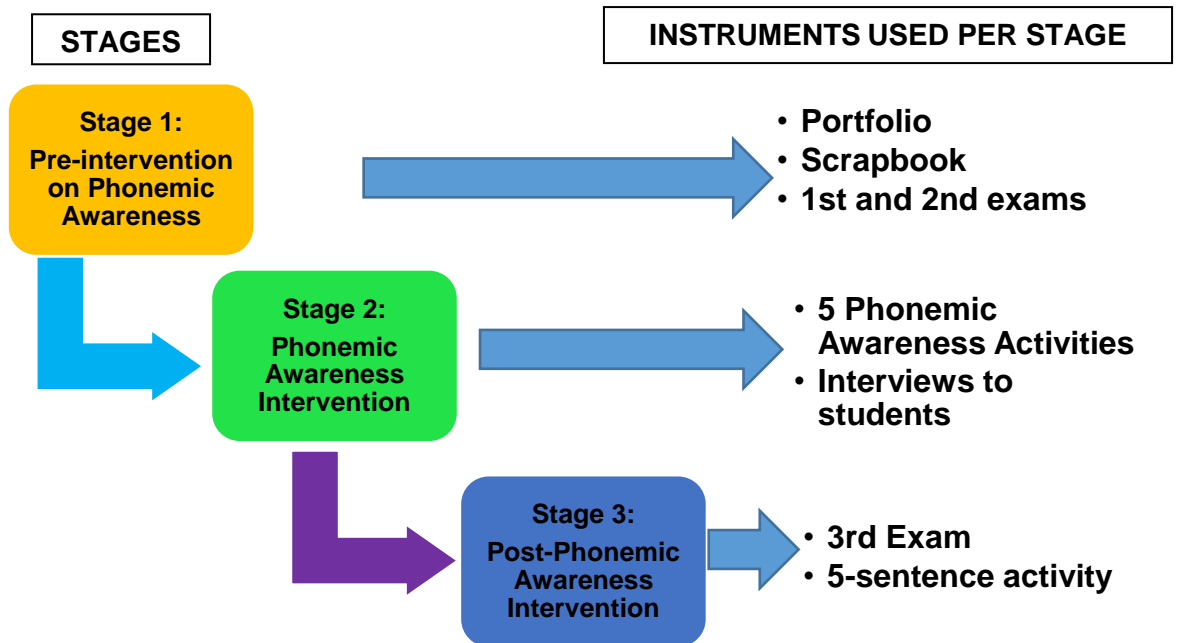
11. Invented words: A lot of times students invented their own words to express what they wanted. The invented words were not just in Spanish or English; words were also in a new vocabulary they invented.

12. Write words to support ideas: Most of the times students used images to express what they liked, accompanied of words in English to support the images and communicate their ideas.

5.4 Procedure

The next graph shows what was done through the phonemic awareness interventions during the whole project:

Graph 2. Stages and instruments used per stage



The description about what was made during the different stages is described in detail below:

FIRST STAGE:

In the first stage an enumeration was made, taking into consideration the number of times the writing aspects previously explained, were repeated in the instruments (Scrapbook, portfolio and 1st and 2nd exams). The main objective was to collect

students' activities in order to define the way, they were writing in English at the end of the third term by May. For this purpose, the activities that were planned and done were classified into the aspects mentioned above: isolated words, copy from the board, organize words, repetition, misspelling, drawing to support ideas, free production, use of Spanish and English together, use of Spanish, coherence, invented words and write words to support ideas.

This classification allowed to identify how many times the students used each one of the aspects mentioned in each one of the activities, which was relevant for the analysis before the phonemic awareness implementation.

The way each activity was implemented is described in the following lines:

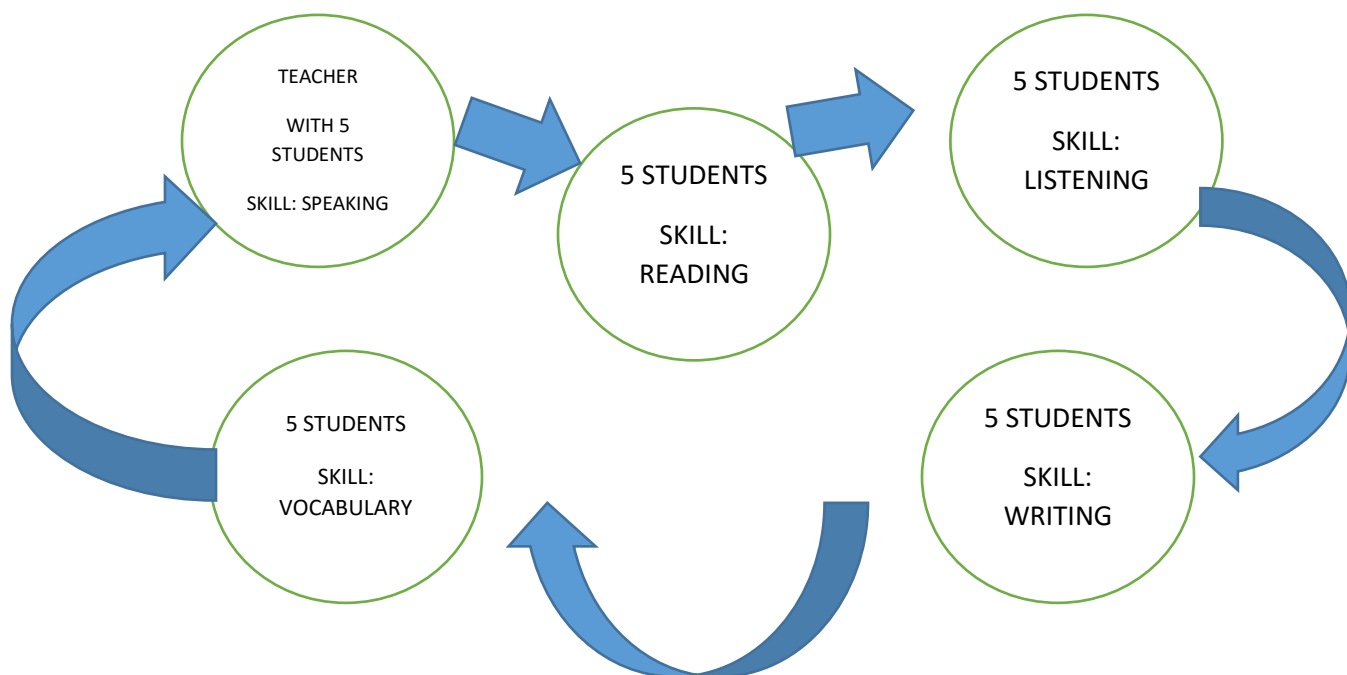
Scrapbook: The teacher designed a fiction activity. The first graders traveled around the world during their school year, they visited countries like Colombia, The United States, India, China, France and England. In all of the countries they had to design their own scrapbook, describing what they liked the most about each country, giving important information about what they investigated and what they knew about the country, writing also what they learnt and pasting the trimmings they took to the class. The scrapbook contains what the students liked and enjoyed the most during his travel around the world and also was the way through which was possible to see the writing process in the foreign language.

Centers: At the private school where this research was developed, one of the most important aspects to take into account during the writing process was the methodology implemented in class (centers). Consists in design 4 or 5 activities where students were able to develop experiences through the different English abilities, what matters in this methodology is not just to improve students' knowledge about one topic but also to become autonomous. The role of the teacher in centers is to design the activities based on each ability and to be in charge of one activity. For this purpose, the teacher has to give enough information and explanation at the beginning of the class about the activities in each center, in order to let students, organize and choose the center they like. During the week students rotated through all of the centers, they also constructed

some material in the activities and the result were used at the end of each class in their portfolios.

Graph 3. Centers' organization with english skills' topic

In the next graph, the center's methodology organization can be observed focused per skills and the students'/teacher's role during one week.



Portfolio: Following the methodology implemented in the school (centers), students had to organize some words or information and also had to complete different writing activities using words or images. The topics in the subjects were, habitats in the countries they visited, social organizations in their closest reality, endangered animals around the world, pollution and traffic signs in different countries, among diverse interesting topics. In the proposed activities, students had to complete a word sheet using words in English and some information about what they had learnt, they organized letters or words to create sentences that allow them to express their thoughts and also they described what they observed through images and produce sentences based on some open questions.

Exams: During the school year, students have to present their exams three times, one per term, during the first stage the first and second exams were analyzed. The third

exam also was analyzed but at the end of the process. That kind of evaluation is designed with the main purpose of assessing knowledge about different topics that students learn every term. The exams were made through different questions like; the open ones, or questions about complete using specific vocabulary, or some in which students just had to draw and write using one word or simple sentences about what they have understood using English.

SECOND STAGE:

In the second stage, 10 observations were carried out about phonemic awareness activities, where students developed sensitivity to the sound structure of language. The main idea was to analyze every phonemic awareness activity, in terms of how many students did the activity correctly and complete it, how many did not complete it and how many did not develop the activity. In all of the activities, it was possible to identify small units of sound interacting with old and new vocabulary, directly related to the topics in English. Activities were designed and applied; listening, alliteration, rhyming, blending, syllables and segmentation activities were implemented and all were repeated twice per week in order to observed changes during the first and second time.

After 5 months working in the scrapbook and the portfolio teacher looked for phonemic awareness activities and designed the implementation of 5 phonemic awareness' activities, these were chosen based on the students' preferences in class, their needs and likes (games). And were implement during 5 weeks; twice per week in order to see if there were any changes between the first and second implementation of the activities.

The description about what was the purpose and development in each phonemic awareness activity is described below:

- 1) Rhyme awareness and construction- back activity:** In this activity students had to choose a partner. One of the students took a paper from a bag (topic: habitats) and he/she was in charge of spelling on his partner's back using his finger, while the other one was trying to write on a piece of paper using a pencil the sound that he/she understood, reading aloud the sound. After the first

student finished and guessed the word, both students had to find a word in English that rhymed with the one they already guessed (words that rhymed were copied in the board). They had to write on another paper the word they guessed. The couple who finished first won one point. At this stage through this activity students produced words that rhymed. These were the words:

DESERT- DESSERT- CONCERT

FRESH WATER- DAUGHTER- MATTER

MARINE- COUSINE- MACHINE

SNOW- BORROW- BELLOW

GRASSLAND- SAND- BAND

TREES- BEES- FREEZE

AQUATIC- CLIMATIC- DRAMATIC

- 2) Syllable blending- balloon activity:** The group was divided into two groups of 12 and 13 students, in this activity students had the classroom full of balloons with different letters, teacher was in charge of giving the first syllable of some words (topic: social organizations) and students had to construct that syllable by using the letters in the balloons and then construct a word with the syllable they had already made, using the same balloons. Twelve words in English were written on the board in order to help and facilitate the activity. At this point students were able to blend 2 syllables or more in words, using the first syllable. These were the words they used in the activity:

HOUSE- FATHER- MOTHER-SISTER

SCHOOL- PRINCIPAL- TEACHER- STUDENT

CITY- DOCTOR- VETERINARIAN- POLICE

- 3) Syllable segmenting- clapping:** The group was divided into three groups of 6 students and 1 group of 7. The three groups were divided into two (ones inside and the others outside of the classroom). In four bags that were located outside

the classroom, students had to find one word that teacher told them (teacher was inside of the classroom with some students) the other students had to go outside and look for the word in English inside of the bag (topic: endangered animals), the first group to write on a piece of paper and then clap the number of syllables in the word in order to get a point. At this moment students were able to say how many syllables were in a word. These were the words they used in the activity:

ANIMALS- PANDAS-TURTLES-ENDANGERED

SNOW- LEOPARD- SIBERIAN- TIGER

CACHALOTE- WHALE- SNUB- NOSE- MONKEY

4) Syllable manipulation- nonsense words: This activity was individual. In a piece of paper (topic: habitats, social organizations, endangered animals, pollution and traffic signs) students had to make up new words using the ones that teacher previously organized and put in a bag, the student who made up more words in 30 seconds and drew a happy face in front of the words that already exist in English was the winner. At this moment, students were able to create new words using their previous knowledge. These were the words they used in the activity:

TRAFFIC -LIGHT- STOP- CONTINUE- ENGLAND- ENDANGERED-FRANCE

LONDON- BRIDGE- SEBASTIAN- UNITED- STATES-POLAR- BEAR

HOUSE- DESERT- INDIA- STATUE- LIBERTY- HABITATS- HOUSE- TOWER

5) Sound and word discrimination- divide in boxes: The group was divided into 5 groups each one with 5 students. The students had to choose one piece of paper from a bag (Topic: pollution) and then they had to put the word they found inside the box to which it belonged, the box had pasted different sounds outside of it, in order to make the relation. At this moment, students were able to identify which sounds and words were similar or different in the foreign language. These were the words students used in this activity:

AIR-PAIR-CHAIR

LAND- HAND- GRAND

WATER- DAUGHTER- MATTER

POLLUTION- SOLUTION- EVOLUTION

TRASH- CASH- FLASH

RECYCLE- CYCLE- MOTORCYCLE

After the second time, each phonemic awareness activity was implemented, some interviews were done to the students:

