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**Enhancing EFL Pre-kindergarten students' lexical recall through the
Plan-Do-Review storytelling approach -Based on Action Research.**

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Acronyms

AR: Action Research Study
EFL: English as a foreign language
SO1: Specific objective 1
SO2: Specific objective 2
SO3: Specific objective3

Abstract

This report presents an Action Research Study conducted in an EFL context in a bilingual private school in Concepción, Chile. The purpose of this study was to determine how the storytelling approach “Plan-Do-Review” could contribute to EFL pre-kindergarten students’ recalling of lexical items. Eight students aged between 4 and 5 participated in a 6-sessions intervention, designed to implement 6 cycles of the “Plan-Do-review” storytelling approach, with 3 teacher-designed stories including 5 target lexical items for the phoneme /ɪ/. Small group interviews and a Lexical recalling test were used as data collection techniques. Thus, content and frequency analysis were applied to analyze the obtained data. It was found that the storytelling approach effectively supports young learners recalling of target lexical items, since all participants recalled 100% of the lexical items for the Lexical recalling test, successfully incorporated the items in their utterances and positively perceived the strategy as a support for vocabulary learning and early literacy development. It is expected that these findings contribute to the further understanding of how very young learners expand their vocabulary bank while experiencing their firsts English acquisition experiences.

Keywords: education, ESL, storytelling, vocabulary learning, very young learners.

Chapter I: Introduction

Worldwide children are learning English at very early age (Pinter, 2017). Nonetheless, reliable information about how to teach this language to learners who may not yet know how to read and write is yet to be unveiled (Mourão& Ellis, 2020). Adults involved in this teaching process need to take an approach that considers the child in a holistic manner, ensuring that their initial language learning encounters provide a solid base for a life-long language learning experience (Mourão& Ellis, 2020).

Chile has acknowledged the importance of young learners' first English learning experiences and has recently developed national policies regarding this matter. An example of this is that the Ministry of Education published a curriculum proposal for Pre-kindergarten levels (NT1) (MINEDUC, n.d.). This proposal establishes the relevance of English as the key for the development of broad communicational competences, along with the access to diverse cultures, realities, and globalized information. Thus, the national pedagogical perspective for early years considers the learner as a leading character of the learning process, providing them with several opportunities for expressing and communicating their opinions, as well as interaction with their environment and peers. Consequently, this proposal is based on the Communicative Approach and complemented with other perspectives which highlight the importance of communication such as the Natural Approach, Cooperative language learning and Content based instruction. Regarding the materialization of this proposal, ~~it is suggested that~~ classroom activities should leave aside memorization and structure repetition, shifting to group work, collaborative projects, role-playing, among others, where children interact and exchange information in situations that are closer to their realities (MINEDUC, n.d.).

The present Action Research Study, Hereafter AR, was developed by a teacher-researcher in a pre-kindergarten class (aged between 4 and 5) at a private bilingual school in Concepción, Chile. In this context, reality falls short from the ideal situation previously described. The Jolly Phonics method is the methodology chosen by the school to teach early literacy skills to young learners. This method has provided teachers a guidance to teach several generations phonemic awareness in an immersion program modality. Nonetheless, the partial use of the steps that guide this method, along with the selection of only drilling and repetition activities to support phonemic and vocabulary learning has resulted in an unsuccessful recall of the lexical target items taught. However, this problem could be addressed by introducing the “Plan-Do-Review” model as a storytelling approach to support students' lexical recall. This strategy is valued as a promising strategy for language teaching since it is a high-quality language input with unique multimodal characteristics, combining text with visual elements and graphic elements (Burton & Mastellotto, 2016).

Therefore, this AR report presents the implementation of the “Plan-Do-Review” model as a storytelling approach used to support English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) pre-kindergarten students' lexical recall, analyzing the influence of the model in students' recalls, language production and perceptions towards the experienced of being exposed to the approach.

Chapter II: Conceptual Framework

In the context of Chilean national policies regarding English teaching, the Chilean Ministry of Education published a curriculum proposal for Pre-kindergarten levels (NT1) (Mineduc, n.d.). This proposal establishes the relevance of English as the key for the development of broad communicational competences, along with the access to diverse cultures, realities, and globalized information. Therefore, the acquisition of effective communicative skills is crucial for students to be able to participate in those scenarios.

Thus, the national pedagogical perspective for Early years considers the learner as a leading character of the learning process they are being engaged in, providing them with several opportunities for expression, communication, and of interaction with their environment and peers. Since this curricular proposal is based on the Communicative Approach, its main purpose is for students to be able to communicate in English in a meaningful and contextualized way, developing the four language skills with a holistic perspective. In order to do so, communication should allow collaborations and meaning negotiation with others (Mineduc, n.d.).

Regarding the materialization of this proposal, classroom activities should leave aside memorization and structure repetition, shifting to group work, collaborative projects, role-playing, among others, where children are interacting and exchanging information in situations that are closer to their realities (Mineduc, n.d.). Consequently, in the following sections key elements of early language learning will be addressed, starting by establishing the definition and characteristics of young learners of English, followed by the exploration of literacy development regarding English as foreign language. Then the Communicative Approach to teach those learners will be addressed, to finally address, vocabulary learning at early age and teaching literacy along with specific methods to do so will be further analyzed.

2.1. Young Learners of English in the EFL context

English as a foreign language is understood as the development of English in a context where it is not considered a first language of the learners (non-English speaking countries) or a predominant language in the area. Still when language learning can be supplemented by out of class interaction with the foreign language, these interactions are not greater than the input provided by purposeful language teaching (Collins, 2016).

The current study takes place in an EFL context, which according with Copland & Garton (2014) demands the analysis of crucial aspects when teaching English to young learners. Firstly, the definition of very young learners needs to be addressed, since physical, psychological, social, emotional, and cognitive factors may be at risk when embracing a wide definition of this group. For this study's purposes, children from 3 to 5 years old will be understood when referring to very young learners, which is the definition of Early years according with Copland and Garton (2014), also known as the Pre-primary Level (Ellis, 2014).

Secondly, even with the growing importance of teaching English since early years, researchers in the Latin American EFL contexts (Bland,2018; Miller et al., 2018) evidenced still outdated teacher preparation and inadequate in-service mentoring regarding effective teaching practices. Consequently, the findings of the present investigation are a contribution to this scarce researched area.

Thirdly, individual and contextual factors that may influence children's language learning should be addressed. Regarding individual factors, Pinter (2011) argues that children's attitudes, and motivation towards learning the language should be considered. The scholar also mentions that the contextual factors that influence their learning are parental attitudes towards the language, hours of language exposure in the school environment and the use of English outside the classroom. Shamsi (2019) adds to the discussion regarding factors affecting language learning at early age stating that motivation, as in individual factor, plays a crucial role in facilitating language learning, yet the effect of external factors, such as motivational activities (songs, games, stories, etc.) cannot be denied. In addition, Alexiou (2020) argues that when introducing English, the choice regarding materials is fundamental. Therefore, the creation of materials based on students' needs and interests is imperative. These pedagogical resources should consider a balance between prior knowledge and new input, since overly demanding activities may result in a negative impact in students' attitudes and motivations towards the language. As for materials and resources commonly used at this age, picture books, flashcards, technology, games, and stories acquire special relevance (Alexiou, 2020).

