**RAE**

1. **TIPO DE DOCUMENTO:** Trabajo de grado para optar por el título de Licenciada en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Lengua Inglesa

2. **TITULO:** Children's writing process through Cooperative Learning Groups

3. **AUTORES:** Engye Lizeth Barrios Castillo, Andrea Milena Pinto García.

4. **LUGAR:** Bogotá, D.C.

5. **FECHA:** Abril de 2013

6. **PALABRAS CLAVE:** Writing Process Approach, Second Language Acquisition, and Cooperative Language Learning.

7. **DESCRIPCION DEL TRABAJO:** El objetivo principal de este proyecto es contribuir tanto en el desarrollo de la escritura como en el trabajo cooperativo en los niños de nivel intermedio en Ingles. Lo anterior basándonos en teorías y estudios previos sobre el aprendizaje cooperativo y el enfoque de escritura. También se presenta el análisis de datos de la información recolectada durante la realización de este proyecto.

8. **LINEAS DE INVESTIGACION:** Línea de investigación de la USB: Practica educativa y pedagógica.

9. **FUENTES CONSULTADAS:** H. Bradbury, The handbook of action research, SAGE publications Ltd. 2001. M.A Buitrago "Fostering writing production in EFL by designing a magazine through cooperative learning" Universidad Del Bosque, 2010. A. Burns "Collaborative action research for English language teachers" Cambridge University Press, 1999. L. Cohen, Research methods in education, Routhledge Talor &Francis group, 2008. S.Cushing, Assesing writing, Cambridge University Press, 2002. David w. johnson, r. t, Aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula, Paidos educador, 1994. N. Diaz "Peer editing: a strategic source in EFL students'writing process" Externado Nacional Camilo Torres, 2010. R. Ellis, SLA Research and language teaching, Oxford University Press, 1997. D. Freeman, Doing teacher-research from inquiry to understanding, Heinle & Heinle publihsers, 1998. J. Harmer "How to teach english: an introduction to the practice of english language teaching", Person Longman,1998. S. Kagan, Cooperative learning and sociocultural factors in schooling, Resources for teachers, Inc, 1986. D. A. Melgarejo "Assesing chidren's perceptions of writing in EFL based on the process approach" Cooperacion Universitaria UNITEC, 2010. J. Salvador "Progressive writing, an easy approach to composition" New way magisterio, 2007.

10. **CONTENIDOS:** La escritura se define por Salvador (2007) como "la codificación de un mensaje", lo que significa que una persona puede expresar cualquier idea o pensamiento al utilizar símbolos como letras o dibujos. Además, la escritura permitió a la gente compartir conocimientos con los demás y tener la oportunidad de no perderse durante el tiempo, porque al escribir es posible mantener un momento o una historia seguros en bibliotecas o archivos. "Aprendizaje de una segunda lengua es a veces un contraste con el segundo aprendizaje de un idioma en el supuesto de que se trata de un proceso diferente, por ejemplo, el término" adquisición "se utiliza para referirse a la exposición, mientras que el término" aprendizaje "se utiliza para referirse al estudio consciente de una segunda lengua "(Ellis, 1985, p. 6), cuando los estudiantes van a la escuela a la que se exponen a aprender otro idioma y otra cultura y vocabulario. Por lo tanto, los estudiantes tienen más oportunidades de aprender y comunicarse.

11. **METODOLOGIA:** Es una Acción- Investigación, con un enfoque metodológico con base en situaciones reales dentro del aula de clase y que busca generar una solución a esta creando nuevas estrategias.

12. **CONCLUSIONES:** El estudio demostró que la mayoría de los estudiantes de cada grupo quería llevar a cabo el trabajo asignado y reconoció que cuando había colaboración en el grupo este funcionaba mejor. Además, los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de elegir la tarea, el orden y el ritmo con el cual querían trabajar. Otro aspecto interesante que ocurrió durante la interacción entre los estudiantes fue que decidieron pedir el apoyo del profesor con el fin de ayudar a terminar las ideas de la historia. Y, el humor era un buen aspecto que ayudó a los grupos para tener un mejor ambiente, también se observó que los grupos siempre han tenido en cuenta la risa y las bromas, evitando las clases monótonas y momentos hilarantes.

CHILDREN'S WRITING PROCESS THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS

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Abstract

This qualitative action research project was based on cooperative language learning and writing compositions. It was carried out at Military University from February to September 2012, with intermediate level students in a Saturday English course. The main objective was to analyze the process in writing compositions of children through the use of cooperative language learning. The researchers decided to focus on the former topics because the observations during the English classes and the interviews conducted at the beginning of the project, evidenced that students preferred working on speaking, listening and reading than doing written tasks. For this project, three data collection instruments were used: interviews, audio recordings and students' artifacts. With these instruments, we wanted to collect real data to analyze the process of children's written compositions when working in cooperative groups. Thus, the research questions that guided the study were: what is the impact in the writing process approach when working in cooperative learning groups? And, what does the use of cooperative language learning inform us about children´s interaction at Military University? During the process the students developed the three stages. Where they should create a story in cooperative groups, each groups developed a good interaction and they chose a student with a leader personality, developing a strategy where they learnt to respect other ideas, participated by turns and work together in order to have a good work and achieve the same goal.

*Key words:* Writing Process Approach, Second Language Acquisition, and Cooperative Language Learning.

Table of contents

Table of Appendixes

## 1.  Project Identification

Tenth semester students from San Buenaventura University implemented this research during 2012. They were undergraduate students of basic education with emphasis in English. The place where the researchers conducted the study and the data collection process was at Military University. Therefore, the following table identifies the Project:

Table 1:

Title: Identification of the Research

| Title of The Project | Children's writing process through Cooperative Learning Groups |
|---|---|
| Date | February To November 2012 |
| Institutional Research Line | Educational and Pedagogical Practice |
| Thesis Director | Jorge Enrique Muñoz Oyola – M.A in Applied Linguistics to TEFL |
| Main Researchers | Engye Lizeth Barrios and Andrea Milena Pinto |
| Institution | Universidad de San Buenaventura |

## 2.   Description of the Project

In this qualitative action research the process in writing compositions from intermediate level children. Throughout the use of cooperative language learning was presented. During the classes, the researchers observed the process of the students in their writing compositions, and their interaction within the groups. The purpose of this was to contribute to both their writing development and their cooperative relationship.

Moreover, the researchers examined the relation among the students when they worked in small groups and created written compositions. As children were motivated when doing written activities, they were divided into small groups where each student had a specific role to accomplish a specific task.

### 2.1 Statement of the Problem

Since February 2012 at Military University the researchers worked with students of intermediate level two, in an extension course on Saturday. In this level there were 14 students at the beginning, but at the end of the project 11 students more were added, for a total of 25 participants. The university provided a space for students to learn English so they could interact in another environment different from the school´s. The English program offered 4 hours a week and 16 per month, where students put into practice all their knowledge and vocabulary in English. Students worked with the book and workbook *click on 2* and a CD to develop the 4 skills (listening, writing, reading and speaking).

We noticed that during the classes, these students developed 3 different skills: listening, reading and speaking, where they interact among them. However, when the activity was writing, the students preferred to work alone and showed some difficulties in grammar and spelling. On the other hand, Students told us that they did not like writing short stories but they preferred to speak in performances, reading their books or watching short videos.  The results of the questionnaires conducted at the beginning of the study show the following:

English skills preferred by the Students
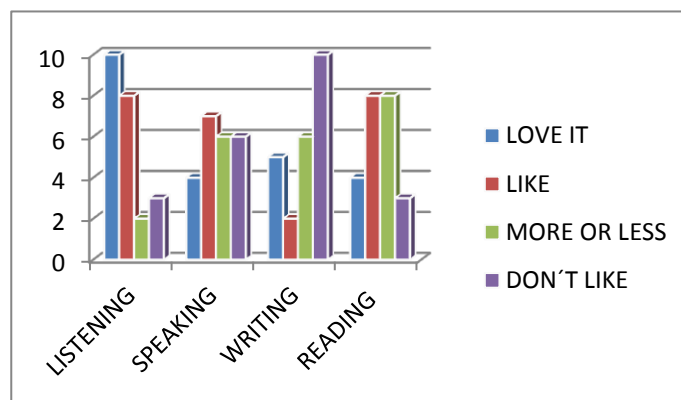


Figure 1.Results of the interviews. This figure illustrates
which skills students liked and which one they did not.

As it was observed, 3 students out of 10 did not like the activity of writing, and other 3 students placed this activity in the second lower score. In total 6 students, did not prefer working in written activity. Because of that, the main concern of the researchers were to offer the students the opportunity to enhance their writing skill, in a cooperative environment by using different materials like cards, posters, whiteboard and workshops. Also, we wanted the students to use interesting topics like accidents, fantasy stories and compositions created by their own.

**2.2 Rationale**

During our experience as teachers of intermediate level students at Military University, we saw different learning processes and different relationships among students. One of them was that students preferred to work alone. Thus, it was important for us to contribute to student-student relationships while doing writing tasks.

Therefore, the project have an interest in cooperative learning which, according to Barkley (Cited by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1994) it is "the uses of small groups so students can work together in order to maximize the learning process of both, their own and their classmates[1]" (p. 8),because students maximize their learning process when they share with others. Also, the researchers wanted to apply cooperative language learning as a tool to motivate intermediate level students to create written compositions.

Also, it was significant for English teachers, because, this generated a tool for their future classes, where they could use cooperative groups in order to work on written activities and during the development of written compositions in cooperative groups. Students could foster the individual process, like share and give opinions, learn of grammatical errors or increase vocabulary.

**2.3 Participants**

This project was developed with children from the English extension courses at Military University, in Bogota, Colombia where the University offered video beams in the classrooms and a computer lab. These gave a lot of opportunities to the students for learning a foreign language. Besides, the students were enrolled in an intermediate-level course and they were disciplined, attentive, and participated in the activities presented by the teachers.

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[1] Translated by the researchers

**2.3.1 Students.** They were 25 students, 11 boys and 14 girls, between nine and twelve years old, from an intermediate English level. The Military University offered four hours of English every Saturday. The students were from middle socio-economic class, some of them studied in bilingual schools. For that reason they had a good English level. They attended the English extension course only on Saturdays.

**2.3.2Teachers.** they were pre-service teachers and tenth-semester students from Universidad San Buenaventura, Bogota. Their main role was as teachers-researchers who observed the students and participated in the project by helping them and developing the worksheets for the written activities. Likewise, it was necessary to ask the coordinator of the English center for permission in order to apply the project with the target population. Therefore, a written permission was sent to the students' parents during the first classes. (See Appendix N° 1)

**3.  Research Questions and Objectives**

In order to deal with the problem stated above, the following research questions and their corresponding objectives were stated:

**3.1. Research Questions**

- What is the impact in the writing process approach when working in cooperative learning groups?

- What does the use of cooperative language learning inform us about children´s interaction at Military University?

**3.2. Objectives**

- To examine the children's writing process when creating stories in small groups.

- To analyze the interaction of the students when working in cooperative learning groups.

## 4. Literature Review

For this action research some important constructs gave us fundamental ideas and bases for the data collection procedure. These theories and the research studies that supported the project were mainly: the writing process in EFL, first and second language acquisition and cooperative language learning. Below, there is detailed information about these topics.