Interviews: After the second five-phonemic awareness intervention, some interviews were carried out to all of the students, 7 students per activity at the end were interviewed, in order to see how they felt after each one of the activities and what they had learnt. The questions were designed by the teacher, in order to help students to do a metacognition process, that allow them to internalize what they learnt through the phonemic awareness intervention. The teacher was the interviewer and she created an informal and save environment to ask the questions to the students. These were the questions based on the five phonemic awareness activities:

- 1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity? (this question was made in all of the activities)
- 2) Which words rhyme with the word desert, fresh water, marine, snow, grassland, trees, aquatic? (Activity 1)
- 3) What word can you blend with the syllable hou, sch, cit, fath, moth, sis, prin, teach, stu, doc, vete, poli (Activity 2)
- 4) How many syllables have the word endangered, animals, pandas, turtles, snow, leopard, Siberian, tiger, cachalot, whale, snub, nose, monkey? (Activity 3)
- 5) What words can you remember about nonsense activity? (Activity 4)
- 6) What words were similar to air, land, water, pollution, trash and recycle? (Activity 5)

During the five phonemic awareness' implementation, teacher registered in her teachers' log the most relevant details about each activity in the first and second implementation, the next is a detail description about what was written in the teachers' log:

Rhyme awareness and construction- Back activity; 1st time:

The activity started normally but apparently, students didn't understand the instruction because they were doing other things. It was necessary to stop and repeat the instruction twice, asking one student to pass in front of the class and represented the instruction. When the activity started, students asked many times to the students that were writing on the back, to repeat the letters in order to guess the words. It was easy for them to find the words that rhymed with the ones they already knew, but there were two students (one couple) that didn't understand the activity and argued between them frequently, but also there was one couple and one student that did the activity incomplete because the couple was able to rhyme some words but not all of the words were easy to relate with others, they took more time with certain words. It was curious to see, one couple where one student guessed the words, but didn't understand the meaning of them, even if the teacher repeated several times and that didn't allow him to rhyme the words.

Applied in: May- Time: One hour and a half

Rhyme awareness and construction- Back activity; 2nd time:

At the second-time students listened the instruction and immediately they knew what they had to do. Teacher asked them if there were questions and it was common to listen expressions like: "It was easy" or "we know teacher, we know". During the second-time, students were developing the rhyme part of the activity in less time, it was common to see how they worked well organized in groups. There was just one student, that did not do the activity with his partner because he didn't guess the words that his partner drew in his back, and there was one student that did the activity incomplete, because for him was possible to guessed the words that were written on the board but not to rhyme them. An interview was made at the end of the second time

the activity was implemented and based on their answers, students understood the vocabulary they rhymed and also learnt and refreshed the vocabulary about habitats. At the end, they guessed which one was the topic related to the activity.

Applied on: May- Time: One hour

Syllable blending-balloon activity; 1st time:

At the beginning of the activity the instruction was made and six words were written on the board. It was possible to see how students started the activity speaking and spelling in Spanish, and when they constructed the words and the teacher spoke in English immediately they switched to speak in English too. There was one leader that guided the group to win the game and was a clear advantage to identify the students that were able to blend 2 or more syllable words, in contrast with the group that were working together but didn't have a leader and that showed disorder at the time students had to blend the syllables. It was possible to identify two students in that group that called teacher's attention, one that didn't want to participate in the activity and one student that helped his group to organize the first syllable, but his vocabulary was not enough and he wasn't able to find the second syllable to blend the first syllable. In general students were focused on the activities' development and the balloons' element gave and extra point, in terms of attention and motivation because students were excited to start.

Applied on: May- Time: One hour

Syllable blending-balloon activity; 2nd time:

At the second time, it was not necessary to give the instructions because as soon as students saw the balloons and the twelve words were written in the board, they knew what they had to do. The group was divided in the same two groups and ten they started to look for the letters to blend the 6 words implemented at the first time, with 6 more. The second time the activity was implemented, it was possible to notice that just one student had problems to blend the new 6 words, he was able to blend the 6 first ones because they already blended those ones, but at the time he had to blend the 6 new ones, he blended just 3 words, he did the activity incomplete. An interview was

made at the end of the activity and students were able to respond which syllables would blend with others. It is important to mention that 1 student didn't go that day.

Applied on: May- Time: 45 minutes

Clapping activity; 1st time:

The instructions were given and the teacher performed it, in company with another colleague. The teacher explained what they had to do and it was easy for them to understand, because they immediately started to find the first 6 words. It was possible to identify that at the beginning of the activity, students divided each group without any strategy and that determined the time students took to develop the activity (this activity was in fact the longest). This clapping activity was developed by all of the students, they mentioned how easy was to clap and understand the vocabulary (words). They said that clapping allowed them to remember the words faster.

Applied on: May- Time: 45 minutes

Clapping activity; 2nd time:

The second-time students were divided into the same groups, but this time before they started the activity one of them asked for time, to organize a strategy in order to win and the teacher gave all of them the time to think in a strategy and it was possible to notice, how the time was less the second time, in fact all of them completed the activity successfully until the end, looking for the six first words with other 7 more that allowed them to remember the endangered animals' topic and they just required 35 minutes to finish. It was common during the activity development, to listen students express how easy was the activity. During that week, teacher observed some students playing in the break to clap all of the words they imagined. An interview was made at the end of the activity and students were able to know how many syllables had a word and what was the topic related to the words. There was one student that didn't understand one of the questions on the interview and his answer responded to the second activity question in the interview.

Applied on: May- Time: 30 minutes

Syllable manipulation- nonsense words activity; 1st time:

This activity was developed individually and all of the students had a paper, the teacher gave them one word and students had to create new words in 30 seconds, at the beginning was difficult to create new words because they didn't know how and the teacher had to give them an example, after that it was possible to notice how 13 students were able to create new words easily. This activity was difficult for some students in terms of vocabulary knowledge, because they didn't check some words that exist, but they created the list of words, that happened because they had a lack about vocabulary, different from the one they learnt in class, that means that they developed the activity incomplete, different from the ones that didn't do anything; neither the list nor the creation of new words.

Applied on: May- Time: 1 hour

Syllable manipulation- nonsense words activity; 2nd time:

The second-time, students listened carefully the instruction and the teacher gave them all of topics before students started the activity, in order to help a little bit to relate the topics and the vocabulary to create the list. This time, it was possible to notice how more students wrote the list of words based on one word and also understood and knew the vocabulary and less students did not do the activity. Some students didn't do it, because they expressed that it was difficult to think in words. At the end one interview was made and it was possible to notice that words students remembered were directly related to the topics they like or developed the most in their scrapbooks.

Applied on: May- Time: 45 minutes

Sound and word discrimination- divide in boxes 1st time:

The teacher gave the instructions about the activity and she read the 9 words written in the papers aloud and one example of one word, different from the one that had the same sound in the box. At the beginning of the activity, students took the paper with the word from the bag, but they didn't read them aloud, they just saw the words and classified them in the sound boxes, it was clear how even the activity was in group, students tended to develop it individually, without asking their classmates. Two

important situations were presented because of that, the first one was that the time was very short and the second thing was that as a result of the individual work it was possible to identify how just 10 students (2 groups) did the activity complete and classifying the words in the corresponding sound boxes in contrast with other 10 students (2 groups) that did the activity incomplete because were fighting each other to classify the words and at the end they didn't classify the words correctly and 5 students (one group) that did not do the activity because no single word was located in the correct sound box.

Applied on: May- Time: 35 minutes

Sound and word discrimination- divide in boxes 2nd time:

In order to help students to understand what they had to do, the teacher made the activity once and then students followed the instruction easily. It was possible to identify, how at the beginning of the activity students chose a word from the first 9 ones and the 9 new ones (18 words) and teacher had to help them performing the word (if it was possible) because some of them didn't understand or remember what was the meaning. After that extra help, it was easy for them to classify the words into the different sound boxes, but this time was different in terms of cooperative work, because students chose the word and immediately they read it aloud in order to obtain classmates help and that allowed them to classify. It took more time, but it was more effective at the time they had to classify the words, because at the end of the second time more students did the activity complete. This time a careful observation was made inside of each group while they were developing the activity, identifying that 19 students did the activity complete without much kind of help, 4 did not work inside of their groups because they were playing and 2 students did the activity incomplete because were not able to recognize some sounds in order to classify them. At the end of the second implementation of this activity, it was possible to made an interview that showed how students, were are able to identify different sounds and also understand different words.

Applied on: May- Time: 50 minutes

THIRD STAGE:

In the third and final stage, the analysis was made on the third term final exam (The writing part) and one activity which students had to write what they had learnt. At the end of the process, students wrote 5 sentences in order to see how they were writing after the phonemic awareness activities' intervention. Students had to write 5 free sentences answering to the questions: What do you like the most about everything that you have learnt? What do you remember about the things you learnt?

6. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This section presents the results of the data gathered from the instruments (Scrapbook, portfolio and 1st and 2nd exams), the first and second phonemic awareness activities implementation, the 3rd exam and 5 writing sentences activity results, and the answers of the interviews, after the second time the phonemic awareness activity was implemented.

First of all, through the Scrapbook, portfolio and 1st and 2nd exams, it was possible to identify the different writing aspects students used to express their ideas and develop certain kind of activities in class, aspects like isolated words, copy from the board, organize words, repetition, misspelling, drawings to support ideas, free production, use of Spanish and English together, use of Spanish, coherence, invented words and write words to support images, were the writing aspects found in the scrapbook instrument at the beginning of May.

According to the scrapbook instrument, it was found that students tended to support their ideas using drawings instead of using Spanish and English together when they wrote. Taking into consideration students context (bilingual context) it is possible to see the use of Spanish and English together described as the less used in the scrapbook instrument. However, it was found that in the portfolio instrument, students preferred to use words to support images instead of invent words. Taking a look at the first and second exams, it was possible to relate how students used the invented words aspect and the write words to support images aspect, to give their answers because they guarantee through the use of both aspects the corresponding grade.

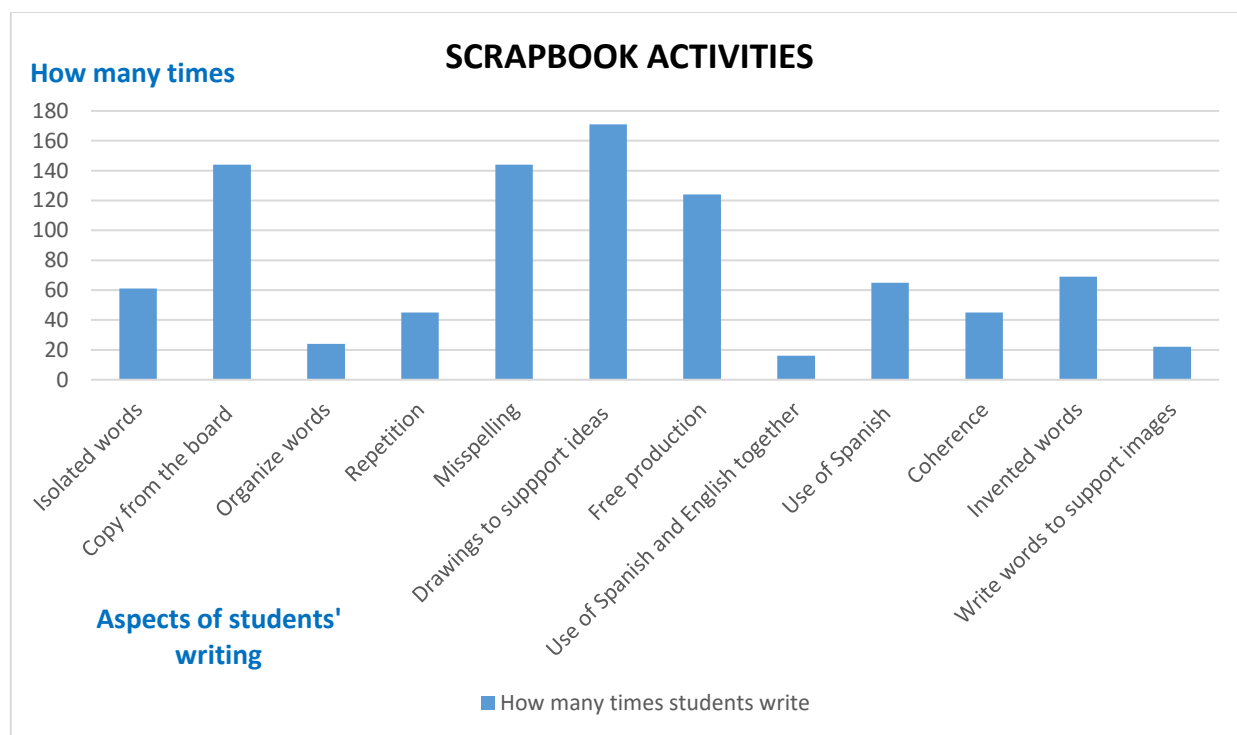
During the interviews, it was possible to see the impact of phonemic awareness development and how students were able to relate what they learnt about specific topics and at the same time they felt comfortable to express that knowledge and their ideas through words in English at the end of the process in the 3rd exam and the 5 writing sentences activity.