Consequently, an appropriate knowledge of young learner's characteristics and of appropriate pedagogical aspects such as teaching, resources, and activities becomes crucial for an effective language learning. Thus, the current approach recognized by the Chilean national context to teach English to young learners should be further addressed.

2.2. The Communicative Approach

Jabeen (2014) affirms that the Communicative Approach is considered one of the most effective theoretical methods for English teaching since 1970s. Responding to the increasing need of a successful learning of communicative skills in our nowadays globalized world, teaching effective communicative abilities becomes the goal of language learning. Moreover, this approach is based on what Hyme's in 1960's proposed as Communicative Competence, highlighting the importance to balance the linguistic and grammatical knowledge with the cultural, social and contextual understanding of the language. Consequently, one of the underlying premises of this method is that it needs to be considered not only the functional meaning of language, yet also the social meaning of it (Jabeen,2014). Additionally, some of the characteristic activities that this methodology follows are Group and Pair work, Open or cued dialogues, Role plays, among others, where the main aim is to provide opportunities for the students to use the language in different contextualized situations (Jabeen,2014).

As previously mentioned, this particular view of language as a vehicle for interaction and learning in context and collaboration works as a framework for the Chilean curricula when addressing the development of the four language skills: Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking (Mineduc, n.d.). Particularly for the interests of this AR, early literacy development and vocabulary learning requires an in-depth analysis in the case of very young language learners who are facing their initial encounters with English.

2.3 Vocabulary Learning

“While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Lewis, 1993 in Rasouli& Jafari 2016, p.40). This means that vocabulary plays a leading role in effective and meaningful language communication.

Susanto (2017) states that vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in mastering a foreign language. In addition, lexical knowledge has a vital position in all four of the language skills. However, even with the identification of its significant role, other aspects of language such as grammar have been given more importance in language teaching along the years. Consequently, it is important to consider that if learners lack vocabulary knowledge, their ability to comprehend and to express themselves will be severely compromised. In other words, limited vocabulary will impede a successful communication. Furthermore, one of the reasons discussed by Susanto (2017) of why lexical learning has been neglected and why it is difficult for students to learn new words is that unlike syntax or phonology, vocabulary does not have specific rules that may be followed or used as scaffold for learners’ language development (Susanto ,2017).

Supporting the statement that vocabulary is a core element of any language, Rasouli& Jafari (2016) highlight the importance not only of the four well-known language skills of English, but also the relevance of the three remaining language components: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. This last component is defined in terms of: “words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning” (Rasouli& Jafari,2016, p.40). Likewise, it is mentioned that vocabulary knowledge functions as a predictor of reading success, since learners need to know approximately 98% of the words of an oral or written text to comprehend it (Rasouli& Jafari ,2016).

There are two dimensions of vocabulary that need to be considered, namely breadth and depth. Vocabulary breadth refers to the number of words that students need to learn, and vocabulary depth is defined with the consideration of eight dimensions, namely: meaning, written form, spoken form, part of speech, frequency, collocation, register and associations as illustrated in Figure 1. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge requires the mastery of different and complex sets of information.

Figure 1

Dimensions of vocabulary depth (Rasouli and Jafari 2016, p.40, adapted from Nation 1990).



2.3.1 Young language learners' vocabulary development

Vocabulary has been classified in various categories. One of these classifications would be between Receptive and Expressive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is the type of vocabulary that learners are able to recognize and understand, but that not necessarily can produce. In other words, these lexical items are the ones that can be identified when seen or read, however, they will not certainly be available to use them while speaking or writing (Susanto, 2017). As for the Expressive vocabulary, Vatalaro et al. (2017) defines it as the lexical items that are mentally retrieved and will be present in expression, such as speaking or writing. Moreover, these authors also highlight how both Receptive and Expressive vocabulary are crucial precursors for later literacy development (Vatalaro et al.,2017).

Furthermore, during decades the explosive increase in children early speech has interest researchers. Hypothesis such as the development of the levels of conceptual

understanding, representational skills, and metalinguistic insights to explain this abrupt onset have been used (Dapretto & Bjork, 2000). However, the asymmetry between the development of early Receptive and Productive skills and the different cognitive demands they imply, should be considered. While considering Receptive skills, language comprehension is required by means of recognition of words and sounds and the recalling of what that specific phonological pattern means when hearing this specific input. In contrast, production requires the retrieval of a pattern of sounds associated to a specific meaning (Dapretto & Bjork, 2000). For the purposes of this research, both receptive and expressive dimensions of vocabulary is further explored with the participants.

2.4. Teaching Literacy to Young language Learners

When introducing English in an EFL context in order to develop literacy for early language learning some aspects need to be taken into consideration. Firstly, the recognition that children are all unique learners is required (Pinter, 2017). In words of Gardner (1983), Intelligence manifest in various and different ways, which is well-known as Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Educators worldwide have acknowledged this framework in order to have their learners explore their different intelligences while learning a new language.

Secondly, the different contexts where this early literacy will take place needs to be identified (Pinter, 2017). There are four main types of bilingualism: second language learning from birth, as cultural heritage, minority language learners, and as for the one that that respond to this action research study's purposes, majority language learners, where students learn two high- status languages usually by following immersion programs (Pinter, 2017). Bilingualism advantages for early language learning are identified in early metalinguistic awareness, more consciousness for language systems, structures, and patterns, and in better pronunciation performance (Pinter, 2017). Additionally, Barac et al. (2014) recognize cognitive advantages in terms of better executive control function. In addition, DeKeyser (2012) states that those advantages apply in natural learning environments. Consequently, Muñoz (2014) evidenced that those performance advantages would not work in the same way in the EFL context due to input limitations. Thus, in her longitudinal research it was found that more than the starting age and length of English instruction, it is the contact with good quality speakers and opportunities for intensive exposure to the language that marks the difference regarding literacy development.

Finally, early literacy development needs to come with the development of 21st century skills (Pinter, 2017) to raise awareness of the factors that are influencing language learning from early years. Thus, strategies for learning how to learn need to be introduced. According to Pinter (2017), there are three distinguished categories of the strategies that need to be taught: social and affective strategies (how emotions affect learning along with social and respect elements such as listening, taking turns, etc.); metacognitive strategies (ongoing process of reflection by planning, monitoring and evaluating language learning);

and cognitive strategies (how to deal with linguistic information in an efficient way, organizing, categorizing and memorizing linguistic information).

The aforementioned key elements that are involved when teaching literacy to young learners, namely multiple learning preferences, type of language learning context and modality, as well as auxiliary skills development are materialized in specific teaching methods that bring to life the described implications when introducing young learners to the emergent development of the English Language skills. Two specific methods, The Jolly Phonics Method and The Storytelling approach, both relevant for this investigation, will be described in the following sections.