### 4.1 Writing in EFL

Writing is defined by Salvador (2007) as "the encoding of a message", which means that a person can express any idea or thought when using symbols like letters or drawings. Also, writing allowed people to share knowledge with others and have the opportunity of not losing it during the time, because when writing it is possible to keep this safe in libraries or files. According to Salvador (2007), there are two different types of writing: formal and informal writing. The former is defined as the production of well-structured and related sentences that form a coherent text in which a topic is developed, also here, the writer has to follow special rules or forms (Salvador, 2007, p. 15).The latter, informal writing, could be any letter for a friend or just something that does not need a specific structure. It is something students can write on a piece of paper without following specific rules, just making an understandable character to recognize it later. During the application of writing, the students used the formal writing, due to they should use specific rules and take into consideration grammatical aspects and well-structured sentences.

Writing must be explicitly taught, as Crushing expressed: "writing outside of school settings is relatively rare" (Cushing, 2002, p. 4). Commonly, when a person writes in his native language, he first must identify the letters and characters of this language, and then he starts to

write. As a matter of fact, writing in a foreign language needs more analysis since the learner should identify the characters and their sounds for knowing how to write them. For example, the population of this project should have learnt some grammatical elements and identify the topic they wanted to talk about before creating the stories.

Additionally to this, Grabowski (1996) notes that "writing can be seen as a more standardized system which must be acquired through special instruction" (as cited in Crushing, 2002, p. 4) Because first the teachers explained the activity by giving examples and then they helped the students to solve any doubts they had about the task assigned.

Moreover, English nowadays is a language use all over the world, and the necessity to learn this is very perceptible. Writing stories is an interesting way to accomplish this requirement. For that reason, we agree with Crushing (2002) when he expresses that some English learners will probably have more realistic needs for writing in that language than others(Cushing, 2002, p. 7). Therefore, English is involved in any curriculum school and it is clear that one important feature that should not be missing is the writing skill. This is supported by the authors when it is posed that "writing is an important part of the curriculum in schools from the earliest grades onwards" (p. 5). In this regard, developing writing in a foreign language requires time and aptitude, thus, teachers are an essential help for students to acquire this important ability.

**Written Language.** Brown (Cited by Crushing, 1994) provides the following list of the characteristics of written language:

- Permanence: Writing is permanent and can be read and reread as often as one likes.
- Production time: writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their words before they are finalized.

- Complexity: written language ends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators.

- Formality: because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal.

- Vocabulary: written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words.

The previous elements were seen during the creation of the stories, because in order to write, the students had to create ideas, start thinking about short paragraphs, use new vocabulary, look words up in the dictionary and stick to some rules that helped them to plan the story better. Besides, the teachers could read and reread the stories to evaluate students' compositions. And, this permitted that the groups reviewed their writing paper in order to have a better final version. Hence, the stories were interesting and called the teachers' attention.

**Writing Process Approach.** According to the British Council (2003) "the process approach treats all writing as a creative act which requires time and positive feedback to be done well. In this approach, the teacher moves away from being someone who sets students a writing topic and receives the finished product for correction without any intervention in the writing process itself"(British Council, 2003). When children wrote their stories, they had to develop three stages. In the first stage, students work together, in the second, the teachers revised and gave feedback to each group, so they could change or improve the story. For the third stage, the teachers checked again the papers and each group wrote the story clear and neat.

The researchers applied the writing process approach because it helped them to identify how was the progression of the groups, if each group was correcting the mistakes, learning new things and getting familiar with the writing. The stages that were used in this research were called: graphic organizers, first draft and final copy. According to the British Council (2003), in the writing process approach, there are three phases,

1. **Phase 1: Pre-writing.** The teacher needs to stimulate students' creativity. In this stage, the most important thing is the flow of ideas, and it is not always necessary that students actually produce much (if any). In this phase, students first put in order ideas, and identified the topic about the story they would do. It is important to mention that graphic organizers were used in this stage of the project where the children stated the characters, the places and recognized the problem of the story (See Appendix N° 2).

2. **Phase 2: Focusing on ideas.** During this stage, students write without much attention to the accuracy of their work or the organization. The most important feature is meaning. Here, other students should concentrate on the content. In this phase of the project, the students started writing the story, they first wrote the beginning of the story, the plot and the ending, the first draft was use in this stage. (See Appendix N° 3).

3. **Phase 3: Evaluating and structuring.** Now the writing is adapted to a readership. Students should focus more on the form and on producing a finished piece of work. The teacher can help with error correction and give organizational advice. During this phase of the project, the teachers were in charge of checking grammatical, coherence and spelling mistakes, so, students could fix them for presenting the final paper. Finally, the students corrected the errors and they started writing the story in a clear paper including decoration (See Appendixes N° 4-5).

According to the Colombian research of Assessing Children´s Perceptions of Writing in EFL based on the process approach by Melgarejo, many characteristics about the writing process approach was mentioned; he worked with students form intermediate English level, between 9 to 13 years old at a language institute in a Public University in Bogotá. He conducted action research for analyzing the perceptions of writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Finally he concluded that, the used of portfolios, showed that students changed their bad insight about writing, and on the other hand,  generated a motivation for writing and self- awareness if their writing process (Melgarejo, 2010, p.  70), this project contributed to the writing process approach development. Because, the researchers were guided in the construction of the steps, to complete the story, the children used the technique of drafting, revision and editing the stories. This helped them create the writing paper and a good environment for sharing and receiving opinions into the groups.

**Teaching Writing.** Harmer (1998) states the reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language, which are described as follows:

- Reinforcement: some students acquire languages in a purely oral way, but most of us from seeing the language written down.

- Language development: it seems that the actual process in writing helps us to learn as we go along; the mental activity we have to go through is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

- Writing as a skill: the most important reason for teaching writing is that it is a basic language skill; students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, and how to reply to advertisements.

The previous reasons are very interesting and should be taken into account at the moment of teaching English. Writing skill is necessary in every language and society. Besides, the development of this ability helps the people to increase cognitive and intellectual development, such as comprehension, analysis and innovation.

Moreover, Harmer (1998) explains that there are different styles of writing depending on student's age, interest and level. It is also important to mention that the writing task should be chosen according to students' abilities. Another factor which can be decisive to select writing tasks is the student's interest. In this particular project, we chose topics that the students could enjoy doing such as fantasy facts and accidents. In addition, intermediate level children expressed their interest by means of fun activities such as writing on cardboard and making story books (See Appendix n° 6).

**Writing Common Mistakes.** According to Salvador (2007), some of the most common errors an EFL writer makes have to do basically with sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, spelling and word choice. The categories are described below:

a. Long and confusing sentences. Students do not use punctuation and make long sentences in order to express an idea.

b. Misplacing: Students use the first language rules. For instance, writing the adjective before the pronoun.

c. Omission: Students omit one or more elements of the sentence such as articles, pronouns or connectors.

d. Agreement (Grammar): Writers use singular and plural forms and some verbs incorrectly when expressing an idea.

e.  Redundancy: Students use similar words or synonymous in a same sentence.

f.  Word choice (confusing word): Learners use a noun and an adverb of a word to express the same idea. E.g.: profession – professionally.

g.  False cognates: this happens when the writer use English words that are similar to Spanish ones such as: Actually = Actualmente.

h.  Spelling mistakes: spelling errors are considered small ones, they usually cause confusion, distraction, and misunderstanding; they are somewhat embarrassing, because making them frequently means poor intellectual preparation by the writer (as cited in Salvador, 2007, p.  71).

### 4.2 Second Language Acquisition

"Second language acquisition is sometimes contrasted with second language learning on the assumption that these are different process, for example the term "acquisition" is used to refer to the exposure, whereas the term "learning" is used to refer to the conscious study of a second language" (Ellis, 1985, p. 6), when the students go to school they are expose to learn other language and other culture and vocabulary. Therefore, the students have more opportunities to learn and communicate.

On the other hand, according to Ellis the term "second language acquisition refers to the subconscious or conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or tutored setting" (Ellis, 1985)this occur in our context with the term second language acquisition.  When the teacher helps the students to learn English at school, the goal is that they could communicate in that language.

**Writing in the first and second language.** Vähäpässi (1982) and Leki (1992) point out that "the first language writing is inextricably linked to formal education and writing must be explicitly taught" (as cited by Crushing, 2012, p.5); that is certainly true when teaching a foreign language. Moreover, Cushing affirms that "in the second language writing, both children and adults can learn in school and other settings due to the wide varieties of situations in which people learn (Cushing, 2002, p. 5). In Colombia, as English is considered a foreign language (FL), many people learn English in schools or in short courses in different institutes.

On the other hand, According to Buitrago, Mantilla & Rueda (2010), writing seems to be one of the most difficult skills for L2 students. The difficulty not only consists on producing and organizing ideas, but also translating these thoughts into a text.

**Language Transfer.** Brown (2000), states that "transfer is a general term describing the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to subsequent learning (Brown, 2000, p. 94). this was used by the students in several occasions; they transferred the first language used into the Second language. Moreover, Brown said that interference of the first language in the second language occur when the learner generalizes the first language laws, and when writing in the second language apply them incorrectly (Brown, 2000, p. 97). during the process in writing, the groups revealed their intention of expressing English ideas by using Spanish grammar rules, even though, this carried out many grammar and coherent mistakes into the writing. Also, this demonstrated the independence of the students at the moment of creating ideas, and showed that Intermediate level students could work on their own instead of just sit down and wait for the teacher's help.

On the other hand the manifestations of language transfer according to (Ellis, 1993, p. 301). Is in the errors of learners "errors occurred as a result of the negative transfer of mother tongue patterns into the learner´s L2. It is possible to identify a number of other manifestations of transfer, however, three of which will be considered here: facilitation, avoidance (or underproduction), and over-use." When the people learn a L2 they use their knowledge of the first language for to construct the sentences and the vocabulary in the L2 but sometimes they make errors, these are usually the same mistakes that they made when they learned their first language; learn a second language may have more difficulty students depended of vocabulary and the number of languages that they are learning at the same time, and which are bases of the first language, we must also take into account the age at which language is being learned, for a young student is able to acquire languages more easily and can make less mistakes, that an adult student.

The facilitation, is a positive transfer during the learn process, the learners L1 can also facilitate L2 learning, the learners may sometimes pass the different steps of learn of the second language more early and easy because they have more bases for to construct and development of rules during their studies. Other point is the over-use according to Ellis over-use as a result of transfer is also evident at the discourse level. Over-use of linguistic and discourse features as a result of L1 influence is probably more common than generally acknowledge. (Ellis, The study of second language acquisition , 1993)

**Inter language.**

The learners when acquire a second language pass for different claims, these claims stand in stark contrast to behaviorist accounts of second language acquisition in this case the SLA was concerned, the key concept in the revised thinking about the process of learning was that of inter language. This word was used to refer to the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner´s L1 and the L2 system he is trying to learn.