First graders should go through daily writing practices where students are able to practice, learn and improve three kinds of writing: Opinion, informative and narrative, Kelmon (2018). The opinion and informative writing were the kinds of

writing students were able to develop more in this research based on the different instruments applied. Through the relation among the different texts students read, their opinions and also the information they responded about what they've learned, it was possible to conclude the writing stages where they finished at the end of the process.

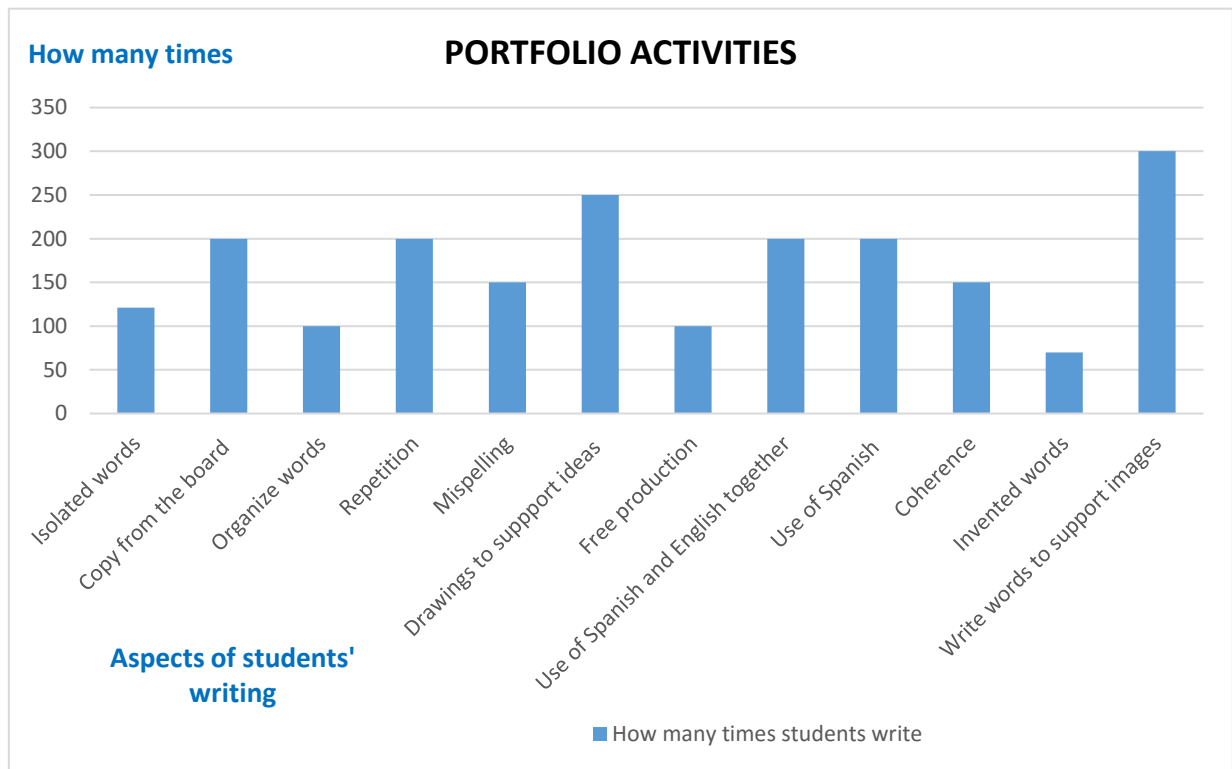
Graph 4. Scrapbook Activities

In the next graph, it is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 61 times, copy from the board= 144 times, organize words= 24 times, repetition= 45 times, misspelling= 144 times, drawings to support ideas=171 times, free production=124 times, use of Spanish and English together= 16 times, use of Spanish= 65 times, coherence=45 times, invented words=69 times, write words to support images= 22 times) from September 2016 until May 2017 in the scrapbook tool.



Graph 5. Portfolio Activities

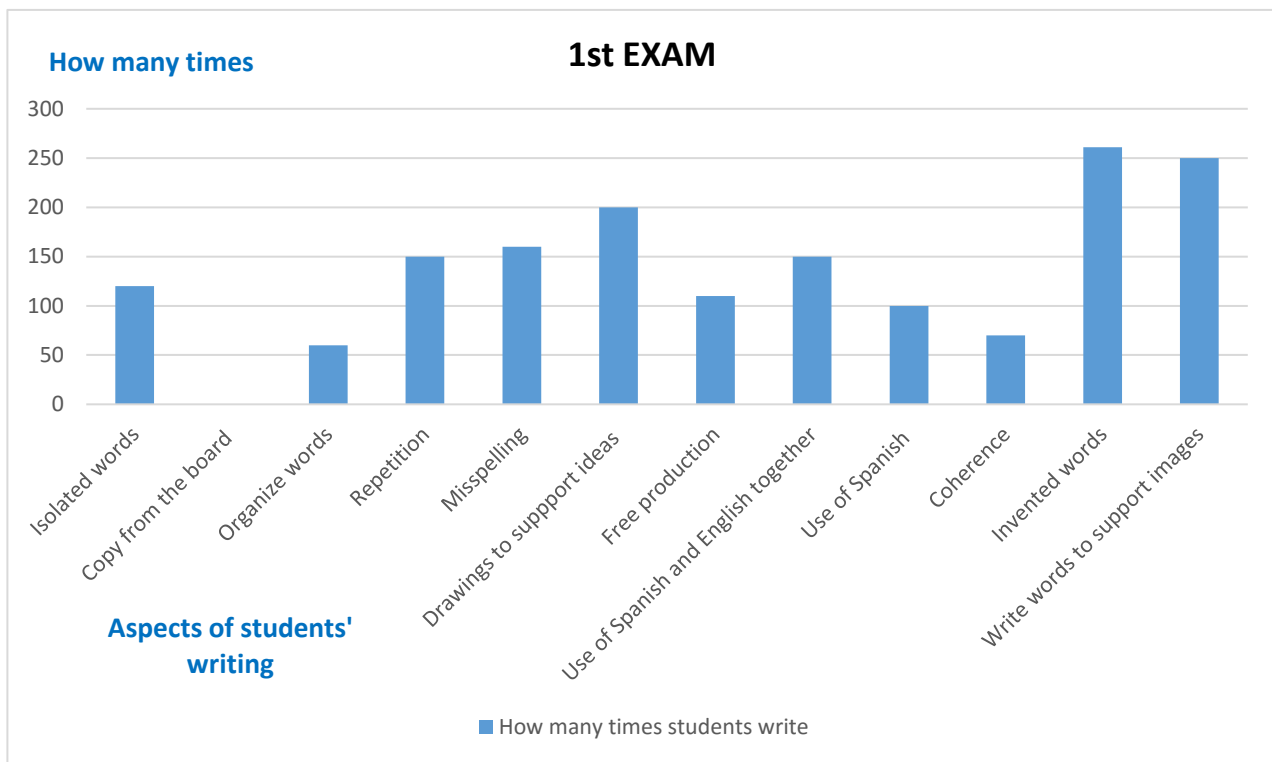
In the next graph, it is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 121 times, copy from the board= 200 times, organize words= 100 times, repetition= 200 times, misspelling= 150 times, drawings to support ideas=250 times, free production=100, use of Spanish and English together= 200 times, use of Spanish= 200 times, coherence=150 times, invented words=70 times, write words to support images= 300 times) from September 2016 until May 2017 in the portfolio tool.



Graph 6. 1st Exam Analysis

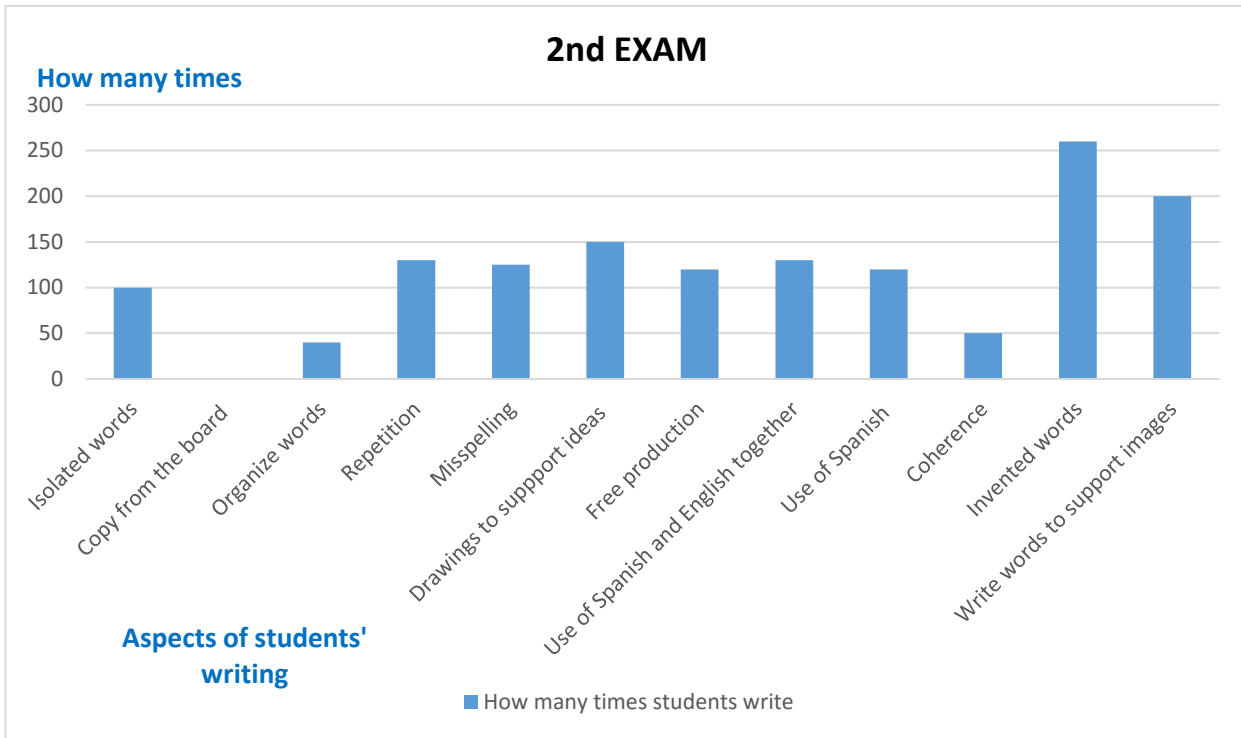
In the next graph, it is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 120 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 60 times, repetition= 150 times, misspelling= 100 times, drawings to support ideas=200 times, free production=110, use of Spanish and English together= 150

times, use of Spanish= 100 times, coherence=70 times, invented words=261 times, write words to support images= 150 times) at the end of the first term in their first exam presentation.



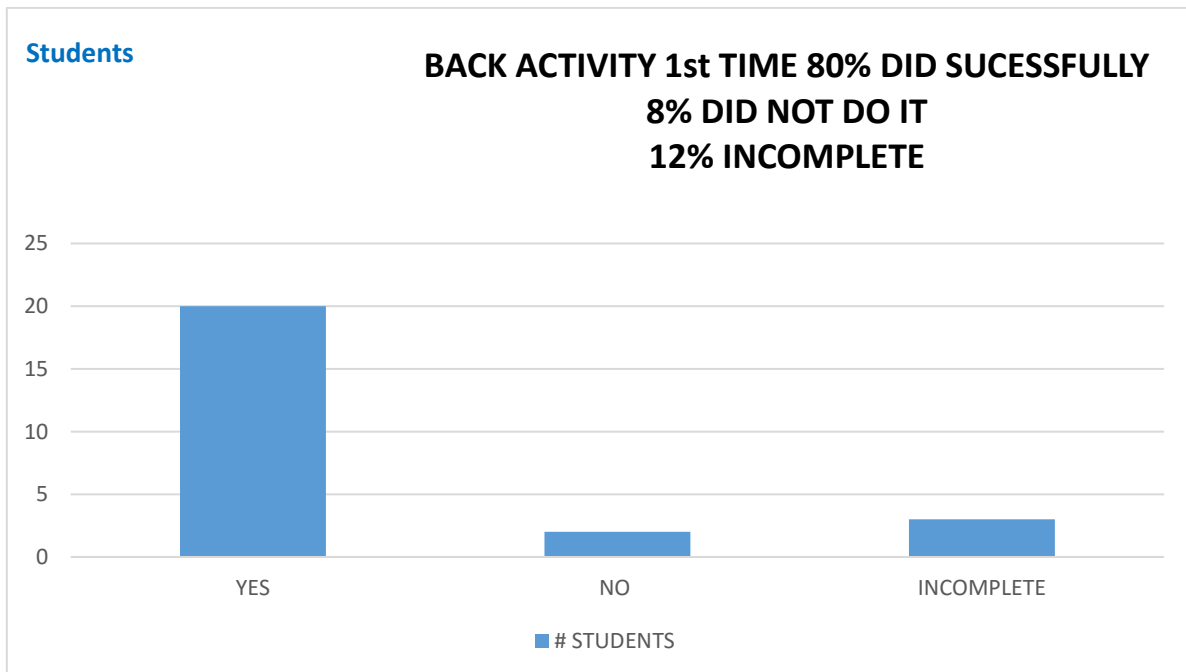
Graph 7. 2nd Exam Analysis

In the next graph, it is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 100 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 40 times, repetition= 130 times, misspelling= 125 times, drawings to support ideas=150 times, free production=120, use of Spanish and English together= 130 times, use of Spanish= 120 times, coherence=50 times, invented words=260 times, write words to support images= 200 times) at the end of the second term in their second exam presentation.