2.4.1. The Jolly Phonics Method

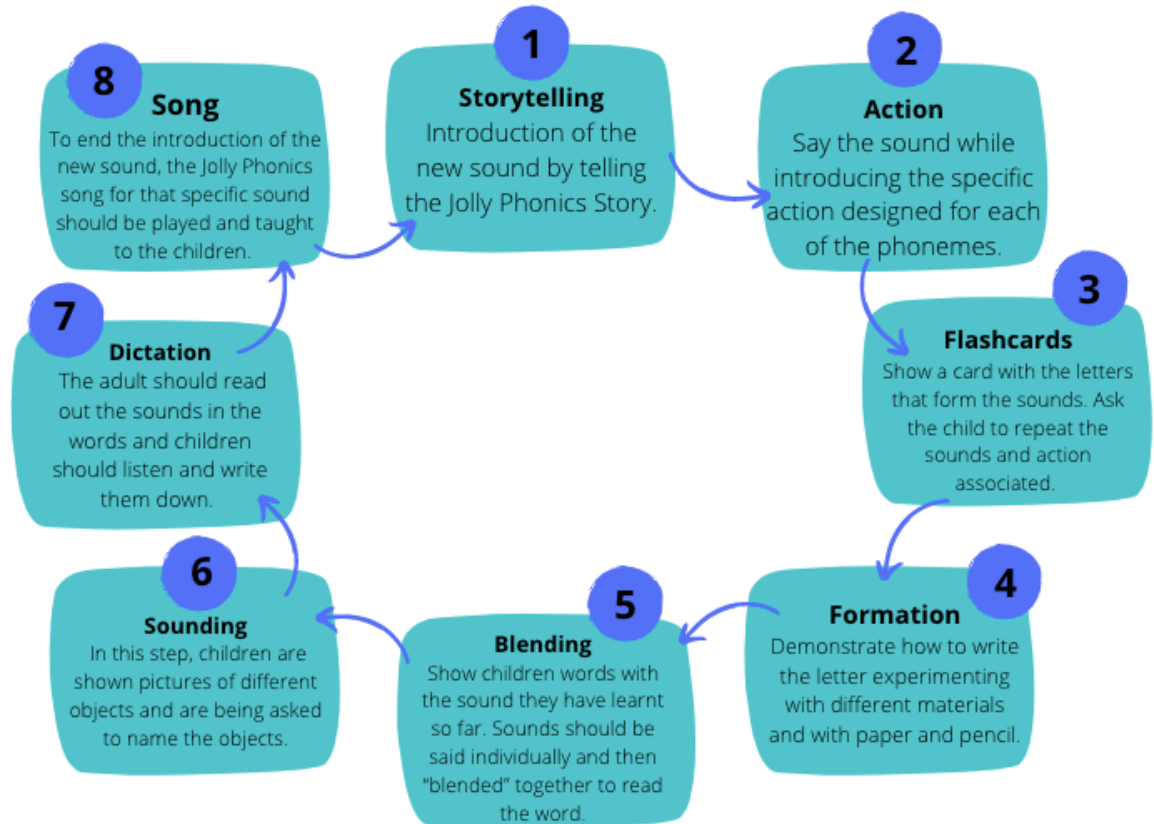
According to Jolly Technologies (2020), the Jolly Phonics Method is a worldwide known literacy method that allows students to learn how to read and write English with a focus in phonemic awareness. Furthermore, the focus on Phonics implies that the sounds that letters make are the ones that need to be taught, since this is the aspect that will be useful to learn how to read and write, as opposed to letter names. Therefore, 42 different sounds are taught in what it is stated to be an engaging method, through stories, actions, songs, and characters (Jolly Technologies, 2020).

Moreover, in an in-depth description of the sounds, even when the English alphabet only has 26 letters, 42 sounds are taught since two or more letters together sometimes imply producing only just one sound, for example “oa” or “ie”. The sounds are taught in seven groups with a graduated difficulty progression (Jolly Technologies, 2020). As for the purposes of the current study the first group of sound is considered: “S, A, T, I, P, N” (Lloyd & Wernham, 2003), with a particular focus in the fourth sound of this progression for the phoneme /i/.

Additionally, an 8-steps sequence for teaching a letter sound is suggested, which is further illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

8-steps sequence for teaching a letter sound using the Jolly Phonics Method. Adapted from Jolly Technologies (2020).



An example on the use of methods that focus on phonemic awareness is the work of Suggate et al. (2021). These scholars conducted an investigation where a Repeated-reading and Phonemic Awareness method was compared to an Elaborative Storytelling approach (IES) in the impact in vocabulary, phonemic awareness and oral narrative skill. Their findings show that children participated more actively in the IES condition against the Repeated-reading method. Moreover, in the phonemic awareness condition more disruptive behavior was evidenced. Regarding story vocabulary, at the post-test the IES resulted in statistically significantly greater performance for both receptive and expressive story vocabulary than phonemic awareness training. Finally, there were no differences in oral narrative skills.

Particularly regarding the use of the Jolly Phonics Method, Ariate et al. (2018) argue that this is an effective method to enhance early literacy skills, evidencing that children who are taught by using the Jolly Phonics method show a better performance on reading, spelling, and literacy. Nevertheless, and despite its proven effectiveness the authors recognize that factors of absence surrounding the strategy are still present, such as lack of materials and teacher knowledge of how to implement this specific approach.

Those elements need to also be considered when assessing the efficiency with which the method may be implemented.

2.4.2. The Storytelling approach in Early Years language learning

Narrative plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning, since the human brain is predisposed to think, remember, and shape identities using a narrative structure. In Burner's (1997) words, "It is very likely the case that the most natural and earliest way in which we organize our experience, and our knowledge is in terms of the narrative form" (in Burton & Mastellotto, 2016, p.137). Therefore, the narratives which stories carry works as a powerful tool to share knowledge in society suiting the most natural way of knowledge organization. Additionally, Burton & Mastellotto (2016) indicate that stories are a useful tool for language teaching because of their rich communicative function in the cultural and linguistic domain. They also conceive the storytelling process as a co-creative and interactive one, where both teller and listener are creating their own narrative of understanding, where psychological, linguistic, metalinguistic, and metacognitive skills are fostered.

The storytelling approach is considered to be a promising strategy for language teaching. Firstly, because it is a high-quality source of language input with dynamic and multi-sensory characteristics. Secondly, it is multimodal, combining written text, visual images, and graphic elements, having a complexity and richness that encourages multiple readings and analysis. Thirdly, reading stories in early years bring linguistic, social, and affective benefits since they are an enjoyable and motivating tool that contributes to the development of a positive attitude towards the language. Furthermore, they facilitate language acquisition and retention because language is presented through patterns of repetition and rhyme, which are predictable and easy to remember. Moreover, listening and telling stories allows children to learn the intonation, prosody and pronunciation of the language, therefore nourishing the development of oral skills (Burton & Mastellotto, 2016).

Ellis and Brewster (2014) add to the discussion of the benefits of the implementation of storytelling in early years by acknowledging that teachers have students with diverse learning needs and different levels of English. For this, storybooks function as an ideal source to meet those students' needs with their visual attractiveness and authenticity. Besides, with the teachers' storytelling techniques and accompanying illustrations from the stories, each child can create meaning according to their individual linguistic level and cognitive abilities. These authors appreciations towards the benefits of incorporating stories to the teaching curricula may be summarized in the following statements developed by Ellis and Brewster (2014):

- Storytelling is one of the most natural ways to introduce continuous and coherent spoken discourse in the target language.
- Storybooks unleash creativity and imagination of both children and teacher.