Some typical English inter language errors are the use of articles (from Richards 1971:187):

- Omission of THE. Sun is very hot

- THE used instead of blank : *the* Shakespeare

- A used instead of THE: *A* best boy

- A instead of blank: *A* human beings

- Omission of A: he was brave man (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 225)

These errors are most common during the learning process, but they are the starting point for students, that is where they see their mistakes and begin to create a new strategy for learning a second language better, the errors we cannot see as a failure but as a help to them in their learning.

"The process by which input becomes implicit knowledge is seen to involve two principles stages; one where input becomes intake, which involves the operation of noticing, and one where intake becomes part of the learner´s inter language system. Intake occurs when learners take features into their short or medium memories, whereas inter language change occurs only when they become part of long-term memory."
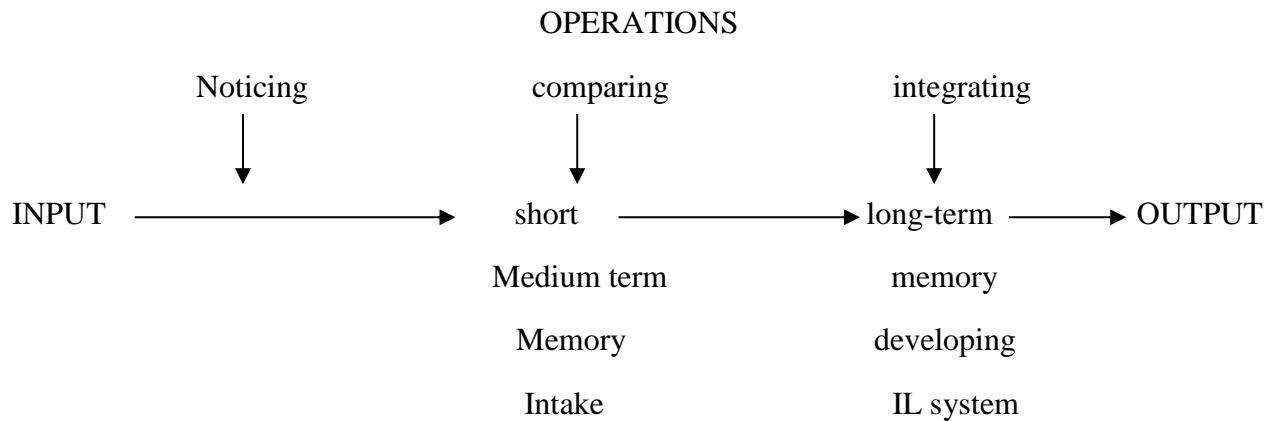
OPERATIONS

Noticing                    comparing                    integrating

INPUT ⟶                     short  ⟶  long-term  ⟶  OUTPUT

Medium term                  memory

Memory                       developing

Intake                       IL system

*Figure: the process of learning implicit knowledge.* (Ellis, understanding second language acquisition, 1985)

Interlanguage has various alternative terms, used by researchers to refer to the same expression Nemser (1971) refers to approximate systems, and coder (1971) to idiosyncratic dialects and transitional competence. These terms reflect two related but different concepts. First, interlanguage refers to the structures system which the learned constructs at any given stage in this development. Second, the term refers to the series of interlocking system which form what Coder (1971) called the learner´s "built-in syllabus" (Rod Ellis, 1997, p. 47) when the researchers mention this word they have different meanings for that but this have the same goal in the learning process and in the students represent the same thing:

1. Language is a human specific faculty

2. The process of acquisition consist to the principles of the "universal grammar"

3. The acquisition device atrophies with age

**4.3 Cooperative Learning**

Nowadays, educational settings present many strategies to the students regarding group work, collaborative or cooperative tasks. For that reason, they like the school and like to work with others students. Therefore, in this action research the cooperative learning strategy was implemented. This is understood as "the implementation of small groups where students work together in order to maximized their learning process[2]" (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1994). Within this environment, students work on a common goal or task in small groups to maximize their own and others´ knowledge.

Besides, this strategy has different ways to be conducted during a class. One of the most important aspects is the group, which is divided into three different forms: formal groups, informal groups and cooperative base groups. Each has a special function, for example, according to, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994), in formal groups "the students work together to reach the same goal, by making sure that each student accomplishes the learning role that is assigned [2]"(Johnson et al., 1994 p.15 ). Hence, the teacher must divide the class in small groups to construct the cooperative formal group. Also, the teacher must state the objectives and the evaluation of the students' learning process.

The informal group  " the teacher can use it during a magisterial class, a movie or a direct class, the most common activities are, dialogues, discussions, or chats that can be between 3 to 5 minutes [2]"(Johnson et al., 1994 p. 14). The teacher uses this informal group because the students can exchange opinions and ideas among them in a short time instead of working with the entire class. On the other hand, the cooperative base groups "are a long- term period groups (at least one year) and they are heterogeneous groups, with permanent members, and their principal objective

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[2] Translated by the researchers

is to give the possibility to the members to learn and provide each other support [3](Johnson et al.,

1994). In this type of group, there is more responsibility and cooperation inside the groups. Also,

the teacher can implement this when he/she wants to see the process in the interaction between

their students. It is crucial to highlight that for this project, the researchers used the first form of

group, which is the formal.

Other researchers as Pinzon (as cited by Deutsch, 1962) states that "cooperation is to

work together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek

outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and the other group members. Cooperative learning is

the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and

each other's learning". From this research experience, we could state that the development of the

cooperative learning in the class required time and analysis, because the teacher must know their

students very well in order to do an excellent division of the groups and foresee possible

difficulties. In cooperative learning, the teacher is the person who facilitates the learning process

and is the person who has the mediation of the activities.

Considering this, it is important to mention that in a classroom there are different types of

learners and they do not work in the same way. Also, the teacher should know what kind of

groups she wants and how to divide them, in order to have good relationship among the group.

Regarding this, the cooperative learning was an essential part in our research project, because in

the classroom there were students from different ages and English levels, and we as their teachers

had to know them in advance, in order to be able to divide them in an appropriate way.

In addition, when the teacher works with cooperative learning groups, he or she should

know that the students may have some differences in their interpersonal relationship. In this

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[3] Translated by the researchers

regard, Kagan (1986) points out that "interpersonal conflict occurs primarily in situations of low structure, especially when there are not good models of decision making and conflict resolution" (p.14:28). At the beginning of the project, some difficulties were visible when the children worked in small groups: lack of organization of the tasks, turn-taking respect, group commitment and active participation during the activities. Therefore it is important to mention Kagan's eight modes of conflict resolution (share, take turns, avoid, compromise, chance, outside help, humor and postpone), because with these modes the students can create a strategy for developing the activity and they can conclude the story, these modes are:

Share: when the students in the groups share their ideas, knowledge, opinions and activities, they can construct a good work group and they can concrete the activity to develop the activity and finish it in an excellent way.

Take turns: in this mode the students can improve their interaction because they have an organization already establish, for example, when they want to participate or give their opinions they take turn. in this mode each group choose a leader, and he/she is in charges of giving the turn to the each member of the group.

Avoid: in this mode the students try to avoid the students that do not contribute or the students that do not cooperate into the group activities. And the students decide that the student is not a good influence for the group.

Compromise: in the groups the students know what their commitment with the group is and they recognize that when they collaborate with the group they work better.

Chance: in this point, the students have the opportunity to discus and choose the task and decide the order and the rhythm to work.

Outside help: in this part the students not only look for others members of the group´s opinions, but also they look for the teacher´s and other's partners help.

Humor: in the groups always is presented the giggle and the jokes, the students never forget the humor when they work in the groups. For this reason, the students always have a good environment to work.

Postpone: finally in this step, the students have many things to postpone. But they develop the task in the next class.

Taking into account these modes, it showed that students had more possibilities for improving the relationships among them. During the activities in each group the students got through many of these modes but always the groups could improve their problems and found good solutions. On the other hand, for the teachers, these modes were very important because, they showed that the students could work cooperatively and collaborate during the writing process and worked better in the groups.

Another important topic was the ways to create the groups, there were four ways to create them. the first, was the number of the students in the groups, cooperative learning groups typically have between two to four members in the group, the rule is [4] " If the group is small

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[4] Translated by the researchers

much better" with this point, the teachers wanted to implement the cooperative groups with the

objective of letting students to interact among them and find solutions when necessary. The

cooperative groups could be used in all classrooms. The important point is to know how to

implement it for better results.

The second way was the indiscriminately distribution. This way was used when the

teachers did not take into account the gender, the level of English, aptitudes and the knowledge of

the members of the group. The other way, were the groups select by the students, in this part the

students have the total control to conform their own groups. Therefore, in this project this was not

used, because students certainly would choose their friends, and this is a problem when the

teachers want to deliberate the task and increase students´ circular friendship.

Finally, the fourth way, was the group conformed by the teacher, this was the most important

because gave the teacher control on decide the organization of the groups, and the possibility to

work better. Also, we could see that the distribution of the groups gave us lot of information

about the student's interaction, for example, students shared different ideas, some kids helped

others and the student- student interaction created a good learning environment.

Likewise, the groups were a very interesting tool for English classes and also an important part of the development of cooperative learning. Therefore, we would like to mention other interesting investigation that  developed the cooperative learning and also took into account the information named above, the projects was "describe and understand the learning environment that in the second grade classroom, identifying the critical thinking skills students achieved through oral discussions and written responses and recognizing the type of interaction that was generated while students were working cooperatively at San Mateo Apostol school" (Mora Yadira, 2009 p.12).

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1 Type of study

The researchers carried out an action research study that, according to Cohen (2008), "can be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, task and procedures cries out for solution (p. 297)". We observed the necessity to motivate students towards the writing skill by increasing their little interest in this ability during English classes. Moreover, the children were encouraged to develop awareness about the importance of working cooperatively.

Furthermore, another concern was to impact intermediate level students' perception about the uncomfortable way they felt when writing, and at the same time we wanted to help other teachers or colleagues that would have to deal with this problem.

Lewin (cited by Bradbury, 2001) states that action research is a tool that could advance science while dealing with practical societal concerns. And that happened in this project; because the researchers were looking for solving a real problem in the class.

Finally, the researchers wanted the students to see that writing could be attractive when doing other activities different from working on a book or notebook. Like Zuberskerritt (cited by Cohen, 2008) suggests, "The aim of any action research project is to bring about practical improvement, innovation, change or development of social practice" (p. 298).

**5.2 Instruments for data collection**

During the investigation, we worked with 7 different groups. However, we noticed that one group did not complete all the stories at the end of the sessions. For this reason, only 6 groups were taken into account for the data analysis. We would like to mention the techniques used in our action research project to gather data and answer the questions stated in the study. The techniques were: questionnaires, students' artifacts, audio-recordings and interviews. These are described as follows:

**Questionnaires.** They are sets of written questions focusing on a particular topic or area which are used in non-face-to-face situations (Freeman, 1998). The questionnaires portrayed student's opinions and provided the researchers with necessary information to start the investigation. The purpose of this was to identify what activities called students' attention and what did not at the beginning of the study. The results demonstrated that students did not like writing, and they preferred to work on listening. (See Appendix N° 7).