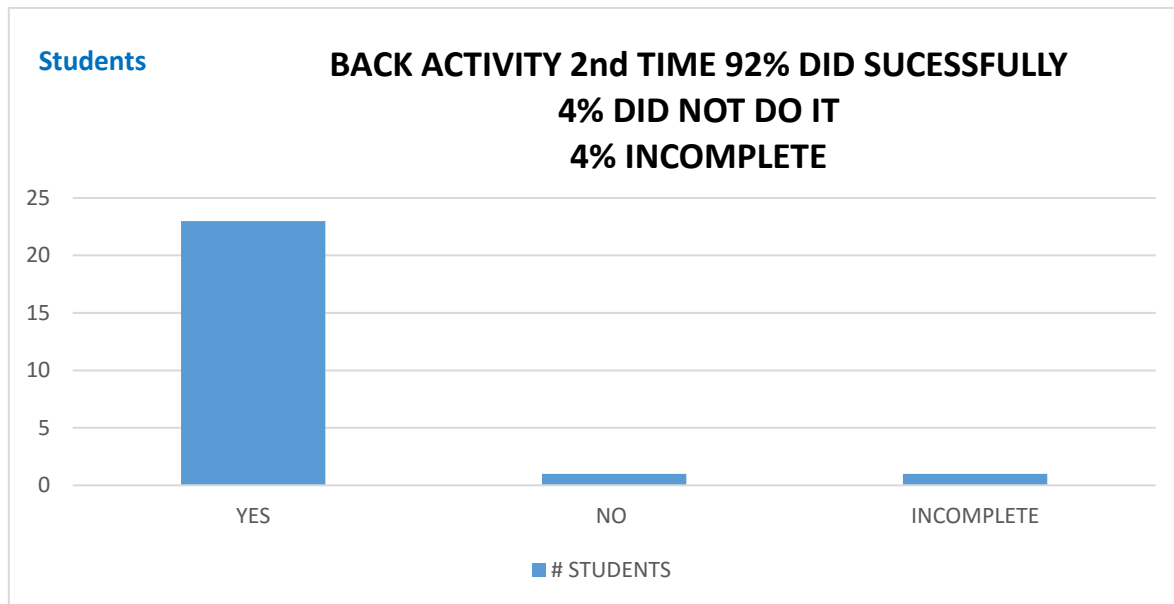
Graphs 8. Back Activity 1st Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 20 completed the activity successfully= 80%, 2 did not do the activity=8% and 3 did it incomplete= 12% the first time the back activity was made.



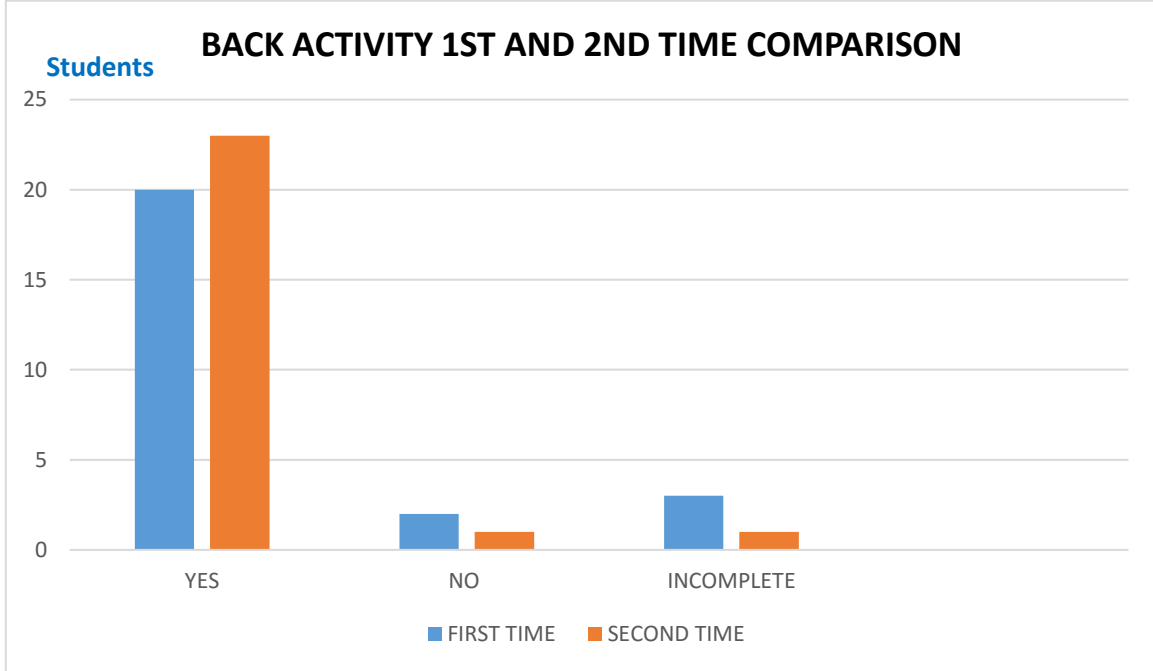
Graphs 9. Back Activity 2nd Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 23 completed the activity successfully=92%, 1 did not do the activity=4% and 1 did it incomplete= 4% the second time the back activity was made.



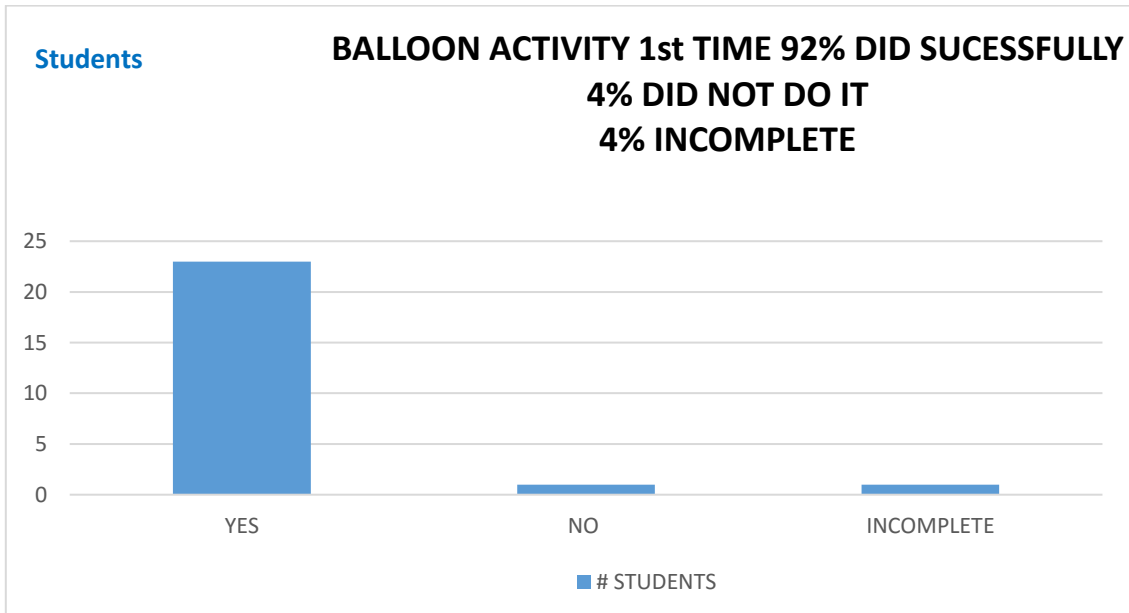
Graph 10. Back Activity 1st And 2nd Time Comparison

In the graph, it can be seen the comparison among the first and second time of back's activity implementation. The first time, 20 students did the activity complete in contrast with the second time that shows 23 students that completed the activity. The graph also shows 2 students that did not do the activity at the first time in contrast with 1 student that did not do the activity the second time. Finally, the graph shows a comparison among the first time the activity was made incomplete by 3 students and the second time that was made incomplete by 1 student.



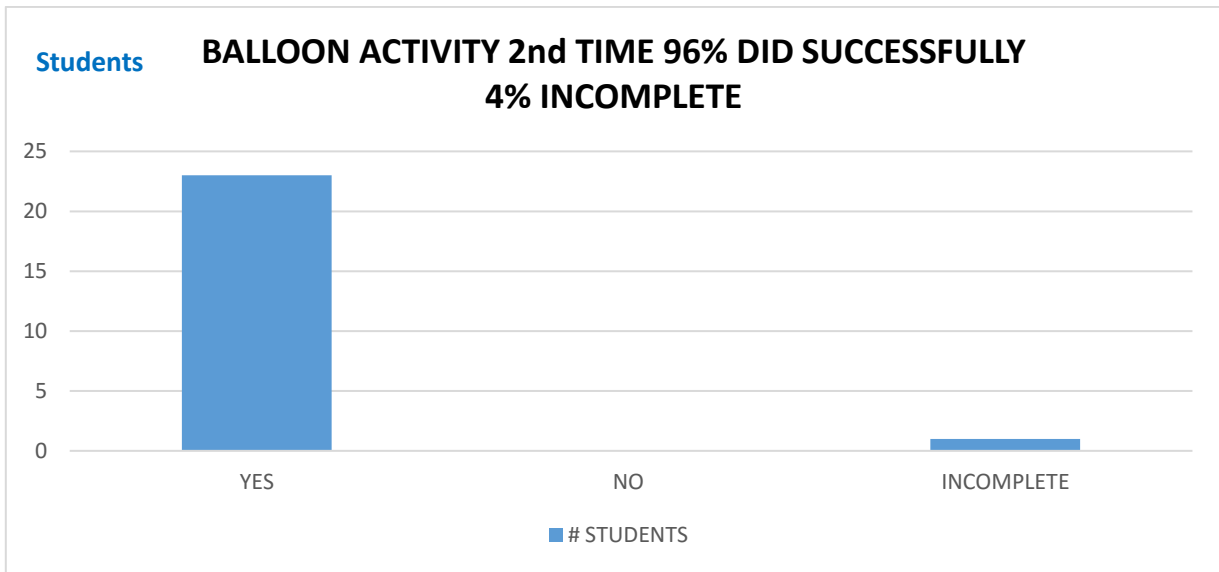
Graph 11. Balloon Activity 1st Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 23 completed the activity successfully= 92%, 1 did not complete the activity=4% and 1 did it incomplete=4% the first time the balloon activity was made.



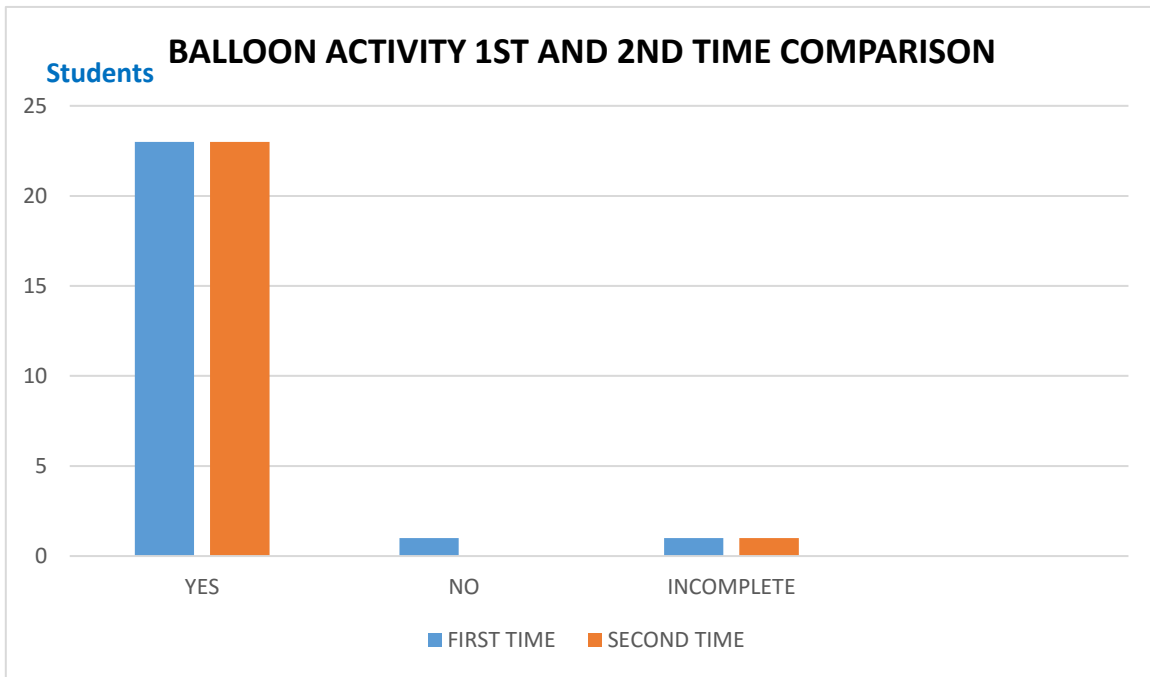
Graph 12. Balloon Activity 2nd Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 24 completed the activity successfully=96% and 1 did the activity incomplete=4% the second time the balloon activity was made.