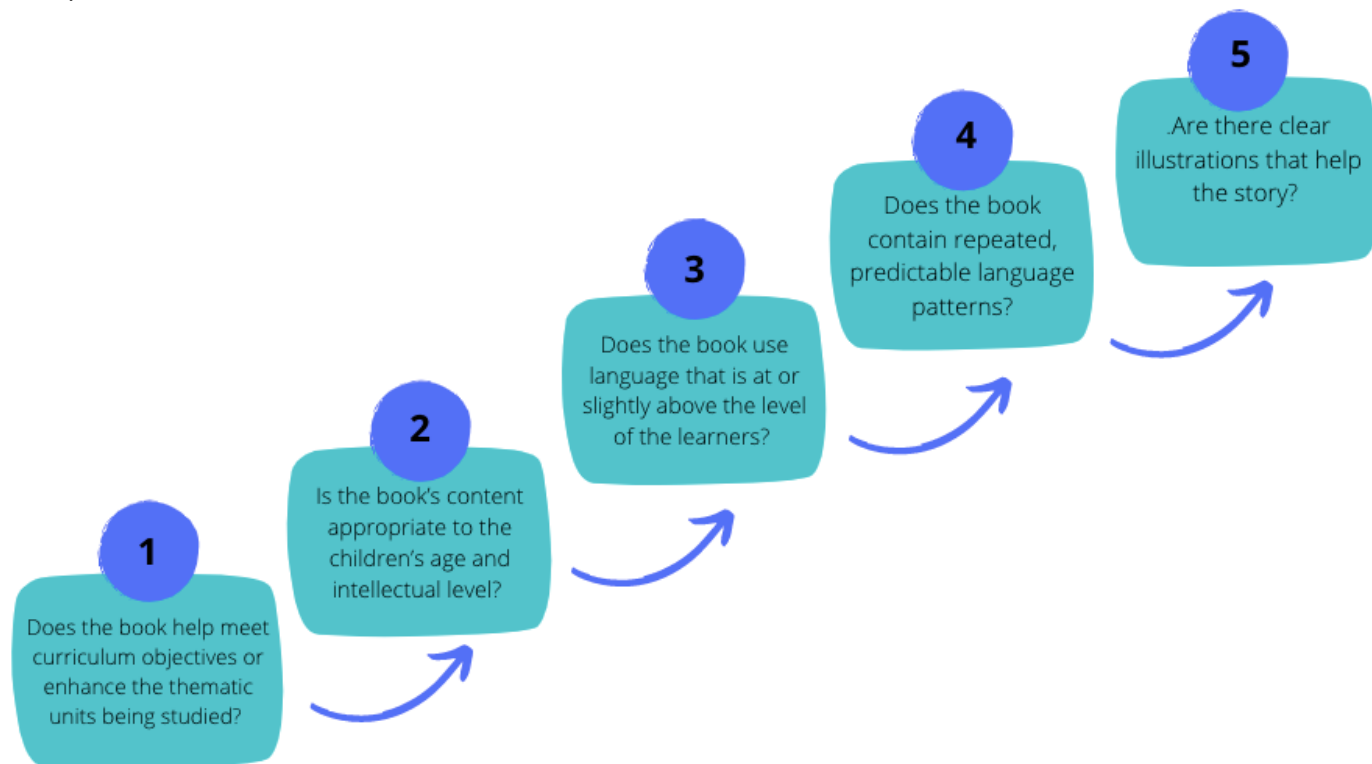
- Stories exercise imagination. Students become personally involved in a story, identifying with the characters and interpreting narrative and illustrations.
- Listening to stories is a social experience. The shared evoking emotions that stories provoke boosts individual confidence and nourishes emotional and social development.
- Stories allow the introduction of new vocabulary. The varied, memorable, and familiar context that the narratives provide enrich students thinking and progressively generates that the new words integrate their speech.
- Storybooks help to develop children's learning strategies, such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing.
- Storytelling addresses universal themes that go beyond daily dialogs and activities, allowing students to experiment with ideas and feelings that are relevant for them.
- Stories lay foundations for future consolidation of literacy skills, providing students with early knowledge about language structures, functions, language learning skills and vocabulary.

Regarding concrete classroom experiences of the implementation of the storytelling approach, Dolzhykova (2014) investigated the characteristics of the use of storytelling in an EFL context with young learners in a pre-reading stage. Findings suggest that that storytelling is valued as a resourceful tool for teaching, nonetheless it is incorporated in an unstructured and non-systematic way inside the classrooms. Similarly, it was found that teachers consider storytelling as a time-consuming task, since they tend to find themselves creating short stories that meet their students' needs and contextual teaching characteristics. Therefore, the importance of the unique characteristics of stories that truly respond to specific context demands, such as specific target vocabulary teaching, acquires special relevance. Thus, stories need to serve the purposes of the teaching context they are being used in, and stories may be successfully used to teach vocabulary.

Another relevant issue is the appropriate criteria for the selection of stories. Mart (2012) states that an efficient story selection generates the opportunity of exposure to new, contextualized and visually supported vocabulary, along with the repetition of key words and phrases that students can manipulate. Regarding criteria for selection, the enhancement of curriculum objectives achievement, appropriateness to children's age and cognitive level, language difficulty, use of rhymes and language patterns and quality of illustrations are highlighted. Furthermore, these aspects may be presented as questions for adult guidance for story selection, as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Questions that guide stories selection (Mart, 2012, p. 102, adapted from Smallwood, 1998)



To support the aforementioned guiding questions to select stories, Ellis & Brewster (2014) provide a summary that addresses five objectives of language teaching (Linguistic, Psychological, cognitive, social & cultural), brought into criteria that are expanded into questions (See Table 1).

Table1

Criteria for selecting storybooks. Adapted from Ellis and Brewster (2014).