**Student's Artifacts.** According to Diaz (2012), they are pieces of students' written compositions which are useful tools for analyzing the ways in which students develop their writing process. This instrument was collected to gather and analyze the creation of the children step by step. As the writing approach was used during the implementation, the development of the story was divided into three steps. First, the students filled out a graphic organizer that helped the groups to produce the base of the stories. The next step was the draft, in which the participants had to invent a story including beginning, plot and ending. Here, students should

make use of the base and start creating paragraphs. The last step was the final version of the story

in which the students included the decoration, drawings and teachers' corrections.

**Recordings.** The third instrument used was the Audio-recording. It helped to identify how

the students interacted and worked during the development of the stories. During the project, one

member of each group was in charge of recording the conversations during the classes. Burns

(1999) states that audio or video recordings prove objective records of classroom interactions;

they are techniques for capturing in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances. In the

classroom, they are very valuable sources of accurate information on patterns teaching process. In

this particular case, the audio recording provided us with significant information about what

happened while the students were writing the stories (See Appendix N° 8).

**Interviews.** Lastly, the researcher implemented a final group interview. Interviews are

"face to face verbal sessions conducted by the researcher's unplanned, planned or structured

interactions" (Freeman, 1998, p. 24). The interviews showed us the point of view and the interest

of students during the classes (See Appendix N°9).The teachers asked the students how they felt,

what they learned and what they thought about working in groups with writing activities. The

results of this instrument are discussed in the data analysis chapter.

**5.3 Instructional Design**

We created specific steps during the classes, taking into consideration what  Kemmis and

McTaggart (cited by Burns, 1999) propose: "to do action research is to plan, act, observed, and

reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in

everyday life" (p. 298). These steps are described below:

1. Researching: In this step we observed the relationship of the participants when working in small groups and we could see that students did not want to work in groups and, when they had to do writing activities they preferred to work alone. As a consequence, this problematic called our attention.

2. Identifying: According to the situation mentioned above, we decided to develop different activities where cooperative language learning and writing compositions were together.

3. Preparing: We prepared 5 classes where students were divided in small groups. The groups had between 3 and 4 members and the criteria to select the students were: sex, English level, personality and type of relationship (not friends but acquaintances). During this step, students should create a story using graphic organizers and writing drafts. Then they had to correct the mistakes, and rewrite the story in a final paper (story book).

4. Observing: During the 5 classes we implemented writing compositions in the classroom and each student had a specific role according to the cooperative language learning theory. We explained the methodology of the class at the beginning of the study and we used audio recorders in order to have evidence of both students´ written process and interaction.

5. Reflection: after the 5 sessions the researchers organized the evidence and analyzed it. The audio recordings and the student´s writing compositions gave important data. As stated by Cohen: "Action research allows us to give a reasoned justification of our educational work to others because we can show how the evidence we have gathered have helped us to create a developed for what we are doing" (Cohen, 2008, p. 300).

In conclusion, "action research is an approach to improving education by changing it and learning from the consequences of changes" (Cohen, 2008, p. 299). When we were conducted the 5 stages during the research, we noticed that they helped us to have many tools to contribute to the English language teaching. Moreover, we as researchers would like to continue investigating in order to improve as English teachers.

**5.4. Schedule**

The researcher started the application of the project in February 2012; they observed the students from February to May. During this time, the teachers found that many students did not like to work in groups and they refused to do it when they were asked to. On the other hand, the researchers applied a questionnaire in order to know about skills students did not like to work on and they found that writing was it. Consequently, since August 2012 the teachers started to organize some activities that joined both, working in cooperative groups and doing writing activities. The researchers began applying these activities from September to October 2012. The following chart shows the activities, time, days and materials use in the process:

Table 2:

Schedule to Create Stories in Cooperative Learning Groups

| Date | Time | Activity | Writing Stage | Material |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| February to March 2012 | 8:30 - 12:30 | Observation of the students. | Observation | White board Groups lists |
| April to May 2012 | 8:30 - 12:30 | Each week one student had to follow the sequence of a story notebook the teacher gave him/her. | Students worked in a story notebook. | Story notebook |
| August 2012 | 9:30 – 12:00 | The teachers Planned the first and second activity; the students would develop during September to October 2012. | Planning first and second activity. | Computer, library, Groups lists |
| September 8 2012 | 11:30 - 12:30 | The teachers explained the project to the students. They also organized the groups and gave the roles to each member. | Stage No 1. | White board Groups lists Graphic organizer |
| September 15 2012 | 11:30 - 12:30 | Story N. 1 *Fantasy story* | Stage No 1 and No 2. Graphic organizer and draft. | Graphic organizer, Cardboards Markers. |
| September 22 2012 | 11:30 - 12:30 | Story N. 1 *Fantasy story* | Stage No 3. Final version of the Fantasy story. | Cards, poster paper, markers. |

| September 29 2012 | 11:30 - 12:30 | Story N. 2 *Accident story* | Stage No 1 and No 2. Graphic organizer and draft. | Audio recorder, graphic organizer. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| October 6 2012 | 11:30 - 12:30 | Story N. 2 *Accident story* | Stage No 3. Final version of the story. | Cards, poster paper, markers. |

The previous chart showed the process of the first and second activity the students developed. First, the teachers observed the performance of the students during the classes, and then they observed student's compositions throughout the use of a story notebook during 2 month. The story notebook was about a mystery story. After the students finished the notebook, the teachers checked it, and observed many grammatical mistakes. Consequently they planned activities about completing stories using brainstorming and magical characters.  The first activity was about a magical story on September 8th and the groups started to imagine the characters, the places and the problem of the story. On September 15th and 22nd students corrected the first story and did the final paper using cards, colors and drawings. On September 29th, the teacher showed a power point presentation to the groups with vocabulary related to accidents and the children began to create the second story with those elements. On October 6th, students used cardboard, colors and markers to create the final paper of the second activity.

## 6. Data Analysis

This chapter describes the process of the data analysis which was carried out by means of questionnaires, students' artifacts, audio-recordings and interviews. It is important to mention that open coding was used in order to collect the information necessary for the study. This technique was defined by Strauss (1990) as "the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways"( p. 57).

He (Strauss, 1990) also mentioned that "the data collection and the data analysis are tightly interwoven processes, and must occur alternately because the analysis directs the sample of data" (p. 59).During the data analysis procedure, we employed the strategy called line by line analysis, where we could bring together information related to the research questions, and we saw the necessity of working with the data collected and the analysis at the same time (See Appendix N° 10). As a result, the researchers created an index chart along with some contractions in order to have the exact source of the codes and the frequency with which they took place (See Appendix N° 11).

Additionally to this, we implemented grounded theory in order to collect and analyze the information. According to Freeman (1998) it has four stages: naming, grouping, finding relationships and displaying. To put this into practice, the researchers first used some key words for classifying and organizing the data found (naming). Second, those key words or codes were grouped according to their similarities (grouping). Third, we related two or more groups finding a bigger category (relationships). And, finally, a visual display was elaborated in order to answer the questions stated (displaying). This process was crucial for the study because it helped the researchers to have interesting findings in order to answer the questions stated in this project (See

Appendixes N°12-13). Consequently, when the visual displays were created, the researchers took

into consideration the writing process of the children and the cooperative learning groups. And

these helped the researchers to find the following categories to explain the two research questions

mention below:

Table 3:

Categories from de data collection

| Question | Category |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What is the impact in the writing approach when working in cooperative learning groups? | Students create a strategy for solving difficulties that they found during the writing activity. |
| 2. What does the use of cooperative language learning inform us about children's interaction at Military University? | The groups work cooperatively when a leader deliberate duties and the group organizes tasks for the same goal. |

The first category came up from the first question, describing the impact of the writing

approach when students worked in cooperative groups. The data evidenced that students created a

strategy for solving difficulties when they made mistakes in their written work. The second

category came up from the second question, answering how children's interaction is influenced

by cooperative language groups, and consequently, showing that the groups work cooperatively

when a leader deliberate duty and the group organizes tasks for the same goal. With this

information the two visual displays were created in order to explain the results of the data

collected (See Appendix N°14 -15).

Moreover, the researchers made use of an important element of data analysis called Triangulation which is mainly the use of "multiple sources of information or point of views on the phenomenon or question you are investigating" (Freeman, 1998). Likewise, Martin Denzin (1978) describes four types of triangulation:

1. Data Triangulation

2. Investigator Triangulation

3. Methodological Triangulation

4. Triangulation in time or location

The Data Triangulation was more suitable with the data process carried out in this project because several sources of data were used. During the analysis of the information gathered, four different data collection instruments were employed in order to create the final codes: artifacts, audio recordings, interviews and questionnaires. All this process helped to cluster the information into two big categories which are described below.

**6.1     First Category: Students create a strategy for solving difficulties that they find during the writing activity.** This category was based on the first question that was: What is the impact of the writing approach when working in cooperative learning groups? In order to answer this question, the data analysis was focused on three phases of the writing process approach which are called: graphic organizer, draft and final paper.

The codes from the first phase called graphic organizer, were:

1) Creativity development. When intermediate level students liked the idea of creating stories, and they had expectations about this new activity.

2) Difficulties using dictionary. When students most of the time used the dictionary in order to apply new words into the stories. Many times students asked the teacher about specific words in order to have the vocabulary they need to complete the story.

3) Grammar mistakes. They were observed throughout the compositions of the students. Retrieving some ideas from Salvador (2007), the most common mistake students made was:

- Long and confusing sentences. The students forgot to use period or comma, as it is shown in the following extract. In this example, the group number wrote a complete sentence without noticing that the idea was too long and generated confusion to the reader.
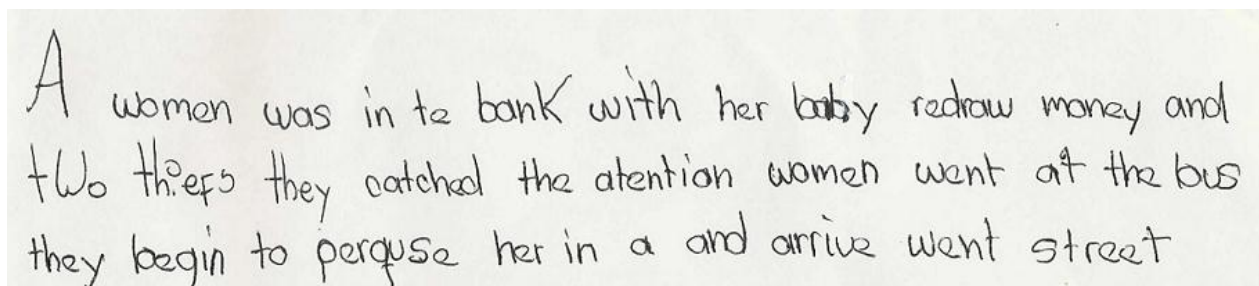