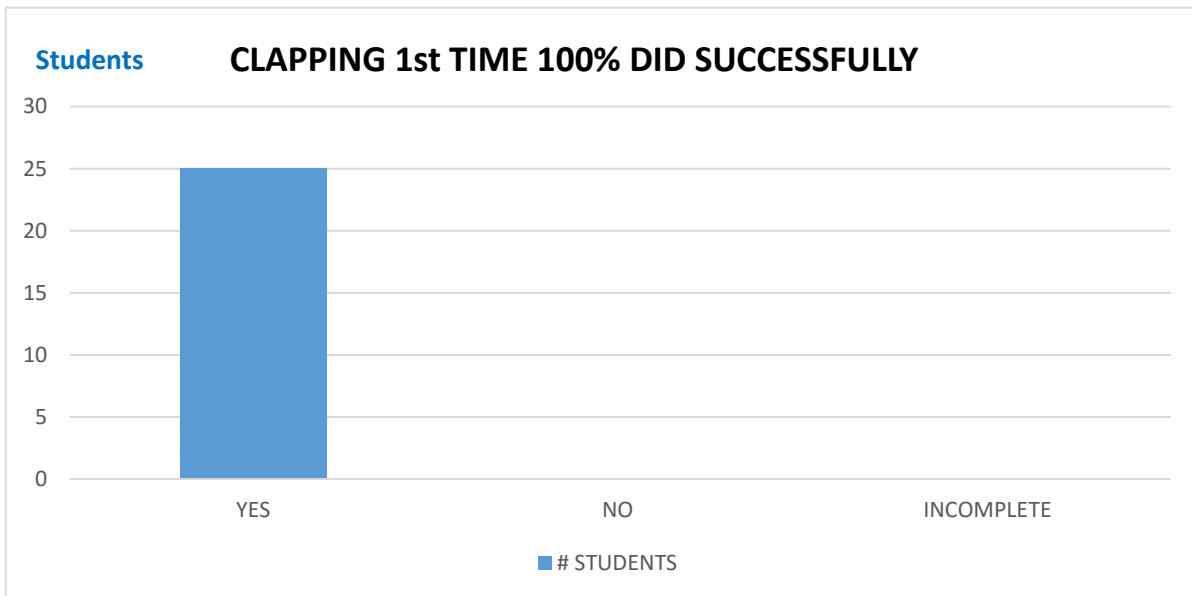
Graph 13. Balloon Activity 1st And 2nd Time Comparison

In the graph, it can be seen the comparison among the first and second time of balloon's activity implementation. The first time and second time, 23 students did the activity complete. The graph also shows 1 student that did not do the activity at the first time in contrast with a second time where there were not students that did not do the activity. Finally, the graph shows a comparison among the first time the activity was made incomplete by 1 student and the second time that was made incomplete by 1 student.



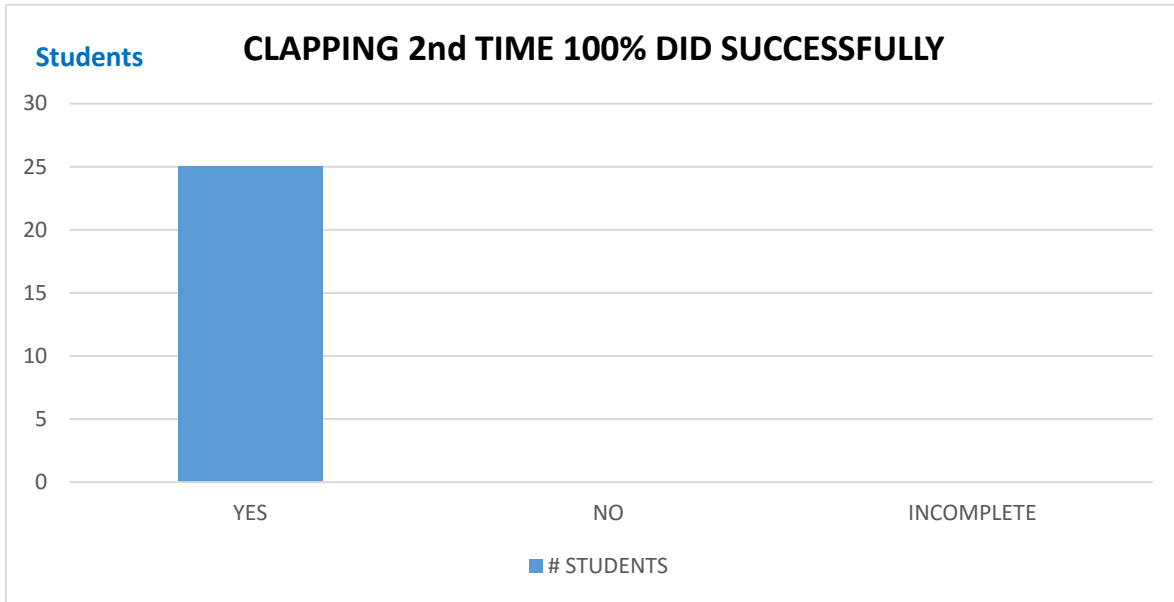
Graph 14. Clapping Activity 1st Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, the 25 completed the activity successfully=100% the first time the clapping activity was made.



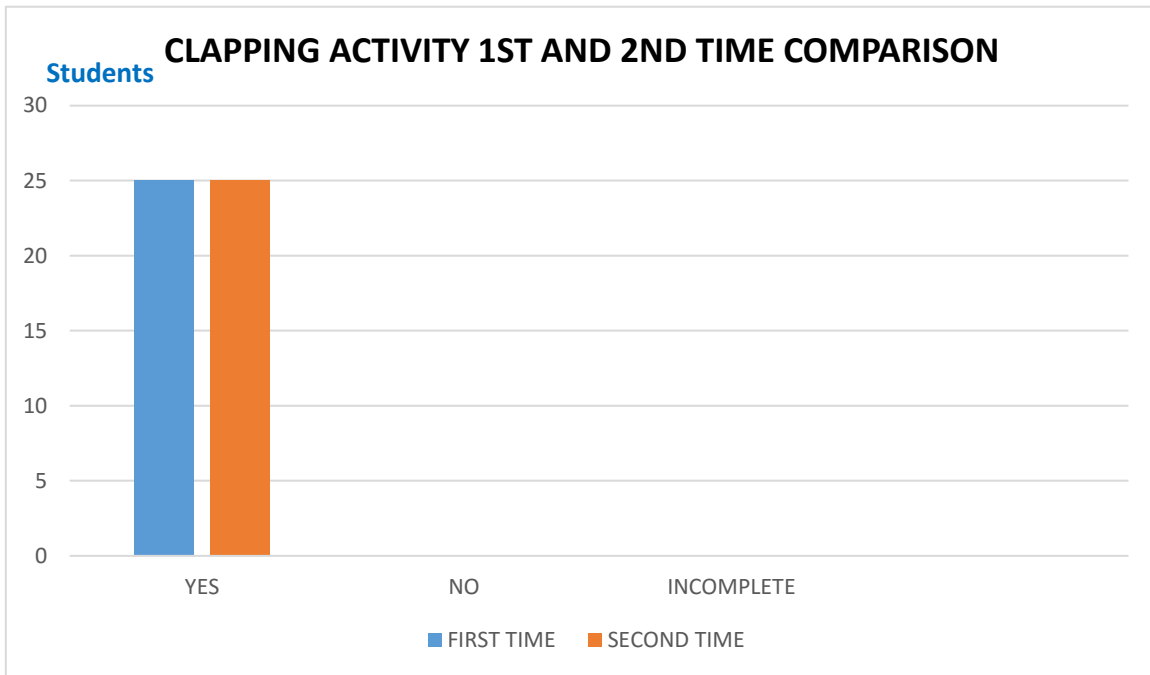
Graph 15. Clapping Activity 2nd Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students the 25 completed the activity successfully=100% the second time the clapping activity was made.



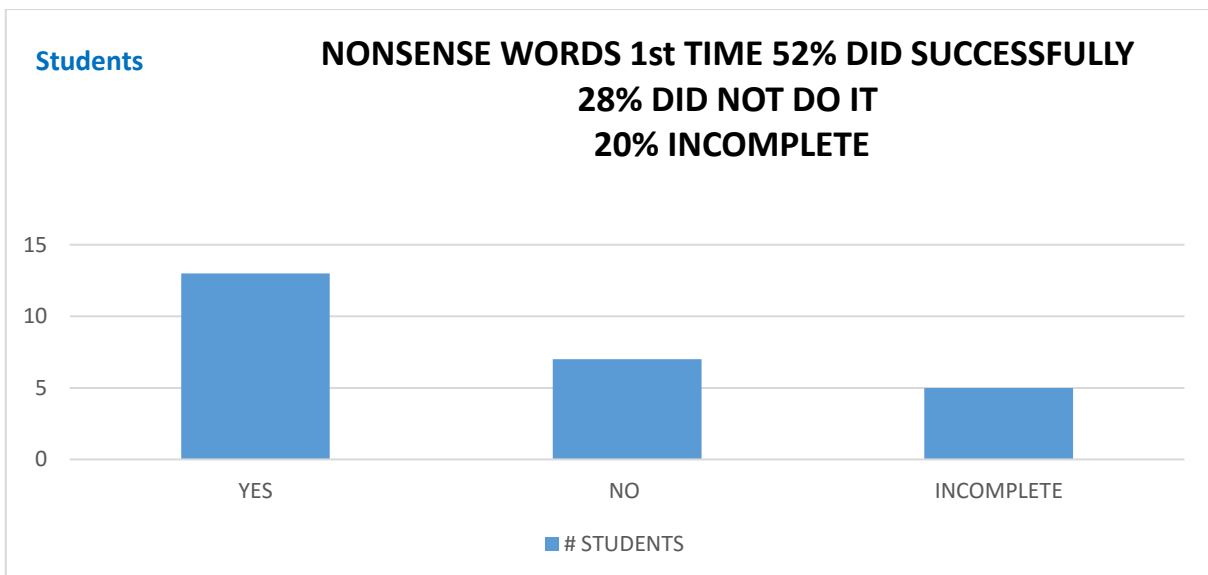
Graph 16. Clapping Activity 1st And 2nd Time Comparison

In the graph, it can be seen the comparison among the first and second time of balloon's activity implementation. The first and second time, 25 students did the activity complete. The graph also shows that there were not students that did not do the activity at the first or second time, and finally that there were not students that did the activity incomplete in the first or second time.



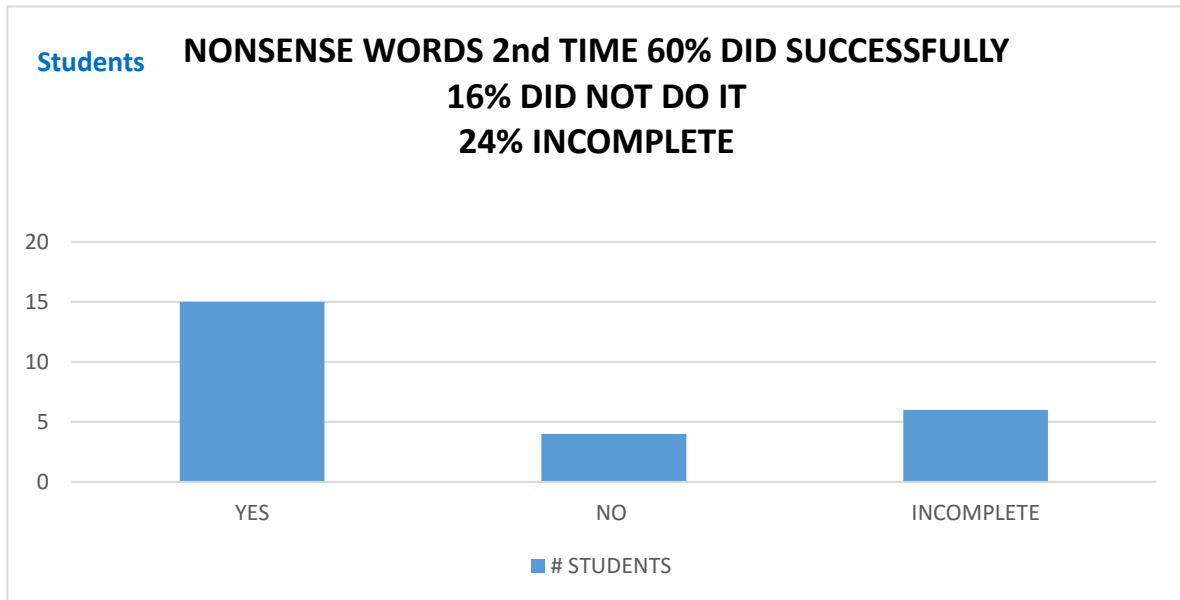
Graph 17. Nonsense Words Activity 1st Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 15 completed the activity successfully=60%, 4 did not complete the activity=16% and 6 did it incomplete=24% the first time the nonsense words activity was made.