Criteria	Guidance Questions
Level (Language, vocabulary structures, functions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the level accessible? • Is the language representative of the variety spoken in the target culture? • Does it provide an appropriate level of challenge? • Does the story contain examples of rich vocabulary to provide comprehensible input?
Literary devices (Repetition, cumulative content)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What literary devices does the story contain? • How will these help children understand the story, participate in the storytelling, improve their pronunciation, encourage

<p>rhythm, rhyme question/answer dialogue, narrative humor, suspense, predictability/surprise onomatopoeia/)</p>	<p>anticipation and memorization, enrich their language, maintain their concentration and add to their enjoyment?</p>
<p>Content (Relevant, interesting, amusing, memorable, length and values)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the story engage my students? • Is it relevant to their interests? • Is it amusing and memorable? • Does it address universal themes? • Is it possible to read the story in one go or can it be broken down into parts? • Do we agree with the values and attitudes projected in the story?
<p>Illustrations/ layout (Use of illustrations/ layout, attractiveness, colours, sizing and target culture)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the illustrations synchronize with the text and support children's understanding? • Will illustrations develop children's visual literacy? • Are pictures appropriate to the age of my students? • Are they attractive and colorful? • Are they big enough for all the class to see? • Do they depict life in the target culture? • Does the layout (For example speech bubbles and Font selection) support children's understanding and maximize their interaction with the story?
<p>Educational potential (Learning to learn, cross-curricular links, conceptual development, Different learning styles/ intelligences)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the story enable children to become aware of and develop their learning strategies? • Can the story link in with other subjects across the curriculum? • Does the story develop and reinforce any concepts? • Does the story and related activities accommodate different learning styles and cater for different intelligences?
<p>Motivation (Enjoyment, positive attitudes, arouse curiosity, successful learning experiences, confidence building and desire to continue learning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the story motivate my students by drawing on their personal experience? • Will it develop their imagination and appeal to their sense of humor? • Will my pupils respond positively to the story and develop positive attitudes towards the target language, culture and language learning? • Will the story arouse their curiosity and make them want to find out more about the target language, culture and language learning? • Will the story provide a positive learning experience, build confidence and a desire to continue learning?

<p>Values (Co-operation, collaboration, emotional development, and self-esteem)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the story help children become aware of and question important values? • Are the values acceptable? • Will it provide opportunities for children to work together, take turns, share? Does the story help children explore and share emotions? • Does the story help children come to a better understanding of themselves and develop their self-esteem?
<p>Potential for follow-up work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the story provide a starting point for related language activities and lead on to follow-up work in the form of concrete outcomes?

Source: Adapted from The Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers. By Ellis, G. & Brewster, J, 2014, British Council.

Thus, the storytelling approach has shown to be an effective teaching method that provides a nourished learning environment based on reading stories. An example of this has been provided by Hsu (2015), who explored the perception of pre-service teachers regarding whether storytelling in group teaching enhanced EFL children's learning motivation and found that most of the teachers agreed that the storytelling lessons were suitable for the students and that they fostered creativity and critical thinking. Additionally, pre-service teachers perceived that those students were motivated and actively interacted with each other because of the storytelling intervention. Similarly, group accountability for a collective objective was demonstrated during the intervention.

In addition, effects of the storytelling approach have been evidenced in vocabulary learning. For instance, Solemani & Akbari (2013) found that storytelling is an effective method to nourish vocabulary learning among children, since results evidence that students' vocabulary mastery increased along with the implementation of the method. Moreover, the strategy was perceived positively by the students who participated in the intervention. Similarly, Maya & Al Halim (2021) reviewed the implementation of digital storytelling as a support for vocabulary learning, by using stories embedded with a combination of spoken narrative, digital images and resources, and technology. These scholars found a significant improvement in students' mean scores when comparing pre and post-test, therefore, an important effect on the vocabulary domain was identified.

Considering that the target level of this action research study is Early Years Education, studies such as the ones conducted by Abasi & Soori (2014) acquire special relevance. These investigators found that the storytelling approach proved to be an effective strategy to improve kindergarten students' vocabulary abilities. Likewise, Siahaan (2012) conducted an action research study, which aimed at improving Kindergarten students' vocabulary knowledge of EFL by using a story reading technique. Her findings indicated that the technique improved students' vocabulary after implementing three cycles of storytelling. Since students' mean scores in post-tests increased from 42 to 92. Furthermore, in a qualitative analysis, it was found that students enjoyed listening to stories and stories with pictures. Additionally, an increment of their enthusiasm and involvement was evidenced along with the implementation of the reading

technique. An interesting finding was that Kindergarten students were not able to identify that they were learning vocabulary with the stories, thus they were not intentionally listening to the stories to enhance their learning.

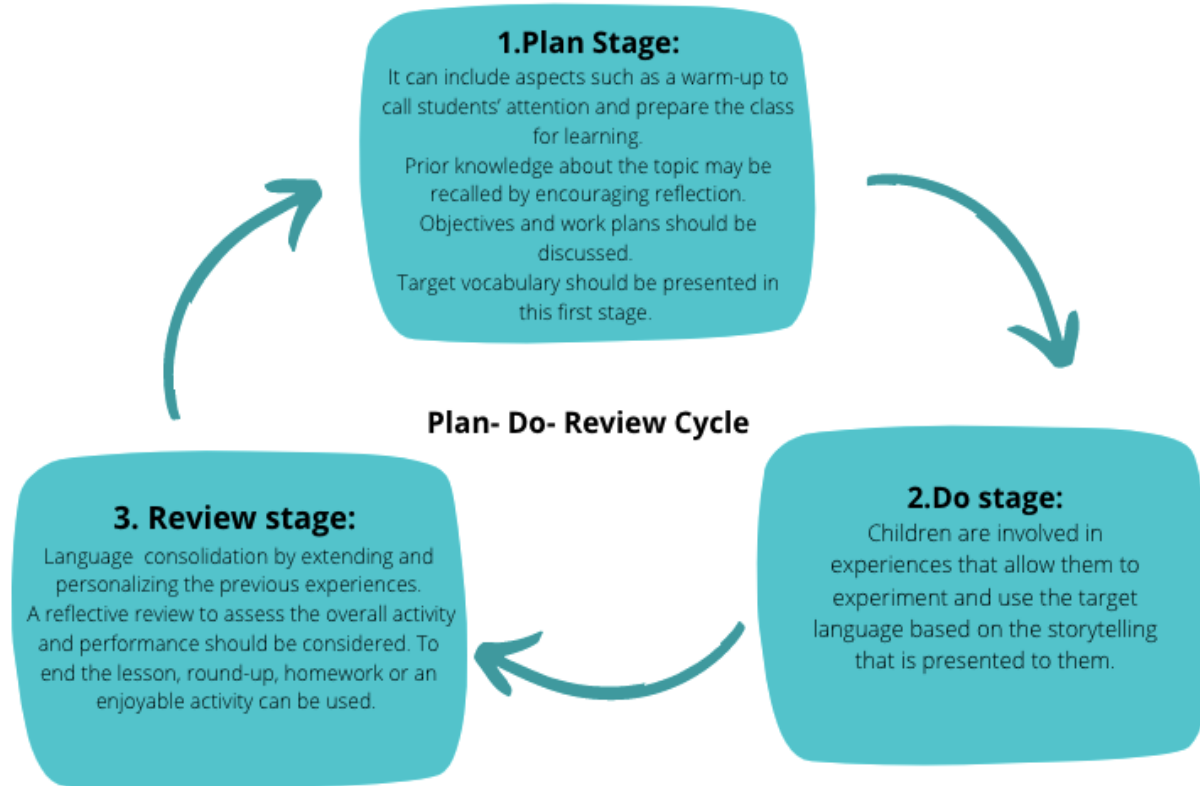
Specifically, about vocabulary retention, Bežilová (2019) evidenced that based on a storytelling intervention children's enthusiasm increased and also their ability to acquire vocabulary. Additionally, the results of two post-tests instances provided clear evidence that storytelling supports longer vocabulary retention. Finally, Horst, Parsons & Bryan (2011) explored the effects of repeatedly reading the same storybooks on both young children's fast and slow mapping abilities, finding that children with the same story intervention condition were better in immediate vocabulary recalling and performed a 150% better regarding vocabulary retention in contraposition to a different stories' intervention condition.