Group 6 Activity 2

4) Inter language use. This happened when students omitted or misplaced some articles like *The*, pronouns like *Your or his/her* or forget to write the noun when writing a sentence in the stories. This is shown in the following excerpts where the students wrote *they up* instead of writing *they went* up; also, *the center of earth* instead of *the center of the world*.
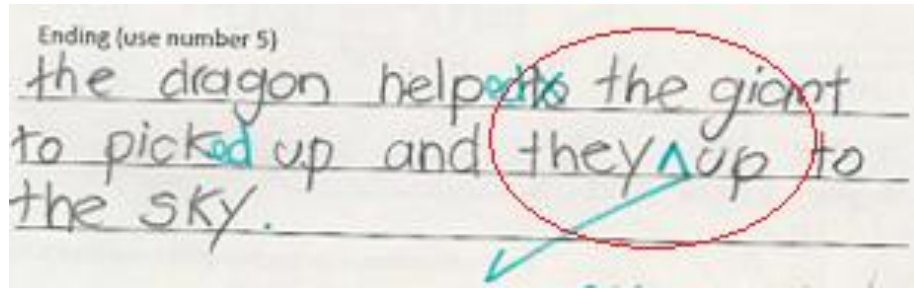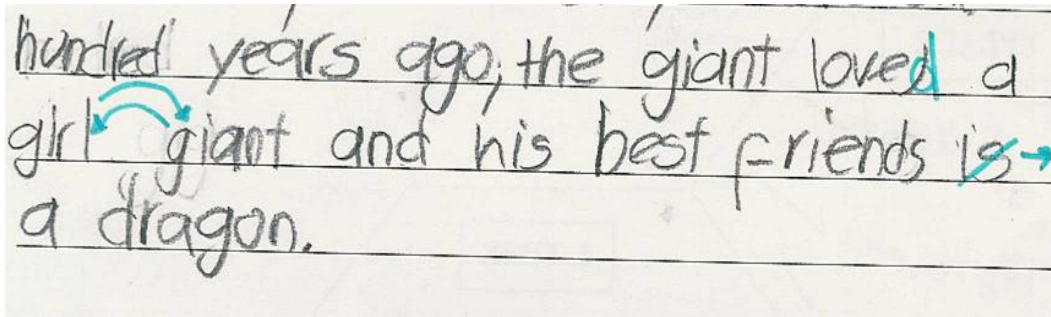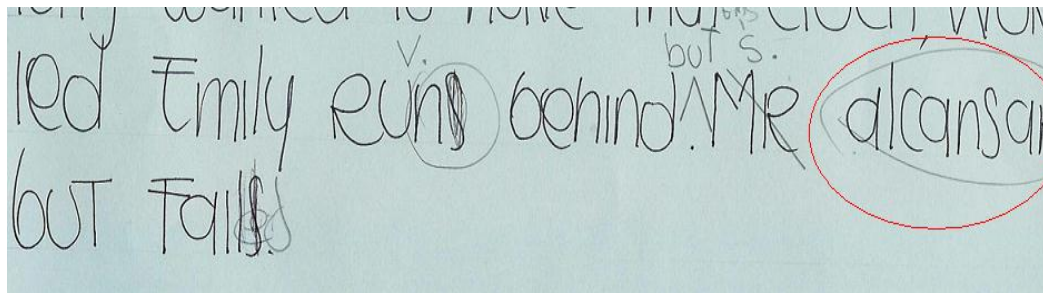
Group 2 Activity 1
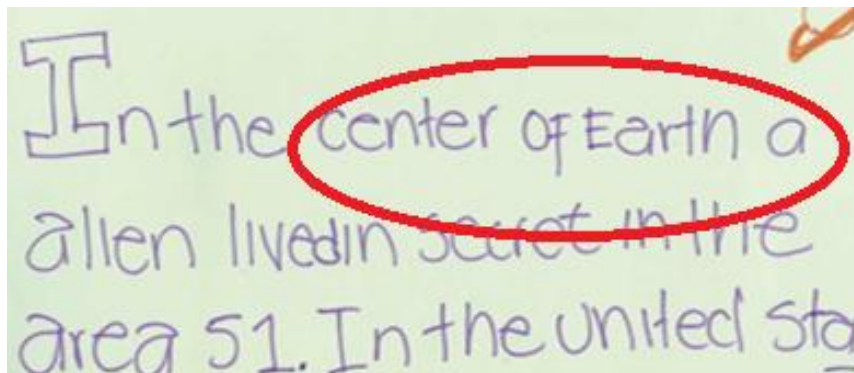


Group 3Activity 1

5) Language transfer. While students were writing, it was observed that students used elements from the mother tongue: using the adjective after the noun, writing Spanish words or writing words at it sounds. The following examples show how they made use of  L1 transfer: *a girl giant and his* (…) , *instead of a giant girl and his* (…); *alcansar* instead of *reaches* and Persons instead of people:
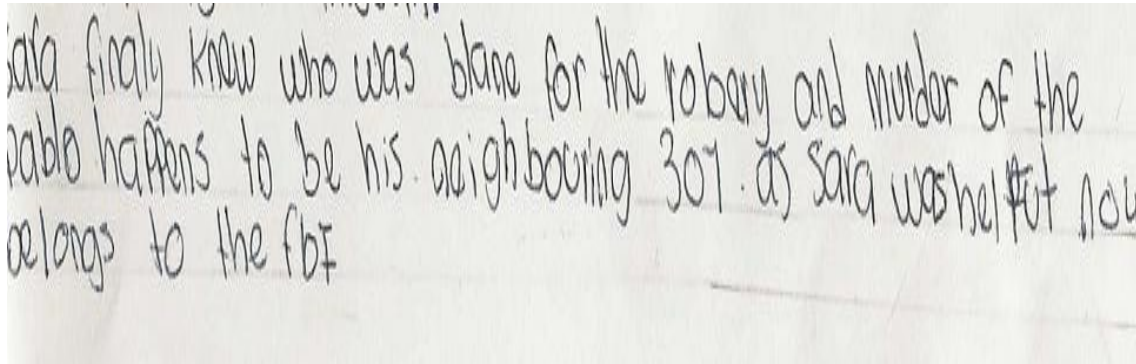
Group 2 Activity 1



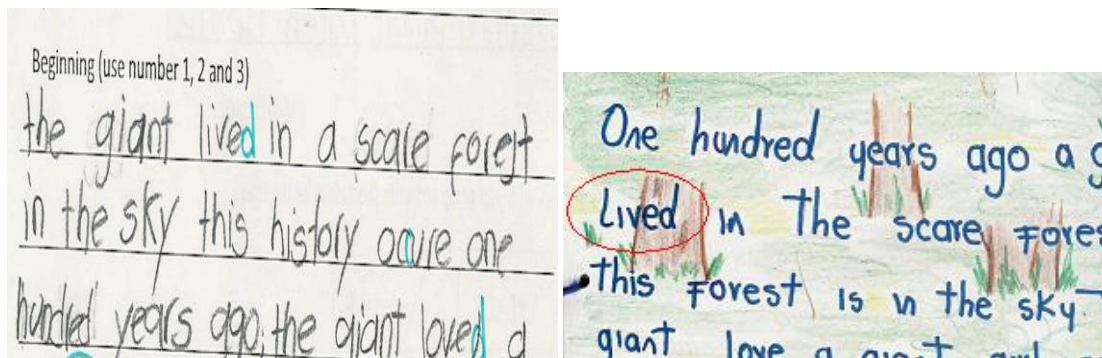Group 1 Activity 1



G2A1AP15

6) Mass- media influence. Something really interesting was the fact that most of the

groups decided to use things, characters or places related to their daily life or things that they

are used to watching on T.V such as famous people (*Carolina Cruz)* and recognized labels

(*Coca-Cola, F.B.I*) like is shown in the following idea: *Sara was helpful now she belongs to the **FBI***.



Group 7 activity 1

The codes found during the second phase called draft and the third phase called the final paper, were the same as in the first phase (Students continued having few grammar mistakes, they use Inter language and language transfer features and Mass- media elements). Also there was added a new one called: Teacher corrections are taken into account. This was seen in the third phase when the children handed in the final paper to the teacher-researchers and they corrected some grammar mistakes so students had fewer or none grammar errors in the final paper. Below there is an example:



Group 2 Activity 1

During the three phases it was observed that the students finally learned to use the dictionary by their own and with the teacher´s help. And this allowed them to make the range of mistakes about vocabulary smaller. Moreover, students created interesting stories, by using real life features, like famous people, or important labels around the world. Likewise, it was seen that intermediate level students had basic knowledge of writing in English and that allowed them to make fascinating stories.

**6.2 *Second category:* The groups work cooperatively when a leader deliberate duties and the group organizes the tasks for the same goal.**

During the implementation of the project, students were divided into 6 groups, some of them with four students and others with three. Each student had a specific role within the group (the leader, the audio recorder, the writer and the person in charge of the dictionary) which had to be developed in order to obtain the same goal and accomplish the activity assigned.

In the First stage, the students were working on the graphic organizer and it was observed that they shared ideas, opinions and different forms to organize the groups. However, one of the most relevant elements in all the process was that the groups chose their own leaders in spite of the fact that the teachers had already selected them. This leader managed and organized the group and gave a task to each student in their group (the characteristics of the new leader were: good English level, autonomous and participative). With this organization and leadership, the groups could improve and finish all the tasks on time. This can be evidenced in the following example where *Man* is the new leader and *Ang* is a member of the cooperative group:

**Man:** escribir las ideas que nosotras digamos, (…) por eso mismo yo soy la que traduce, ok? entonces yo dijo ideas, y tu escribes en español, después yo las traduzco, ves amigo?, entonces saca un esfero y copia, entonces …
**Ang:** pero aquí están las características, el tiempo
**Man:** pero entonces pongamos de una vez acá, plaza de mercado, un callejón.
RECAC1GR1L36

In addition, when the group had a leader the students knew their tasks and could develop their workshops. When they had a leader it was observed that the group was more organized, the workshop and the participation of the students were better, and the relationship among the participants increased. This could be shown in the following extract where the group organized their task and they had an excellent rapport. In this particular case, the leader was *Val* who gave opinions and helped the group to decide the ideas that would be displayed in the story.

**San:** what that's he think he does well?

**Val:** he dance very well

**Ka:** what is his favorite food?

**Val:** people

**Ka:** que es lo que más quiere hacer en el mundo

**San:** él es malo o es bueno

**Val:** es bueno pero a la vez es malo

**Mat:** pongámosle una profesión

**Val:** jajajaja listo quedo chef

**Ka:** con cocina y todo, y el lugar

**Mat:** no porque le pusimos que comía personas.

**Val:** entonces en el bosque

RECAC1GR2L13

Another important element was that, when the students interacted with one another, the leader could contribute to the group by encouraging participation during the activity. For example in this excerpt, the leader answered the questions that his group had and the group waited for his reply. In this case, the leader (Seb) got the entire group to pay attention to the activity and they could participate during the activity.

**Pao:** no se ¿porque la WC es cuando qué?

**Seb:** cuando hay que cambiar la palabra

**Ste:** ¿cómo sería entonces?

**Pao:** cambiar la palabra, como sería el orden

**Seb:** es fácil, solo cambiar la ubicación

**Pao:** S.P,

**Seb:** empieza con tu letra, acá, acá un resumen de que se trata la historia, alguien tiene un marcador negro.

**Ste:** tengo esfero

RECAC2GR7L1

Despite the fact that some students did not collaborate in some stages of the activities, it was observed that the other members were aware of working harder, so they participated together in the written activities. This awareness was observed since the first stage and it was present in all the phases of the project, which was very important for the process of the group and the accomplishment of the task.

This excerpt shows that some groups had a student that did not want to work or collaborate in the group and the other students should make the work that the student did not want to do.