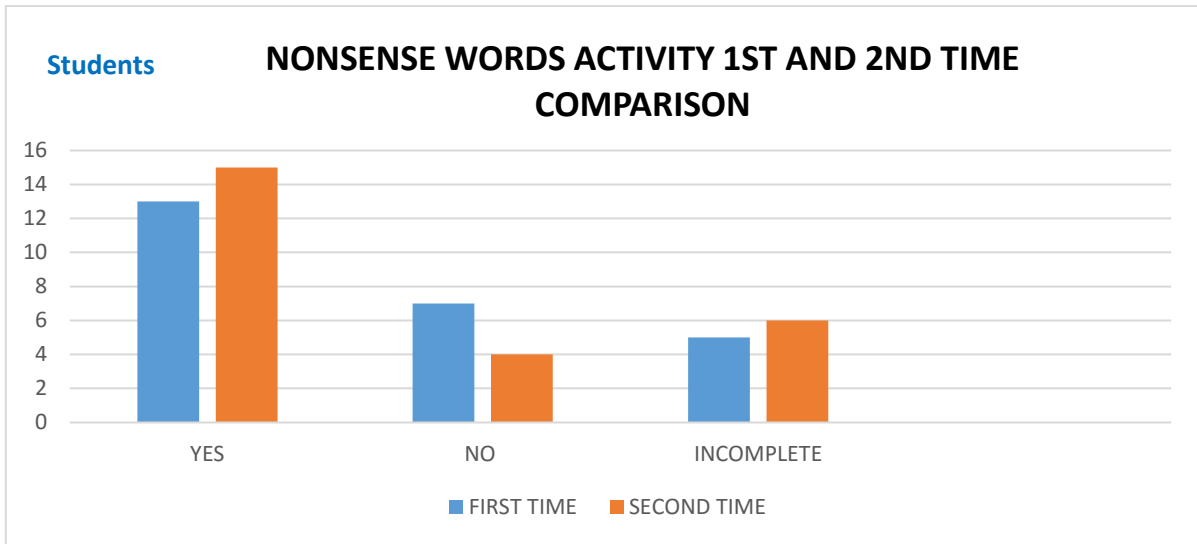
Graph 18. Nonsense Words Activity 2nd Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 13 completed the activity successfully=52%, 7 did not complete the activity=28% and 5 did it incomplete=20% the second time the nonsense words activity was made.



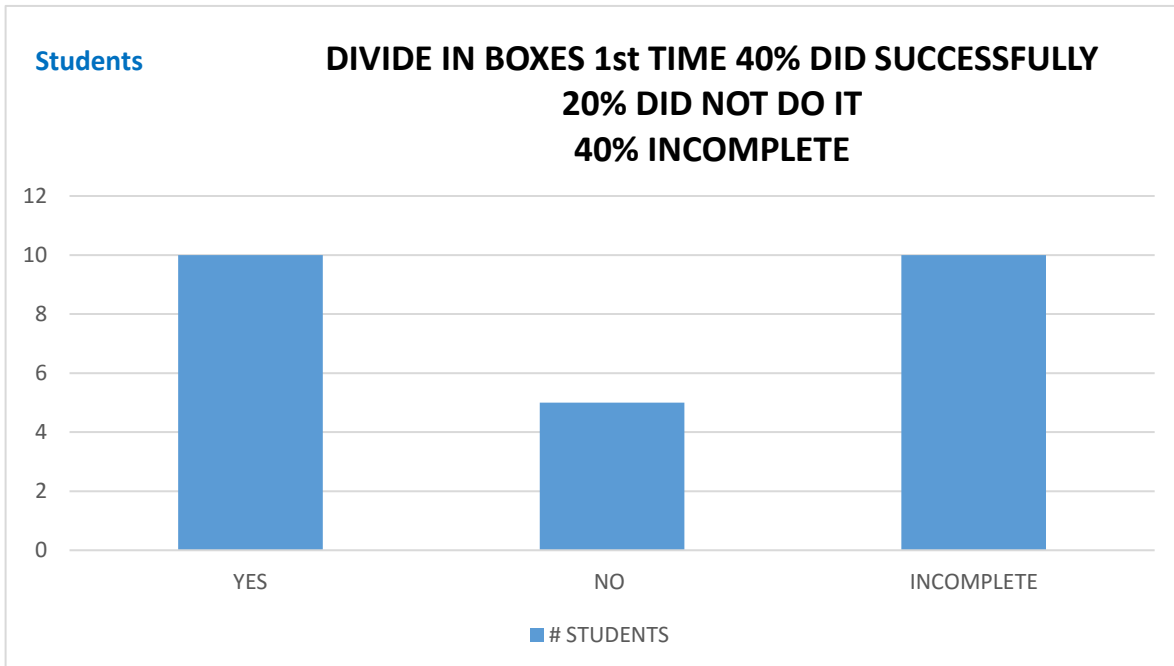
Graph 19. Nonsense Activity 1st And 2nd Time Comparison

In the graph, it can be seen the comparison among the first and second time of nonsense word's activity implementation. The first time, 13 students did the activity complete in contrast with the second time that shows 15 students that completed the activity. The graph also shows 7 students that did not do the activity at the first time in contrast with 4 students that did not do the activity the second time. Finally, the graph shows a comparison among the first time the activity was made incomplete by 5 students and the second time that was made incomplete by 6 students.



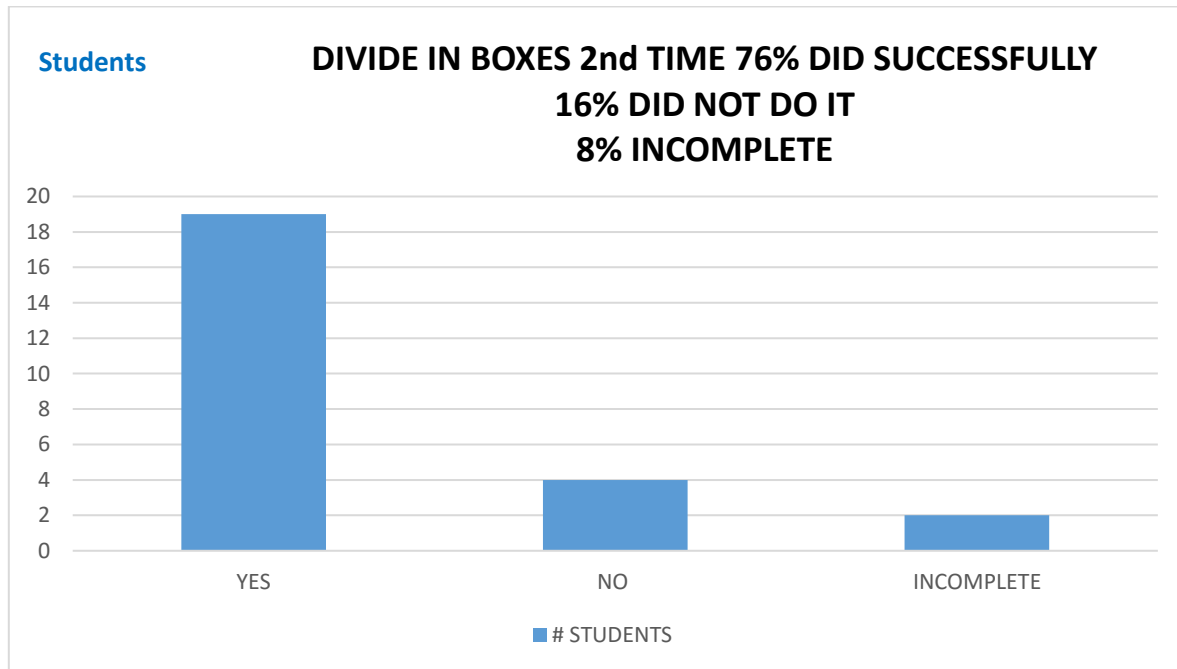
Graphs 20. Divide In Boxes Activity 1st Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 10 completed the activity successfully=40%, 5 did not complete the activity=20% and 10 did it incomplete=40% the first time the divide in boxes activity was made.



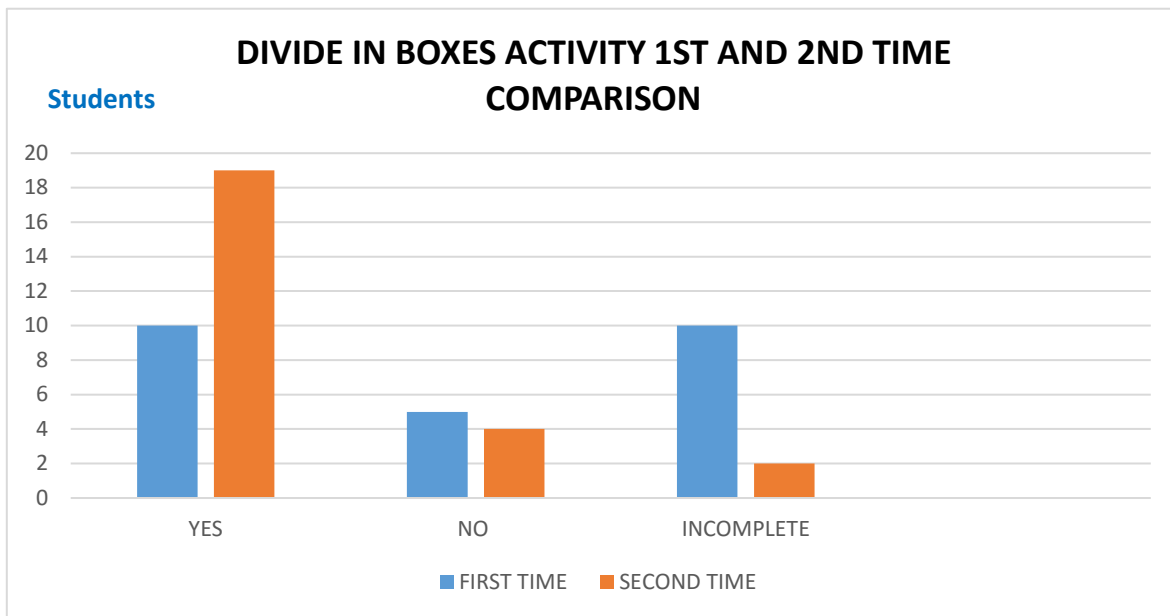
Graphs 21. Divide In Boxes Activity 2nd Time

In the graph, it can be seen that out of 25 students, 19 completed the activity successfully=76%, 4 did not complete the activity=16% and 2 did it incomplete=8% the second time the divide in boxes activity was made.



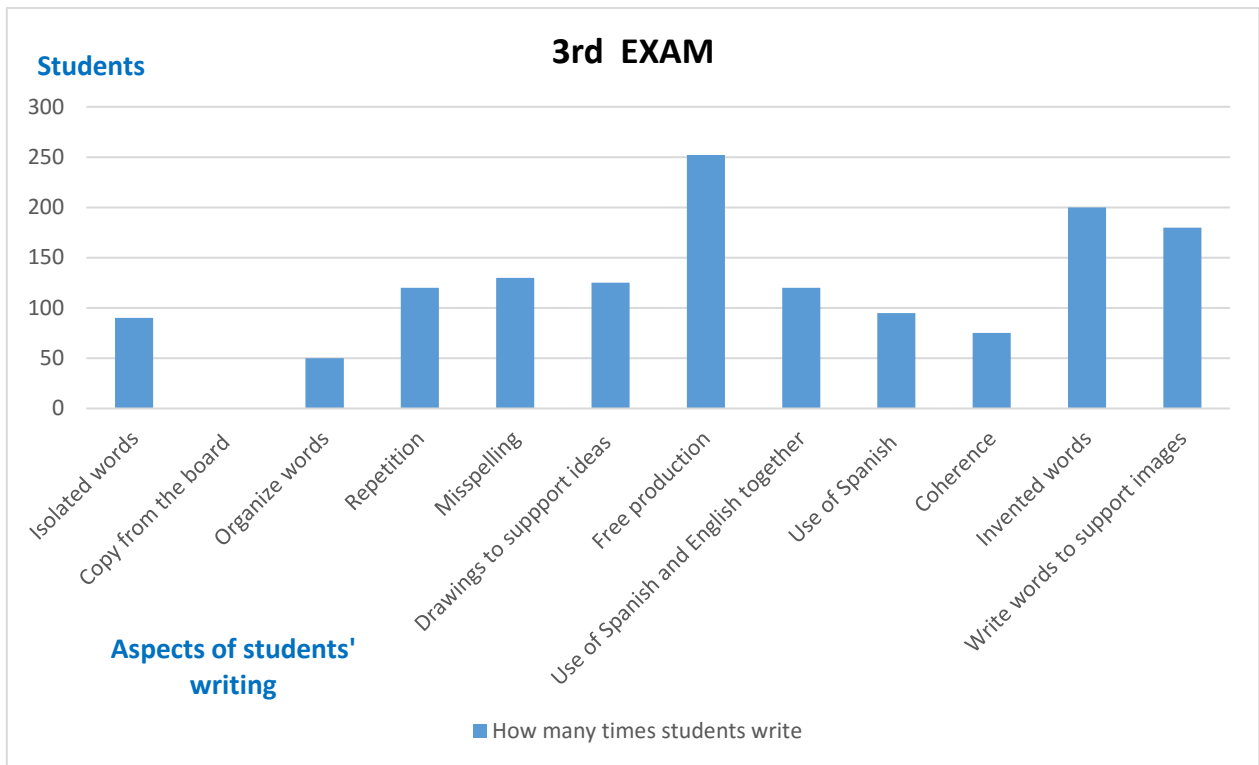
Graph 22. Divide In Boxes Activity 1st And 2nd Time Comparison

In the graph, it can be seen the comparison among the first and second time of divide in boxes' activity implementation. The first time, 10 students did the activity complete in contrast with the second time that shows 19 students that completed the activity. The graph also shows 5 students that did not do the activity at the first time in contrast with 4 students that did not do the activity the second time. Finally, the graph shows a comparison among the first time the activity was made incomplete by 10 students and the second time that was made incomplete by 2 students.