2.4.2.1 Plan- Do- Review Storytelling approach

A well-known storytelling approach model based on which effective interventions are designed is the "Plan-Do- Review", introduced by Ellis & Brewster in 2014 for the British Council. This approach is a three-stage model that provides children with several opportunities to reflect, experiment and further consolidate their language learning by thinking about what and how they are working and what they already know about the story, theme and vocabulary they are working with (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). This model offers a structure that allows learners to see a clear progression of their work with a concrete outcome. Furthermore, introducing the story from the beginning grants that students can be aware of the context and aim of their work. Additionally, with the final stage, children can further reflect about their learning, extending and personalizing language and vocabulary (See Figure 4) (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

Figure 4

Plan – Do – Review Storytelling approach (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).



Chapter III: Methods

3.1 Type of study

According to Burns (2013), Action Research is a type of investigation which enables teachers to acquire a deep understanding of their teaching practices, where innovation and renewal is achieved by a systematical and methodological approach that brings together classroom context, research and understanding. Therefore, the present investigation is an Action Research study where the teacher-researcher implements the “Plan-Do- Review” storytelling approach, designed to introduce specific lexical items, and analyses its contribution to kindergarten students’ receptive ability to recall vocabulary as a result of the implementation. The results drawn from the investigation provide enriching information for the teacher-researcher, allowing to systematically reflect on her own teaching practices and make decisions with solid pedagogical support, being a protagonist of change and improvement in her teaching environment.

In regard to the scope of the study, Atmowardoyo (2018) states that within the descriptive research purpose, the main goal is to systematically describe an existing phenomenon as accurate as possible. The characteristics of the situation already exist, and data collection allows for a deep characterization and explanation of the phenomenon under study. For this reason, the present Action Research study follows a descriptive purpose since vocabulary learning and recalling are examined and described as a result of the implementation of the “Plan-Do- Review” storytelling approach. Additionally, the description of this phenomenon is focused on the specific school context, and the portrayal of the situation aims to access the complexity of this specific context only. Moreover, the Intellectual Puzzle which drives this investigation is the Mechanical Puzzle. According to Mason (2002), this puzzle focuses on how something is constituted, how it works and why. Therefore, this Action Research study addresses the vocabulary learning and lexical recalling processes when using the storytelling approach, aiming to describe the characteristics of this elements providing a deep understanding of how vocabulary learning is taking place in the explored classroom.

3.2 Description of participants

The sampling process for this AR follows the non-random sampling methods of convenience and homogeneous sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In first place, a convenience sampling occurs when individuals are conveniently selected because they are volunteers or they can be easily recruited (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In this Action Research study, the teacher-researcher oversees exclusively one Pre-kindergarten class; therefore, these are the only individuals available to be recruited. In second place, a homogeneous sample consists of the selection of a small set of individuals that share homogenous characteristics, for intensive study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Specifically, for this investigation, the group of individuals share the characteristics of school level, age range, their attendance to the same private school, high socioeconomic level and years of formal exposure to English. Moreover, the sampling methods used for this Action Research study allow the selection of cases to provide the information needed to address the investigation purpose.

The participants of this AR are 8 students, five boys and three girls who attended to all six intervention sessions designed for this investigation. These children belong to the pre-kindergarten level and are between four and five years old. The students attend to a private bilingual school in Concepción, Chile. This school follows an immersion program, where children are exposed to 25 hours per week of English. This specific class is overseen by two Early Years teachers who teach all the subjects, including phonemic awareness and vocabulary knowledge, in a transdisciplinary way using English as the language of instruction. Because of the immersion program, the participants have been exposed to English for two academic years. These children are eager to participate in classes and are not afraid of making mistakes while experimenting with the language.

3.3 Research question and objectives

The reported study focuses on exploring the contribution of the storytelling approach “Plan-Do-Review” designed to support EFL Pre-kindergarten students’ Early Literacy development, in terms of their ability to recall lexical items. It addresses the following research question and objectives.

Research question

How can the storytelling approach “Plan-Do-Review”, used to introduce target vocabulary associated to the phoneme /ɪ/, contribute to EFL Pre-kindergarten students’ Early Literacy development?

General Objective

To examine the contribution of the storytelling approach “Plan-Do-Review” designed to support EFL Pre-kindergarten students’ Early Literacy development, in terms of their ability to recall lexical items.

Specific Objectives

SO1: To analyze learners’ group performance regarding their receptive ability to recall vocabulary when using the “Plan-Do- Review” storytelling approach.

SO2:To analyze learners’ group performance regarding their production of the target vocabulary after using the “Plan-Do- Review” storytelling approach.

SO3:To identify students’ perception towards their experience of being exposed to a storytelling approach as a support for Early Literacy development.

3.4 Research Problem

3.4.1 Research context description

In the context where this AR takes place, the early exposure to English of young learners provides a crucial support for their future language acquisition, valued because of the resources that English provides to participate in our globalized world. In addition, the development of their language skills in English is imperative given that the school follows the International Baccalaureate program. Moreover, these young learners are expected to demonstrate their language proficiency by taking the Trinity Exam from the Trinity College London by the end of their primary years, proving the efficient acquisition of effective communication skills in English.

In the aforementioned context, lexical recalling becomes crucial when considering that during their 4 years of immersion in their Early Years Education students are learning English and Spanish at the same time.

3.4.2 Problem Presentation

For Early Years Education school's curriculum focus on vocabulary is limited to a recognition of an increasing bank of high- interest words. Therefore, vocabulary introduction is done by repetition of words with graphic support. More specifically, lexical elements are taught along with phonemic awareness using the Jolly Phonics Method. Particularly about this synthetic and phonetic method (Jolly Learning Ltda., 2018), the school uses as a guide the groups of sounds (phonemes), songs and actions that it provides. The stories designed for the method are not used because of their lack of appeal to Chilean young learners. Additionally, the early years' teachers choose a vocabulary bank to associate with each phoneme, to facilitate their recognition. Further, teachers engage students in activities which allow students' to further experiment with language, such as puppet creation, bingo board games, plasticine models, among other activities. The issue is identified in this presentation of vocabulary, which uses activities and resources which are not contributing to a meaningful learning and recalling of the target vocabulary, since when asking students to recall the words, only some of them are able to remember a minimum number of the target vocabulary out of the five expected words.

In order to address this issue, a storytelling approach could be suitable to support the introduction of vocabulary and students' possibilities to recall the lexical items selected to strengthen their phonemic awareness, in a meaningful and engaging context. Regarding the contribution of storytelling in young learners' vocabulary acquisition, Tarakçioğlu&Tuñçarslan (2014) explored the influence of a short-story based syllabus approach in very young learners (3- 4 years old) evidencing that children in their experimental group could recall more vocabulary items that the control group, due to the meaningful and enjoyable learning context. Specifically, about lexical recalling, Horst, Parsons & Bryan (2011) found an increase in children's ability to recall and retain words when being exposed repeatedly to storybooks readings. Moreover, the storytelling approach is framed within Ellis & Brewster (2014) "Plan- Do-Review Model", an approach

to introduce a story-based methodology which allows children to experiment and reflect before, during and after the readings.