**AM:** como se dice capturer en pasado?

**JP:** captured , con D, o si quieres Cap. Como se dice errores, oye AN como se dice errores, se supone que el debería buscar en el diccionario, oye tu que estás haciendo. Todos trabajando y tu no haces nada, ok, I finish the picture about, of the accident; the history is of ….

**MA and DA.** We made the work of the /nepaper/, we make the history o a newspaper, I draw the picture, AN graba the conversation and DA write the ideas, and I draw the pictures.

**JP**: Dale rápido, no si peguémoslo, ya que nos tocó hacer todo

RECAC1GR2L1

In the second stage, the draft, the students had the graphic organizer as a reference and they wrote the first version of the story. In this part of the process, the students had already worked in groups and organized the different tasks and the roles that each person had. The analysis of the data showed that the three patterns that emerged during the first stage (leadership) increased more during this second phase.

Moreover, another element was evident at this stage: collaboration, which means that the students helped each other to create the story. The most important element to highlight is the fact that all the participants contributed to the group by listening to the leader's organization, doing peer-correction when something was wrong and re-reading the story at the end of the task. Therefore, this phase was characterized by the organization they formed at the beginning including leadership, task distribution and ideas agreement in order to make the draft and finish writing the story.

**Ste:** ella pensaba porque lo hizo, ¿qué más hacia ella?
**Pa:** no sé, pero rápido que ya casi terminamos
**Ste:** Yo no sé cómo es la historia
**Pa:** (reads the story in spanish)
**Ste:** Como se dice sospecha en inglés, o piensa
**Se:** ya terminaste de corregir
**Pa:** yo estoy corrigiendo esas palabras
**Se:** ya, has un resumen rápido
**Ste:** thinks that the (…) live in the…, que piso vivía?
**Pa:** 301
**Se:** el piso 301?
**Pa:** el vecino del 301, vecino es /neig/ N-E-I-G-B-O-U-R-G, el que vivía ahí, le encuentra el arma homicida al porter
RECAC1GR7L48

In regard to the final phase, final paper, the analysis evidenced another pattern that was *teacher's approval*. This means that the students wanted the teacher to approve the development of the task because they thought if they had such consent, the story might be correct and they could accomplish the story successfully. The students mention that this approval was very important for them because it was the evidence to show that their work was good. The following excerpt illustrates this finding in which *T* stands for *Teacher* while *Se* and *Pa* are the students.

**Se:** este es el final, esta es la solución, escribe de una vez la solución, profe yo ya puedo ir escribiendo el título y haciendo la portada

**T:** claro, puedes ir haciendo eso

**Pa:** yo tengo marcadores si quieres, ¿qué es blame, /blame/?

**T:** culpar, eso les está quedando muy lindo

**Se:** voy a escribir the gadget girl con el rosado y la mitad con rosado y criminal con negro

RECAC1GR7L27

## 7. Conclusions and Implications

During the project an interesting question came out, which was: What is the impact in the writing approach when working in cooperative learning groups? And a category came out to answer this question, the category was: Students create a strategy for solving difficulties that they found during the writing activity.

In order to have this category, the researchers found some codes that came from the data analysis. The codes were: 1 Creativity development, 2 Difficulties using dictionary, 3 Grammar mistakes, 4 Inter language use, 5 Language transfer, 6 Mass- media influence and 7 Teacher corrections are taken into account. Is important to highlight that to find the codes, the process approach was taking into account, therefore, the first two codes found, that were, Creativity development and Difficulties using dictionary corresponded to the pre- writing part. The Grammar mistakes, inter language use, language transfer and mass-media influence corresponded to the second part that was Focusing on ideas. And the last code which was teacher corrections are taken into account corresponded to the third part that was Evaluating and structuring.

Besides, the codes were a really good instrument to complete this project, because they showed us that during the creation of the stories the students were increasing their vocabulary. Also they combined their imagination and real life elements to capture them in the writing, and many of the students began to be aware of the importance of using dictionary. On the other hand, the grammatical aspect was corrected and got better in each step of the writing process, because at the beginning of the story the groups used to have different mistakes regarding with the use of articles, adjectives and also pronouns. Another aspect was that they usually mixed the L1 into the L2 and this created some coherent mistakes, like Ellis (1993) expressed: "errors occurred as a result of the negative transfer of mother tongue patterns into the learner´s L2. (p. 301); however, during the process students were correcting the errors among them and with the teacher´s help

they could avoid many mistakes. Regarding to Salvador (2007), it was noticed that some of the most common errors an EFL writer makes have to do basically with sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, spelling and word choice, and those aspects were seem in the creation of the stories, though they could be manage during the process approach.

Finally, the last but no least aspect that we found was that the students required the teacher to approve the development of the task, this means, that sometimes students asked the teacher how was the writing or how to spell a word. It probably happened because the students thought if they had such consent the story might be better and correct.

The second question that came out was: What does the use of cooperative language learning inform us about children's interaction at Military University? And the category that came out was: The groups work cooperatively when a leader deliberate duties and the group organizes tasks for the same goal. The codes that the researchers found were: 1 Students shared ideas, opinions and different forms to organize the groups, 2 The leader managed and organized the group and gave a task to each student in their group; 3 When a group had a leader it was observed that the group was more organized, the workshop and the participation of the students were better, 4 the students interacted with one another.

The former codes, helped the researchers answer the second question, and also they gave an interesting outcome that helped to understand the dynamic of cooperative learning. The most important elements to highlight were the fact that all the participants contributed to the group by listening to the leader's organization, doing peer-correction when something was wrong and re-reading the story at the end of the task. And, despite the fact that some students did not collaborate in some stages of the activities, it was observed that the other members were aware of working harder, and this allowed that the students helped each other to create the story.

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Moreover, the researchers found that the eight modes Kagan talked about were evident; for example when the students in the groups share their ideas, knowledge, opinions and activities, they constructed a good work group and they developed the activity and finished it in an excellent way. Likewise, the students participated or gave their opinions by taking turns. And each group chose a leader who was in charged to give the right to speak to each member.

Additionally, the students who worked harder from each group avoided the students that did not contribute in the activity by doing their job and completing the task. This showed that most of the students from each group wanted to accomplish the work assigned and they recognized that when they collaborated with the group they work better. Besides, the students have the opportunity to discus and choose the task and decided the order and the rhythm of the work. Another interesting aspect that happened during the interaction among students was the fact that they decided to ask for the teacher´s and other's partners help in order to finish ideas of the story. And, the humor was a good aspect that helped the groups to have a better environment and it was observed that the groups always had into account the giggle and the jokes, avoiding monotonous classes and hilarious moments.

**7.1 Pedagogical Implications.**

Cooperative groups help students to interact with each other, to share knowledge and learn to divide the task in order to do it faster, also it avoids monotonous classes, and give the opportunity to English teachers to change the traditional lessons plans, allowing teachers to modify the methodology, by making it more interesting and calling student's attention. We would like to encourage English teacher to use this tool among them, because this tool not just help to increase intellectual factors, but also social ones, like for example, to know more people, to understand them, to learn how to work in group and think in everyone else.

Likewise, the writing process approach is also a good tool for English teachers, because not just students need to foster their skills but also we as teachers. For example we can use this process approach to increase the vocabulary, writing skill and even thought speaking. On the other hand, this tool allows students to have a better understanding of their learning, for example, not just to focus on passing a final grade but holding the new information they learn day by day. Finally this tool allows the teachers to know how their students have been increasing, foster or improving in their work and understand that the important thing is not the final product but the learning process itself.

**7.3 pedagogical Applications**

The process approach is a very interesting tool for teachers who would like to know what is the process of their students in certain skill or topic, for example if a teacher wants to implement this approach to know how students have been foster their reading skill by means of reading short books, newspapers, letters or stories, he can use graphic organizers and draft to know the process of each student, also, the students can use logs, so they would be able to express how they feel about their progress of reading skill. The three steps a teacher should use in

the process approach are: 1) the previous use of the skill, this mean, to know how the students are developing certain skill,2) students start using the skill with new tools, this mean, for example in reading, the teacher can give them new vocabulary and a book with 50 words, so students can read and learn this words. And the 3) step, that would be evaluation, is when student show their previous and new knowledge by reading a book with the studied words.

On the other hand the cooperative language learning is a really good instrument for any class. In English classes is nice to have cooperative groups because students can share ideas and opinions, and when they work with others their knowledge increase. Besides, cooperative groups can be used for other activities rather than writing, for example to make a role play or to present an oral demonstration. The steps a teacher should have into account are: the amount of students in each group, a heterogeneous group, this mean, to have different type of students in each group, for example from different English level, gender and age. Also, is important to assign roles, each student should have a specific role, like a leader, a writer, a recorder or a reader. And establish rules, like turn- taking, participation of all the members of the group and punctuality.

**8. Limitations and Further Research**

During the project the only limitation that occurred was the time, because the researchers just had five sessions from two hours each Saturday and the students attended the institution and could only hand the work in on that day. However we were able to finish the project in the assigned time.

For further research we were able to see that the students liked more speaking, reading and listening than writing, and the skill they liked the most was listening. And during the English class, when students were developing the activities assigned, they seem to like listening activities to develop the topics of the class. Therefore, a new research we thought further researchers can apply is to know why intermediate level students enjoy listening activities and how using cooperative learning groups they can foster their listening skill?

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Appendix 1

University Consent Form

UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN BUENAVENTURA, SEDE BOGOT          AUNIVERSIDAD MILITAR NUEVA GRANADA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONLANGUAGES DEPARTMENT                LANGUAGE ENGLISH PROGRAM

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN BASIC EDUCATION WITH EMPHASIS ON ENGLISH
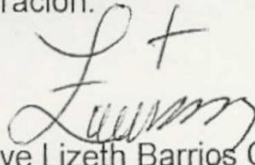
## CIRCULAR INFORMATIVA

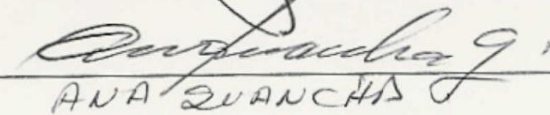Estimados padres de familia, reciban un cordial saludo.

Como estudiantes de último semestre de la Universidad de San Buenaventura, y en prácticas docentes en la universidad Militar Nueva Granada; debemos desarrollar nuestro proyecto de grado. Para ello respetuosamente solicitamos su colaboración al permitirnos trabajar con los estudiantes del curso de inglés nivel kids 6 de los días sábados para aplicar y recolectar los datos que sean necesarios para el proyecto, en donde podremos desarrollar y evidenciar cada uno de los pasos que ellos cumplen en su desarrollo, del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua.

Para nosotras será de gran ayuda poder contar con ellos. Agradecemos su colaboración.