Graph 23. 3rd Exam Analysis

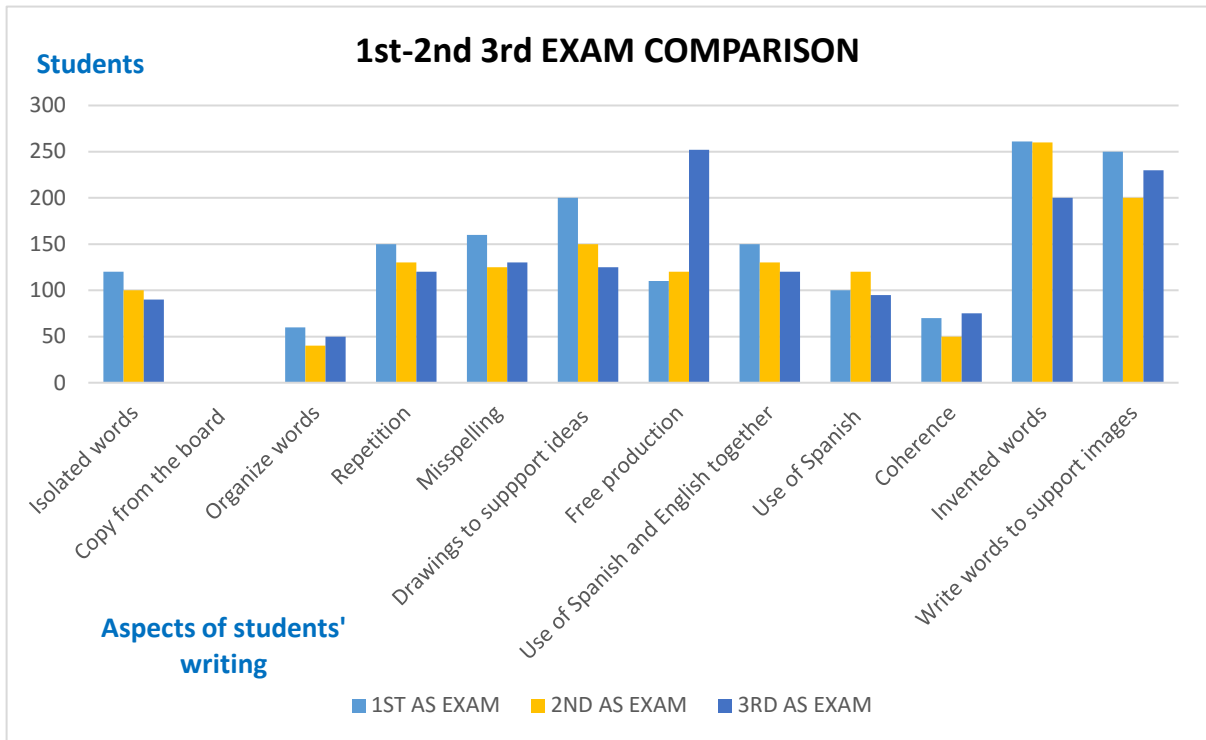
In the next graph, it is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 90 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 50 times, repetition= 120 times, misspelling= 130 times, drawings to support ideas=125 times, free production=252, use of Spanish and English together= 120 times, use of Spanish= 95 times, coherence=75 times, invented words=200 times, write words to support images= 180 times) at the end of the third term in their third exam presentation.



Graph 24. 1st, 2nd And 3rd Exam Comparison

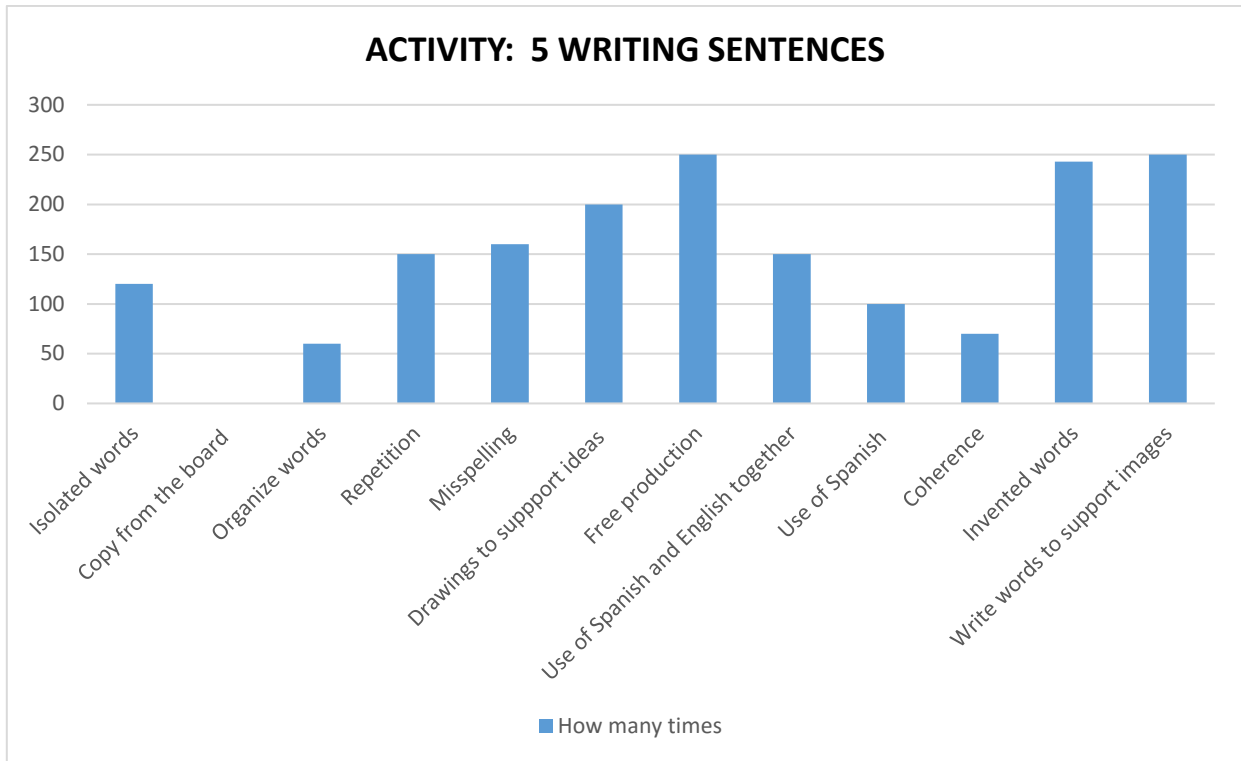
In the next graph, it is possible to see a comparison among the first, second and third exams taking into consideration how many times students wrote using the writing aspects. In the first exam students wrote using; Isolated words= 120 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 60 times, repetition= 150 times, misspelling= 100 times, drawings to support ideas=200 times, free production=110, use of Spanish and English together= 150 times, use of Spanish= 100 times, coherence=70 times, invented words=261 times, write words to support images= 250 times. In the second exam students wrote using; Isolated words= 100 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 40 times, repetition= 130 times, misspelling= 125 times, drawings to support ideas=150 times, free production=120, use of Spanish and English together= 130 times, use of Spanish= 120 times, coherence=50 times, invented words=260 times, write words to support images= 200 times. Finally, in the third exam students wrote using; Isolated words= 90 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 50 times, repetition= 120 times, misspelling= 130 times, drawings to support ideas=125

times, free production=252, use of Spanish and English together= 120 times, use of Spanish= 95 times, coherence=75 times, invented words=200 times, write words to support images= 230 times).



Graph 25. Activity: 5 Writing Sentences

In the next graph is possible to identify how many times students wrote using the writing aspects (Isolated words= 120 times, copy from the board= N/A, organize words= 60 times, repetition= 150 times, misspelling= 160 times, drawings to support ideas=200 times, free production=250, use of Spanish and English together= 150 times, use of Spanish= 100 times, coherence=70 times, invented words=243 times, write words to support images= 250 times) at the end of the process in the 5 sentences activity.



INTERVIEWS:

Table 3. Interviews' Answers

In the next graph, it is possible to see the different answers students gave in the interview, after the second intervention using the five phonemic awareness activities (Back activity, balloon activity, clapping activity, nonsense words activity and divide in boxes activity).

INTERVIEWS: QUESTIONS

	ACTIVITY #1		ACTIVITY #2		ACTIVITY #3		ACTIVITY #4		ACTIVITY #5	
	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2
	1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity?	2) Which words rhyme with the word desert, fresh water, marine, snow, grassland, trees, aquatic?	1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity?	2) What word can you blend with the syllable "hou-", "sch-", "cit-", "fath-", "moth-", "sis-", "prim-", "teach-", "stu-", "doc-", "vete-", "poli-"	1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity?	2) How many syllables have the word endangered, animals, pandas, turtles, snow, leopard, Siberian, tiger, cachalot, whale, snub, nose, monkey?	1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity?	2) What words can you remember about nonsense activity?	1) What did you like or enjoy the most about the activity?	2) What words were similar to air, land, water, pollution, trash and recycle?
INTERVIEWS: STUDENTS' ANSWERS										
Student 1	I like to use the finger and the new words.	GRASSLAND-BAND AQUATIC-CLIMATIC	I like to play with balloons	FATH- FATHER PRIN- PRINCIPAL	I like to play in the playground	ENDANGERED=3 ANIMALS= 3	I like to learn new words	UNITED STATES ENDANGERED	I like to learn new words	AIR- CHAIR RECYCLE- MOTORCYCLE
Student 2	I like to work with my friends	TREES- BEES DESERT- CONCERT	I like to work with my friends	MOTH- MOTHER DOC- DOCTOR	I like to play with my friends	MONKEY= 2 PANDAS= 2	I like to invent words	HABITATS HOUSE	I like to play and work with my friends	WATER- MATTER POLLUTION- SOLUTION
Student 3	I like to play with my friends	MARINE- MACHINE WATER- MATTER	I like to learn with balloons.	TEACH- TEACHER HOU- HOUSE	I like to learn about endangered animals	TURTLES= 2 LEOPARD=2	I like to write new words	DESERT POLAR BEAR	I like to learn in class	LAND- GRAND WATER- MATTER
Student 4	I like to use the finger and learn	GRASSLAND-BAND DESERT-CONCERT	I like to use balloons to learn	MOTH-MOTHER VETERI-VETERINARIAN	I like to use clap the words	SNUB= 2 SIBERIAN=3	I like to write and learn	EFFEL TOWER INDIA	I like to use words	TRASH- FLASH POLLUTION- SOLUTION
Student 5	I like to work with my friends.	TREES- BEES MARINE- MACHINE	I like to play with my friends	FATH- FATHER TEACH- TEACHER	I like to work with my friends	TREES- BEES MARINE- MACHINE	I like to play with my friends	TAHJ-MAJAL INDIA	I like to work with my friends	WATER- MATTER RECYCLE- MOTORCYCLE
Student 6	I like to play	SNOW- BORROW AQUATIC- CLIMATIC	I like to learn	POLI- POLICE DOC- DOCTOR	I like to learn and play	TIGER= 2 CACHALOT= 3	I like to learn and play	FRANCE UNITED STATES	I like to use boxes.	TRASH- FLASH AIR- CHAIR
Student 7	I like to play with the finger	GRASSLAND- SAND DESERT- CONCERT	I like to play with letters	MOTH- MOTHER HOU- HOUSE	I like to run in the playground	WHALE= 1 NOSE= 1	I like to invent words	INDIA EFFEL-TOWER	I like to organize the words	POLLUTION- SOLUTION RECYCLE- MOTORCYCLE

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSION

This section presents the analysis of the data gathered from the instruments (Scrapbook, portfolio and 1st and 2nd) exams), the phonemic awareness activities development, the observations through the implementation process and the interviews after the second time each activity was implemented.