3.5 Stages of the Action Research

3.5.1 Piloting Process stage

During the Piloting process stage of this AR, instruments were piloted with a sample of 4 students for each instrument. Participant belonged to a different class and were aged between 5 and 6. The purpose of this stage was to check the validity and reliability of the instruments and to make improvements when needed to assure an effective data collection process. This stage was conducted in 2 sessions, see table 2.

Table 2

Piloting process stages

Date	Piloting Process stage description
31/05/ 2022	Small groups Interview Piloting Process
01/06/2022	Lexical Recalling test Piloting Process

3.5.2. Intervention Sessions Stage

Six Intervention sessions were conducted during the month of June 2022 in a regular classroom modality. Each session considered the implementation of a complete “Plan-Do-Review” cycle. 3 stories were designed by the teacher researcher embedded with five lexical items for the phoneme /ɪ/ (Inky mouse, Iguana, Insect, Igloo, Ink) and were changed every two sessions. The lexical items were selected since the phoneme /ɪ/ was the one chosen to be taught according to the school curricula when the interventions took place; therefore, this plan was respected for practicality purposes. Each story was written and illustrated by the teacher-researcher having as a protagonist a selected lexical item, following a classic beginning, middle and end structure.

Each cycle considered closing activities as a part of the Review stage of the approach. The activities were selected since they are activities the participants were familiar with, therefor the only new factors introduced were the stories as an input. A receptive task was considered for each of these activities for validity purposes for the later application of the Lexical Recalling Test. The sessions are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Intervention sessions description

Date	Intervention Session description	Intervention Session Summary
------	----------------------------------	------------------------------

06/06/2022	Session 1, Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°1 with story Inky mouse spilled his ink.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective and vocabulary presentation.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story Inky mouse spilled his ink.</p> <p>Review Stage: Vocabulary puppets creation & receptive task (show the puppet for each word).</p>
07/06/2022	Session 2, Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°2 with story Inky mouse spilled his ink.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective presentation and vocabulary recalling.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story Inky mouse spilled his ink.</p> <p>Review Stage: Bingo group game & receptive task (cover the vocabulary words in the Bingo card).</p>
08/06/2022	Session 3, Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°3 with story The perfect gift.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective and vocabulary recalling.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story The perfect gift.</p> <p>Review Stage: Digital guessing game & receptive task (show the vocabulary words).</p>
09/06/2022	Session 4, Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°4 with story The perfect gift.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective presentation and vocabulary recalling.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story The perfect gift.</p> <p>Review Stage: Swatting group game & receptive task (swat on the vocabulary words).</p>
13/06/2022	Session 5 Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°5 with story Iguana does not like insects.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective presentation and vocabulary recalling.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story Iguana does not like insects.</p> <p>Review Stage: Graphic summary (Beginning, Middle, End) Group work. Receptive task (show the words included).</p>
14/06/2022	Session 6 Plan-Do-Review Cycle N°6 with story Iguana does not like insects.	<p>Plan Stage: Objective presentation and vocabulary recalling.</p> <p>Do Stage: Story Iguana does not like insects.</p> <p>Review Stage: Vocabulary plasticine models & receptive task (show the model for each word).</p>

3.5.3. Instrument Application Stage

The instrument application stage took place in three sessions (See Table 4 below). Instruments were implemented in a quiet and comfortable place, with which the participants were familiar with. As for the Small group interviews, each group considered four participants.

Table 4

Instrument application process description

Date	Instrument application description
15/06/2022	Lexical Recalling test application
16/06/ 2022	Small groups interview group 1
28/06/2022	Small groups interview group 2

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

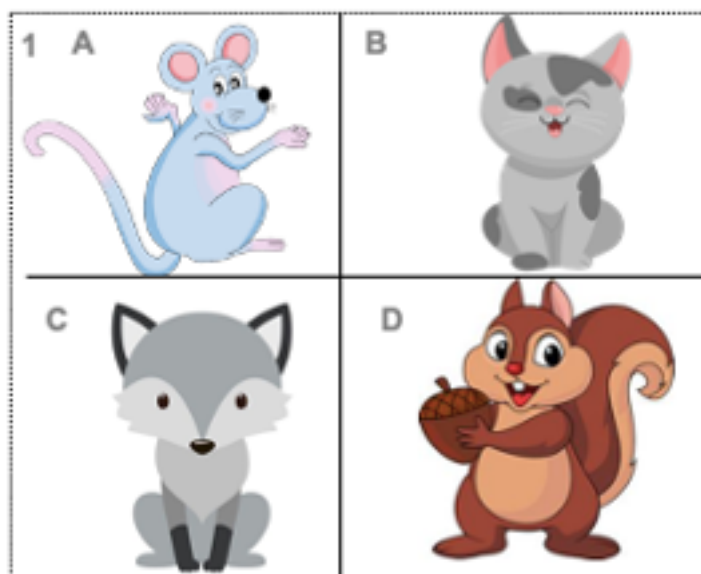
3.6.1 Lexical Recalling Test

To address the first specific objective, an adapted version of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fifth Edition (PPVT-5) was considered, as it has a specific focus on the receptive ability of vocabulary recalling. The PPVT-5 was designed by Douglas Dunn and its revised version was published in 2018. It is an individually administered test that measures receptive vocabulary based on words of the standard American English. Furthermore, this test has a target age range from 2 to 90+ years old and considers a completion time from 10 to 15 minutes (Pearson, 2022). In addition, the PPVT-5 provides useful information when assessing the specific semantics domain and general language development (Pearson, 2022). In fact, the application method implies that the examinees are shown flashcards with four pictures, and they are asked to point out the one that best illustrates the meaning of the stimulus word given by the examiner (Stein & Korey, 2009). An example of the use of this test for research is Arroyave, Asturias, Bauer, Bolaños, Connery, Calvomonte, Colbert, El Sahly, Hernández, Lamb, Muñoz, Olson, and Paniagua-avila's work (2019), who successfully implemented the PPVT-5 to assess receptive language skills in the Latin-American context.

As for data collection procedures, the test was conducted individually to each of the participants, with a completion time range from five to ten minutes. The adapted test considered two practice items for the participants to get familiarized with the test procedures and five test items for the phoneme /ɪ/. The practice items use stimulus words with a previously learned phoneme (/s/) (see Figure 4). The examiner said each of the stimulus words twice and the examinee indicated the picture that best represents the stimulus word, out of the four options in each item. Participants' answers were registered by the examiner in the correspondent answer sheet (Appendix A).

Figure 5

Sample of test item for stimulus word Inky mouse of Lexical recalling test.