Atentamente:

Omar Cabrales
Director centro de idiomas
Universidad Militar Nueva Granada

Jorge Betancourt
Director practicas estudiantes

Engye Lizeth Barrios Castillo
Andrea Milena Pinto
practicantes U. san buenaventura

Firma padres de familia _____
ANA JUANCHAS

Appendix 2

Phase 1: Graphic Organizer as Pre-writing

Universidad San Buenaventura
Faculdad de Educación
Under grade Program in basic education with emphasis in English
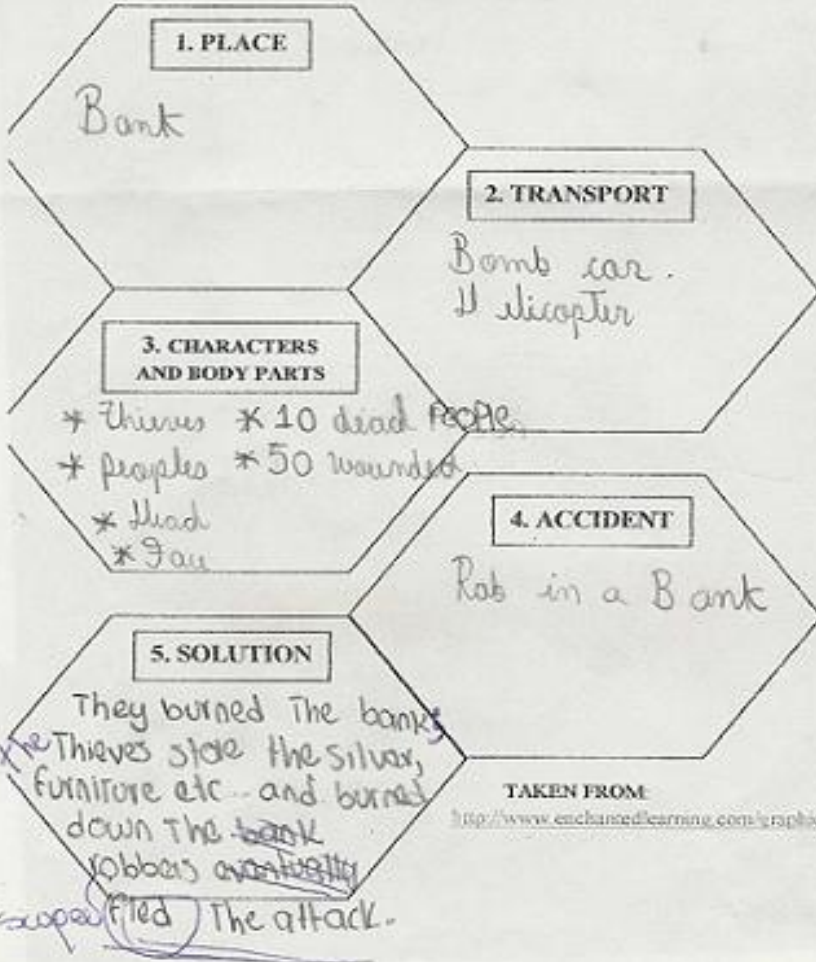
Universidad Militar Nueva Granada
Centro de Idiomas
Extension Courses

INVENTED STORY

DATE: 6-October-12    NAMES: STUDENT'S NAME    STUDENT'S NAME
STUDENT'S NAME

DRAFTING

1.  Work with your group and write short ideas for the accident's story.

1. PLACE

Bank

2. TRANSPORT

Bomb car.
Helicopter

3. CHARACTERS AND BODY PARTS

* Thieves  * 10 dead people.
* peoples  * 50 wounded
* Head
* Jaw

4. ACCIDENT

Rob in a Bank

5. SOLUTION

They burned the bank
The Thieves stole the silver,
furniture etc. and burned
down the bank
robbers eventually
escaped (fled) the attack.

TAKEN FROM:
http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/storymap/

Appendix 3

Phase 2: Focusing on Ideas

DRAFTING

2. Use the graphic organizer to create the story

TITLE   The giant ✓

**Beginning (use number 1, 2 and 3)**

the giant lived in a scale forest in the sky this history acure one hundred years ago, the giant loved a girl giant and his best friends is→was a dragon.

**Plot (use number 4)**

One day the giant ~~wc~~ down to the earth and fall ~~wc~~ down to the people. ¿what do you mean by fall down?

**Ending (use number 5)**

the dragon helped ~~to~~ the giant to picked up and they ∧up to the sky.

OK, good!

Appendix 4

Phase 3: Evaluating and Structuring



08-August-2008

the explosion in a gas station

In August 8 OF 2008 a lamppost Fell down in a gas station. It caused an explosion that killed more than 1.899 people and left 100 people wounded. the explosion covered 2 blocks. one wounded person was buried with a wall in his legs; he Finally had to use a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Other people suffered burns in their arms, Face and legs. the wounded people were taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Some of the cars close to the accident like Jeers, Convertibles, pick-ups, trucks etc... were completely destroyed and on Fire. the Fireman arrive Immediately in order to See what they could do. the lifeguards arrive too.

Appendix 5

Writing Conventions

| Mistake | Abbreviation |
|---|---|
| Choice word | WC |
| Spelling | SP |
| Wrong Position | ⟵⟶ |
| Verb | V. |
| Missing word | ∧ |
| Word not necessary | ✕ |

Appendix 6

Story books



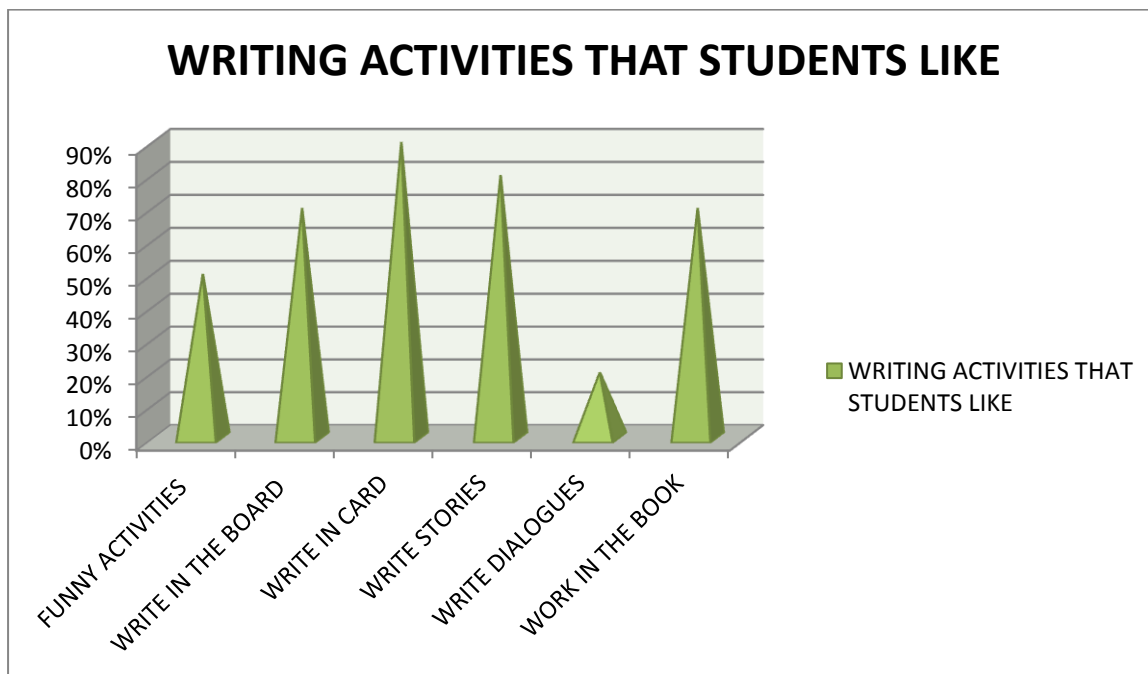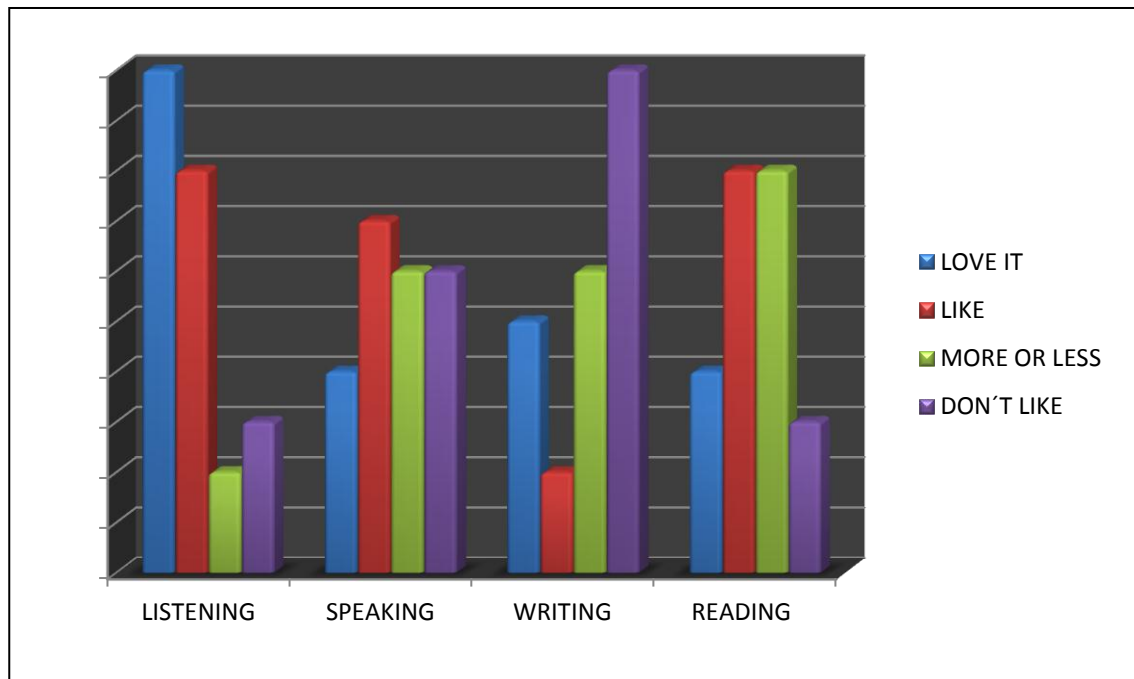Group 3 Activity 1



Group 6 Activity 1

Appendix 7

Questionnaires

Appendix 8

Audio-recordings

*RECGR2SEP22*

L1.Val: a giant life in the scare forest
L2.San: en donde?
L3.Ka: the forest is in the sky
L4.Val: no no ran, run
L5.Ka: the dragon is the friend
L6.Va: the giant girl……
L7.Ka: his friend is a dragon
L8.Val: he ate 8 persons, the others persons run away
L9.Val: a Giant live in the scare forest, this forest is, (…) the giant love the giant  girl and his
L10.best friend was a dragon, one day giant fall down there, the persons was scare and they ran,
L11.the dragon and the giant , and the giant girl (  ) ran away.
L12.San: the giant
L13.Ka: all the night in the sky
L14.Val: and his best friend was a dragon, one day the giant fell down to the earth and ate
L15.persons the persons were ( ) and they run, the dragon and the girl, and the giant girl /helped/
L16.the persons who run away, and the giant girl (  ) with the giant all the night in  the sky.