The relation among the instruments and the writing aspects in English

According to the analysis of the instruments, the writing process in English in first graders was characterized by the use of diverse writing aspects that Ferreiro (2002) mention in the stages of the process to acquire the skill of writing. She considers different moments that help to categorize the aspects students adopt in their writing and most important that allow teachers to measure and understand the progress of children in their writing process.

Based on the instruments applied and the writing analysis of the writing aspects in the foreign language, it was possible to find that both can be related to some writing stages like; “The construction of differentiation forms”, where the aspects that children used were placed between the transition among drawings, scrawls and letters. It was also possible to identify aspects related to “the phonetic production” where they showed a first approach to the different sounds and the corresponding representation of the letters, continuing with “the phonetic correspondence” stage, described as the understanding of letters and the combination of sounds and ending with “the alphabetic stage” where learners were able to prove that they comprehended each alphabetic code, creating free sentences with coherence and order using their previous knowledge in terms of what they learnt after having passed through the other stages of the process.

Phonemic awareness intervention

After eight months analyzing the instruments and paying attention to the students' needs and likes, the possibility of finding a strategy that allowed first graders to change the way they were writing in English became the biggest challenge and that brought to consider that work on phonemic awareness implementation was the precise strategy

to achieve the writing goal. Although, phonemic awareness is considered the most important predictor in reading and writing successfully, it was found that first graders had a vague idea of that fact at the beginning of the research and it was necessary to systematize the application of phonemic awareness activities in order to notice gradual differences in the process.

Based on the phonemic awareness activities that were implemented, it was found that it is possible to change the way students write in English as a foreign language. Through the process students could rhyme, blend, segment and create words, they were able to identify sounds and also count syllables. Furthermore, they were able to play and learn at the same time because the activities were related to the first-grade project "Traveling around the world" and the English subjects (Social studies and Science) in order to change the way they wrote.

Phonemic awareness intervention: The strategy that offers children choices to improve orthography

Through the use of materials like papers, balloons, boxes and plastic bags it was possible first to organize and then to develop phonemic awareness activities in English that helped students to rhyme, blend, segment and create new words in order to change and improve their vocabulary and write better. To work on phonemic awareness is considered a determining factor to writing successfully because it allows learners to understand and play with individual sounds in order to write and handle words in the foreign language.

In order to learn how to write it is important to know first how words work and that is possible only if learners understand first how relevant sounds are to develop words and there are different strategies related to "play" and learn about sounds at the same time. In fact, there is one of those strategies that is also an ability that fits perfectly in the writing goal, the phonemic awareness.

Now, with regards to the five phonemic awareness activities that were implemented with first graders, each one was designed carefully with the main purpose of promoting the writing ability development through a different but also meaningful way and the

different graphs point out that the students were interested in the phonemic awareness activities development because most of the students finished the instruction completely. It means that by applying a phonemic awareness plan within the classroom and specially in first grade, the writing ability, the pronunciation, the vocabulary and the language itself is going to improve because as Saddler and Graham (2005) mention; learners can improve their knowledge from the most basic to the most complex units (Ascending method) and even in that way their learning process at the end is going to be successful and the goal accomplished.

According to the findings, the phonemic awareness' activities implemented with first graders had elements related to the writing aspects that students used in their activities. Those aspects were connected to the different writing stages in order to understand the process better and organize the activities with a clear purpose, to change the way students wrote in the second language.

The result of this study after the interview showed how meaningful the activities were in terms of the relations students were able to do about what they learnt in the phonemic awareness intervention (previous knowledge) and the knowledge they obtained after that (use of new vocabulary in English that they were able to connect).

8. CONCLUSIONS

How the phonemic awareness intervention improve ortography inside of the writing skill in English as a foreign language?

From this study, it can be concluded that working on phonemic awareness activities with first graders in order to improve or change ortography inside of students' writing in English as a foreign language, represents an interpret the world, was an interesting proposal to construct the writing process starting from the most basic elements (sounds) in order to go to the most complex ones (words). It is important to take into consideration that learners are starting their formal writing process in first grade and that is probably the biggest reason to look for a strategy that guarantee progress in the process. Phonemic awareness allows learners to feel comfortable with writing while they enter into the formal instruction of writing in the foreign language.

Working on phonemic awareness with first graders, gives children the opportunity to change the way they wrote letters and constructed words, knowing the sounds better and being aware of the different combinations of those sounds in relation to the alphabet in English, in order to achieve the language goal. While first graders improve their writing through phonemic awareness, it is also possible to see how they are getting prepared to face their academic future and their corresponding challenges.

Written language is based on sounds' representations. Writing itself is letters and symbols that represent particular sounds and the phonemic awareness activities implemented with first graders, were conceived as the "beginning" of the process, in order to use sounds understanding to construct meaning through words, in fact students through the phonemic awareness intervention were able to work on some important aspects like orthography that allowed them to get into the formal writing process.

Impact of phonemic awareness intervention in ortography as a foreign language

The analysis of the different writing aspects in English used by students to express their ideas or complete the different activities, show variety in terms of preferences at the time students face writing. At the beginning of the process students did not use

words, in contrast with the results after the phonemic awareness implementation where they started to use words in English to support their knowledge about the topics.

According to the phonemic awareness activities percentages, there is a high percentage participation of students in four of the five phonemic awareness activities. This study also shows how the students got involved into the activities development showing their likes and interests, increasing their knowledge about sounds in English that at the end of the process, they were able to turn into words with the proper ortography.

During the class observations that were written in the teachers' log about the phonemic awareness activities, it was found that students work to rhyme, blend, count syllables, create words and identify sounds focused on the aspects related to improve writing in terms of sounds and ortography, encouraging kids to use English, participate, learn, enjoy and play at the same time.

While the writing process was gaining strength, it was possible to see how students asked for more writing activities in English. Sounds acquired relevance based on the specific tasks that were proposed and applied, managing to impact the different stages of the writing process in the present looking at the reading process in the future.

In the 3rd exam along with the five sentences activity, it was possible to identify how students started to use more words to support the images they used, in contrast with the use of drawings, that they tended to prefer at the beginning of the study.

According to Reutzel (2015) all primary-grade teachers should know that if they help to create a good start in children's writing using creative strategies like phonemic awareness, probably in their future students will have meaningful progress and succsefull in their school careers.

Does ortography changed after phonemic awareness intervention?

The work done in this study fulfilled the objective proposed, by changing the way students used to write in English as a foreign language using phonemic awareness in order to achieve that goal. Analyzing first, the main writing aspects students adopted to write in English, with the purpose of name and understand the aspects, continuing

with the search of the strategy that suggested a meaningful change that helped teachers to improve students orthography and other aspects inside of writing in the foreign language.

The phonemic awareness activities have important aspects that allowed learners to develop different abilities at the same time.

To sum up “Phonemic awareness activities help children to learn how to distinguish individual sounds or phonemes within words” (Blevins, 2017). It was found that although there exist diverse ways to improve orthography inside of the writing skill in the foreign language, the phonemic awareness activities implemented by the teacher with first graders, were chosen based on the educational context, the children’s process and also their likes and needs and that clearly switched the ways students performed the five phonemic awareness’ activities, proving that students developed the activities successfully because according to the purposes of the activities and the corresponding development of each one, they were learning through games seeing that at the end of the process students wrote more, differently and properly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, J., Foorman, R., Lundberg, I. & Beeler, T. (1998). The elusive phoneme. *American Educator*, 22 (1 & 2), 18-29.
- Adams, J., Foorman, R., Lundberg, I. & Beeler, T. (1998). *Phonemic awareness in young children: A classroom curriculum*. Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing.
- Alberta, E. (2000). Illustrative examples for English language arts: Kindergarten to grade 9. *Journal of alberta learning cataloguing in publication data*, 4(20), 18-30.
- Blevins, S. (2017). *Phonics from A to Z*. Third edition. New York, United States: Scholastic.
- Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A Guide for Designing and conducting in-depth Interviews*. Watertown, United States: Pathfinder International Tool Series.
- Buckler, P. (2006). *The scrapbook in American life*. Philadelphia, United States: Temple University Press.
- Christie, J., & Roskos, K. (2003). *Literacy in play, in literacy in America: An encyclopedia of history, theory and practice*. Denver, United States: Guzzetti.
- Cremin, T., & Myhill, D. (2011). *Writing voices: Creating communities of writers*. London, England: Routledge.
- Dougherty, K., & McKenna, M. (2006). *Reading research at work, foundations of effective practice*. New York, United States: The Guilford Press.
- Ferreiro, E. (2002). *Writing and orality, units, levels of analysis and metalinguistic awareness: Relations in dependence between orality and literacy*. Barcelona, España: Gedisa.
- Genlott, A., & Gronlund, A. (2013). Improving writing skills through learning reading by writing: The iwtr method presented and tested. *Journal of computers and education*, 67 (2013), 98-104. doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2013.03.007

González, R., Cuetos, M., Vilar, J. & Uccira, E. (2015). The effects of intervention in phonological awareness and speed on learning of writing. *Journal of open classroom*, 43 (2015), 1-8. doi: 10.17811/rifie.43.2015.1-8

Goswami, U. (2000). Phonological and lexical processes: Handbook of reading research. *Journal of pearson & R. Barr*, 3(2), 251-267. doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(94)00645-2

Gutierrez, R. (2017). Facilitators of the learning process of writing in early ages. *Journal anales de psicología*, 33(1), 32-39. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.32.3.229611>

Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(4), 437-447. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.80.4.437>

Kelmon, J. (2018). Your 1st grader's writing under common core standards. *Great Schools organization 2018, ss1-7*. Retrieved from: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/first-grade-writing/>

Lane, H., Pullen, B., Eisele, P. & Jordan, L. (2002). Preventing reading failure: Phonological awareness assessment and instruction. *Preventing School Failure*, 46 (2), 101-106. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10459880209603354>

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.

Laurie, M., Díaz, C., & McLachlan, C. (2007). *Literacies in childhood changing views, challenging practice*. Marrickville, Australia: Elsevier.

Lewis, M. (2000). The promise of dynamic systems approaches for an integrated account of human development. *Journal of child development* 71 (1) ,36-43. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00116>

Manitoba, E. (2011). *Early returns: Manitoba's early learning and child care curriculum framework for preschool centres and nursery schools*. Toronto, Canada: Educational resources information center.

Manzo, A., & Manzo, U. (1995). *Teaching children to be literate: A reflective approach*. Lakeforest, United States: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Martinez, N., Coyle, I. & De Larios, R. (2015). Pre-school children's production of sibilant phonemes in English: Developing phonemic awareness through multi-sensory teaching. In V. Murphy & M. London, England: British Council

Osewalt, G. (2014). Phonological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics: What you need to know. Retrieved from: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning>.

Reutzel, D (2015) Early literacy research: Findings primary-grade teachers will want to know. *Journal of the reading teacher*, 69 (1), 14-24. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1387>

Robinson, L. (2003) Technology as a scaffold for emergent literacy: Interactive storybooks for toddlers. *Journal of young Children*, 58(6), 42-48.

Rosado, L. (2018) *Bilingual education supplemental*. Texas, United States: Research and education association.

Roskos, A., Christie, K., & Richgels, F. (2003) The essentials early literacy instruction. Retrieved from https://www.bowdoin.edu/childrens-center/pdf/ParentResources_LiteracyEssentials.pdf

Saddler, B., & Graham, S. (2005) The effect of peer-assisted sentence combining instruction on the writing performance of more and less skilled young writers. *Journal of educational psychology*, 919907 (1), 43-54. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.97.1.43

Scholes, R. (1998) The case against phonemic awareness. *Journal for research in reading*, 21 (3), 177-188. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.00054>

Senechal, M., LeFevre, K., Colton, V. & Smith, B. (2000). On refining theoretical models of emergent literacy. *Journal of school psychology*, 39 (5), 493-60. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405\(01\)00081-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(01)00081-4)

Siegler, R. (2000). The rebirth of children's learning. *Journal of child development*. 71 (1), 26-35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00115>

Stevenson, A. (2010) *Oxford dictionary of English. Third edition*. Oxford, England: Oxford university press.

The Australian government department of education (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming. The early years learning framework for Australia*. Barton, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.

The Office for Standards in Education (2011). *Children's Services and Skills Recovered* from: http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/attachment_data/file/247456/0968.pdf

Trehearne, M. (2000) *Kindergarten teacher's resource book*. Vancouver, Canada: Nelson language art.

Vega, E., & Vargas, M. (2015) Phonological awareness: A step in English language development. *Journal of opening writing doors*. 12 (1), 81-116.