*RECGR5OCT6*

L1.Ta: yo leo y el resto mira si quedo bien
L2.Je: the explosion in a gas station
L3.Ta: in august 8 of 2008
L4.Je: read the all story
L5.Ta: place gas station
L6.Je: transport, ambulance, truck
L7.Seb: accident, the explosion
L8.Die: characters, lifeguards, people and fireman
L9.Je: solution the fireman arrived immediately in order to see what happen.

Appendix 9

Interviews

***FINTGR3***
**TEA: ok siguiente grupo es el 3** bueno chicos díganme cuando les dijimos que
haríamos pequeños grupos en donde tendrían que construir una historia y cada uno
tendría un rol específico que fue lo que más les llamo la atención
**JP**: me gusto mucho que teníamos que construir una historia y podríamos utilizar
nuestra imaginación
**AM**: que tendríamos un rol, y pues tendríamos responsabilidades
**DA**: que podríamos trabajar en grupo
**JM**: ummm no se lo mismo
**TEA**: les gusto el rol que tenían?
**JP**: pues al principio no, por q no hacía casi nada pero ya después me gusto mas
**AM**: si siempre fue chévere
**DA AND JM:** si me gusto
**TEA:** como se sintieron trabajando en grupo?
**DA:** bien porque todos hacíamos algo y estábamos ocupados
**AM:** bien
**JP:** bien además porque no estamos con los amigos sino que compartimos con otras
personas
**TEA:** encontraron dificultades a la hora de trabajar en el grupo y como las
solucionaron
**JP:** si sobre todo que había cierta persona que no ayudaba mucho entonces nos
tocaba hacer la tarea de el
**AM:** si por que todos no estaban interesados en hacer las cosas y pues lo
solucionamos ayudándonos todos
**DA:** haciendo las tareas de los demás aparte de la mía
**TEA:** que actividad les gusto más
**JP:** la primera de la historia del alien
**DA AND AM:** huy si esa fue más chévere
**TEA:** que aprendieron de trabajara en grupo
**AM:** que si no hacemos las tareas que nos corresponde dentro del grupo no
terminamos a tiempo
**JP:** que tenemos que apoyarnos para terminar la historia
**DA:** que podemos trabajar con otras personas y no solo con mis amigas

Appendix 10

Line-by-line Analysis

*RECGR3OCT6*

L1.JP: we are the group 3, we made the second work, the topic is accidents, the place is santa

L2.maria school, the transport is a car, the characters are the teacher, the boy , the paramedic,

L3.the doctor, the police, and the police, the accident, they crashing a bike, the teacher with a

L4.the students , the solutions, they would well in five months. I draw a picture about the title of

L5.the accident for a newspaper of the university. *(Verifying the story)*

L6.AM: como se dice capturer en pasado?

L7.JP: captured , con D, o si quieres Cap. Como se dice errores, oye ana maria como se dice

L8.errores, se supone que el debería buscar en el diccionario,*(using the dictionary)* oye tu que

L9.estas haciendo. *(the leader organize the task)*

L10.JP: ok, I finish the picture about, of the accident; the history is of Juan Pablo perdomo, ana

L11.maria cicua, and Daniela Lopez. We made the work of the /nepaper/ , we make the history o a

L12.newpapaer, I draw the picture, ana maria grab the conversation and Daniela write the ideas,

L13.and I draw the pictures.*(the leader organize the task)*

L14.JP: Dale rapido, no si peguemolo *(the leader organize the task)*

 L15. (1.00)

L16.D: La letra de que color la hacemos, de negro, juan pablo, ¿de qué color hacemos la letra? *(group approval)*

L17. (2.00)

L18.T: Ready, y porque no lo pegan a la historia, listo, entonces pégalo por detrás de la cartulina

L19.JP: OK, we most finish the work, we finish the story, is the finish, we finish all the work

Appendix 11

Index Chart

| Complete Name of the Index | Abbreviation | Complete Name of the Index | Abbreviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Final Interview | FINT. | Spelling | SP. |
| Group | GR. or G. | Word Mistake | WM. |
| Line | L. | Verb Mistake | VM. |
| Activity | A. or AC. | Past Verb | VP. or PV. |
| Appendix | AP. | Grammar Mistake | GM. |
| Pronoun Mistake | PM. | Dictionary | DIC. |
| Missing Article | MA. | Verb Insert | VIN |
| Pronoun Insert | PIN. | TV and mass media influence | T.V. |
| Article Mistake | MAR. | Spanish Word | SPW. |
| Language Transfer | LT. | Recording | RE. |
| Date | SEP. or OCT. | Article Insert | ARI. |

Appendix 12

Coding procedure

| Interview code | Example | Audio recording code | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Helping the group | **FINTGR1L25:** T: Como te sentiste trabajando en grupo, Bien, ¿Por qué? **FINTGR1L34:** Hacerlo rápido, mientras que uno escribía la historia en la hoja, la otra lo creaba y el otro lo traducía | The leader organizes the task | *RECGR1SEP15:* **L1.**Man: escribir las ideas que nosotras digamos, ( …)por eso mismo yo soy la que traduce, ok, **L2.**entonces yo dijo ideas, y tu escribes en español, después yo las traduzco , ves amigo, entonces |
| Ss adjust to the group | **FINTGR56L1:** bueno chicos cuéntenme como les fue trabajando **FINTGR6L3:** Da: bien pues nos integramos mas con niños que no conocíamos | Use of dictionary | *RECGR7OCT6:* **L32.**Pa: 52 heridos, busca heridos **L33.**Ste:/wounded/ |
| Ss like to create a story | **FINTGR7L17:** T: bueno, cuando les digamos que tenían que crear historias en grupo ¿qué les llamo más la atención? **FINTGR3 L4:** Pab: me gusto mucho que teníamos que construir una historia | Per correction | *RECGR6SEP2:* **L26.**dan: in her house **L27.**Lau: acá iría una coma no |
| Ss organize and divide tasks | **FINTGR6L17:** An: que es muy bueno por que las cosas que tenemos que hacer nos las podemos **FINTGR7L47:** Est: yo y paola ibamos corrigiendo las palabras, y el iba inventando la historia . | Sharing ideas | *RECGR1SEP15:* **L66.**Man: No para que lo copiemos en esa hoja de una vez, arrendado coma, los ojos que eran, **L67.**oye el que le robo el reloj era un señor con plata **L68.**An: si, le puse que el que robo el reloj era un señor muy rico |
| Students support each other | FINTGR6L15.Lau: que nos toca apoyarnos y ayudarnos unos a otros para que el cuento nos salga bien FINTGR3L30: Pab: que tenemos que apoyarnos para terminar la historia | Teacher approval | *RECGR7SEP22:* **L38.**Ste: cafetería se escribe igual que español **L39.**T: solamente le agregas doble F , Encontrar en pasado, porque encontrar de presente es find |

Appendix 13

| Interview codes grouping | Audio recording codes grouping |
|---|---|
| *Students learn to work cooperatively :* Helping the group  The group work well  Ss adjust to the group  Students support each other | *The leader manages and organizes the group:*  The leader organizes the task  Turn taking |
| *I like to create and invent stories:* Ss like to create a story  I like to invent stories | *The students ask and look for the vocabulary:* Vocabulary  Use of dictionary |
| *Vocabulary difficulties and use of the dictionary:* Writing difficulties  Using dictionary | *The students help each other  to create the story:* Verifying the story  Per correction |
| *Participating and working all the group:* awareness of working together  Is important participate all the students | *Students interact and share their idea:* Group approval  Sharing ideas |

Appendix 14

Visual Display – First Research Question

What is the impact of the writing approach when working in cooperative learning groups?

*Category found*

Students create a strategy for solving difficulties that they found during the writing activity.

Students used three strategies

Inter language

Language transfer

Mass- media influence
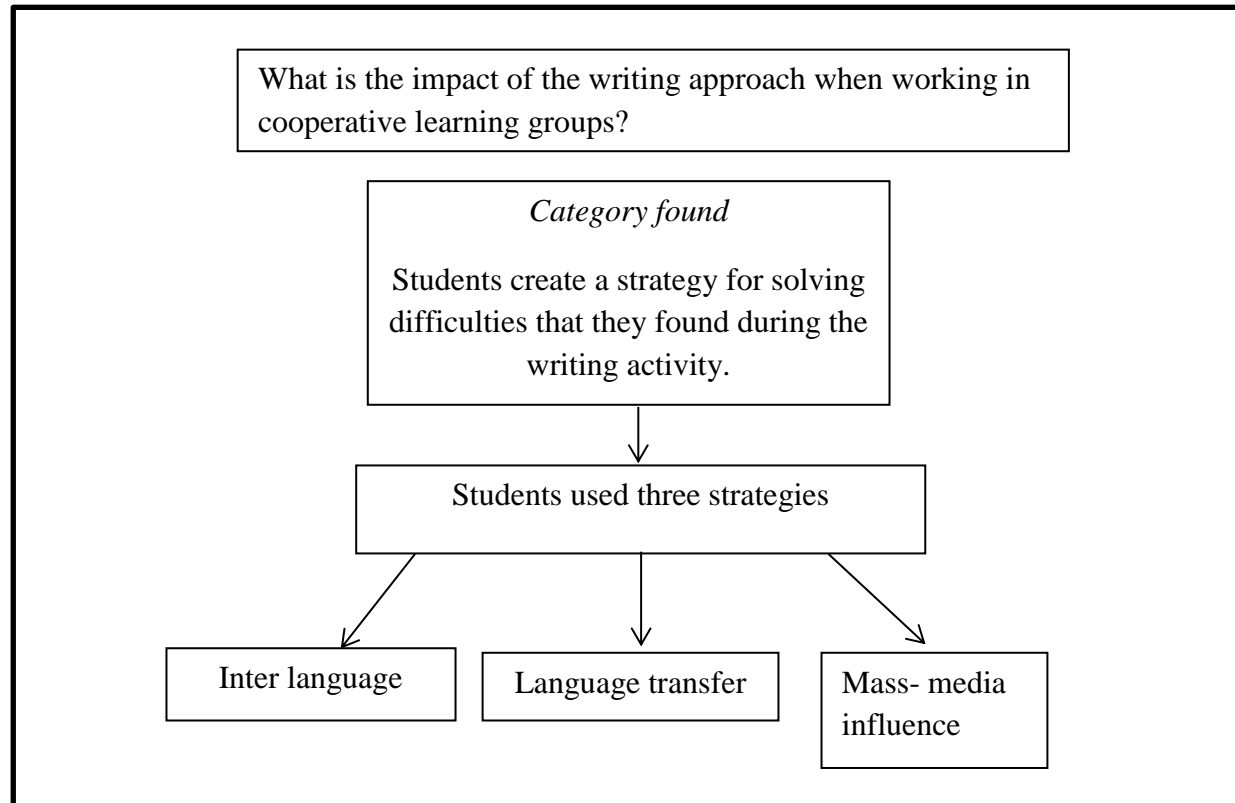
Appendix 15

Visual Display – Second Research Question

What does the use of cooperative language learning inform us about children's interaction at Military University?

*Category found*

The group work cooperatively when a leader deliberate duties and the group organizes the tasks for the same goal.

*The Leader:* deliberate duties and helped.

*The entire group:* participated and shared ideas and

*Students:* Learnt to work together for a same goal, respected others ideas, and met new people.

*The teacher:* approved students writing.