3.6.2 Small groups semi-structured interview

To address the second and third objectives a small groups semi-structured interview was carried out in Spanish (Appendix B). This type of instrument follows the interview dynamics done with a group of a reduced number of participants at the same time. Small groups interviews have been established as a viable and useful techniques for young learners that may reveal consensus views and elicit richer and more reliable responses in contraposition to face to face interviews (Lewis, 1990). This type of interviews creates a safe environment for children, avoiding the power imbalances between researcher and participant that one on one interviews imply (Adler et al., 2019). In the Chilean context in particular, Inostroza (2018) implemented group interviews to access Chilean young learners' perspectives on their EFL lesson in primary schools. Thus, small group's semi-structure interviews provided enriching insights towards students' personal understanding of the "Plan-Do- Review" storytelling approach. The use of concrete star tokens and scene pictures of the stories were considered as conversation triggers for the young participants (See Figure 6). Epstein et al. (2006) highlight that reliance on verbal communication might limit the access to very young learners' perspectives, due to their language limitations. Yet, incorporating other elements such as photographs might trigger memory and address language limit issues.

Two small group interview sessions were implemented, with four students each. The first two questions were focused on children's perceptions of the story, and the last two questions on these stories as a support for lexical calling items (Appendix B).

Figure 6

Concrete star tokens used for conversation trigger.



3.6.3 Instrument Validation

Expert validation was considered for both Lexical Recalling test and the Semi-structured interview before the piloting process of both instruments. Three University ELT professors currently teaching in an English Master Course at Universidad de Concepción, Chile, and two early years teachers who teach in the same Pre-kindergarten level of the participants were requested to validate both instruments to assure an efficient and reliable data collection process. To conduct this process, for each of the instruments a Validation Chart was presented with the criteria “Keep”, “Delete”, “Modify” & “Observations” for each of the statements or questions. After receiving the feedback, the necessary amendments were made before piloting the instruments.

3.7 Data analysis Techniques

The implementation of the Lexical recalling test provides quantitative data for group and individual performance regarding the tested lexical items. Thus, it was organized in scores in which each right answer had two points, being an equivalent to a 20% of achievement for each correct answer.

In the case of the small groups semi-structured interviews, these were audio recorded, and transcribed to then analyze them through Content analysis. Mayring (2014) states that Content analysis is a qualitative method of analysis where texts are analyzed under individual and systematic steps of interpretation which results in content analytical categories. It is important to mention that this type of analysis requires the implementation of a consistent transcription method and a defined line of inquiry to assure a theoretically well-founded analysis. Additionally, as the pieces of text were analyzed taking into consideration their production context, a Frequency analysis was used to identify the number of times and which items of the target lexical items were incorporated in students' utterances.

Chapter IV: Findings

4.1 Specific objective N°1: To analyze learners' group performance regarding their receptive ability to recall vocabulary when using the "Plan-Do-Review" storytelling approach.

To analyze learners' group performance regarding their receptive ability to recall vocabulary, the results obtained from the Lexical Recalling test were used to further analyze individual performance. For each participant, points obtained for each lexical item, as well as their final score in percentages is exposed.

Table 5

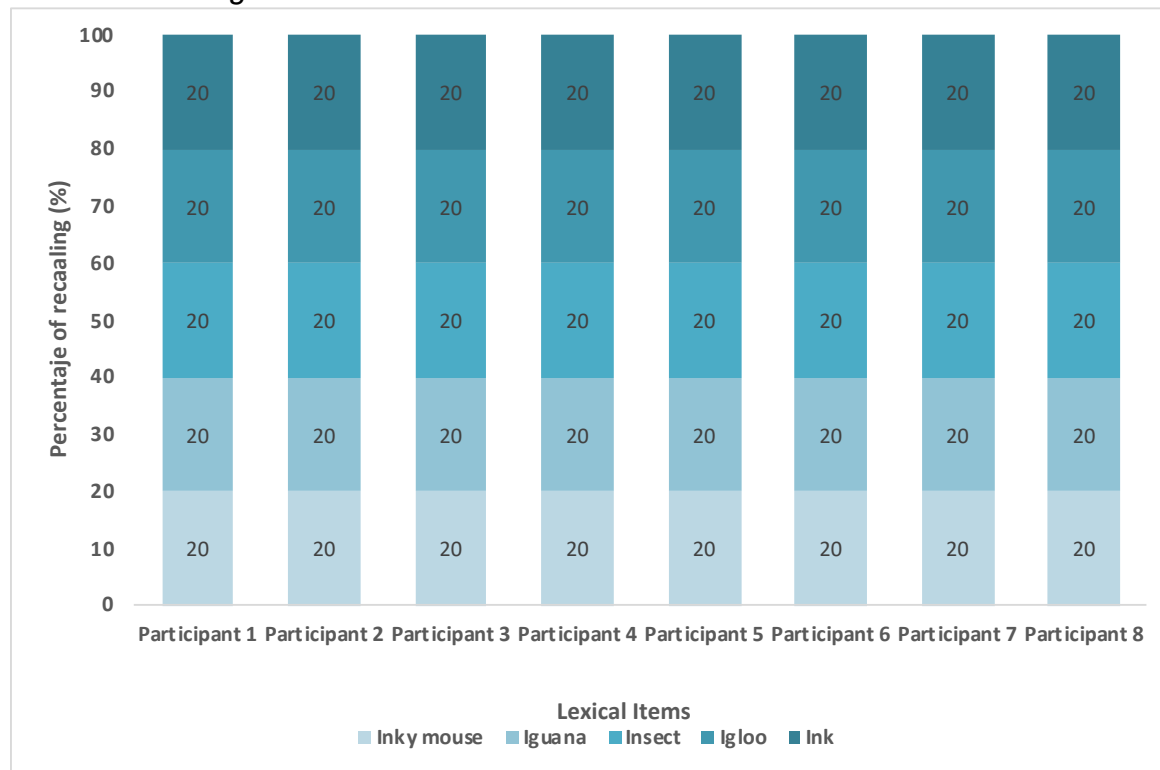
Lexical Recalling Test Individual Results

Participant	Lexical items/ Points (p)					Individual Final Score (%)
	Inky Mouse	Iguana	Insect	Igloo	Ink	
1	2	2	2	2	2	100
2	2	2	2	2	2	100
3	2	2	2	2	2	100
4	2	2	2	2	2	100
5	2	2	2	2	2	100
6	2	2	2	2	2	100
7	2	2	2	2	2	100
8	2	2	2	2	2	100

Results evidence that the 8 participants obtained a 100% on their Lexical Recalling Test, successfully recalling the 5 lexical items in a receptive task with no distinction in the lexical element they were recalling (See Table 5 and Figure 7). Therefore, regarding group performance, it may be established that the "Plan-Do-Review" Storytelling approach effectively supports students' receptive ability to recall lexical items for the phoneme /ɪ/.

Figure 7

Lexical Recalling Test Individual Results



4.2 Specific objective N°2: To analyze learners' group performance regarding their production of the target vocabulary after using the "Plan-Do- Review" storytelling approach.

The information provided by the transcriptions of the small group interviews and drawings descriptions allows to focus the analysis of the learners' group performance during language production. The frequency within each of the lexical items was used by the students during the interviews and sample extracts of how they incorporated the lexical elements in their utterances are illustrated below (See Table 6, Figure 8 and Table 7).

Table 6

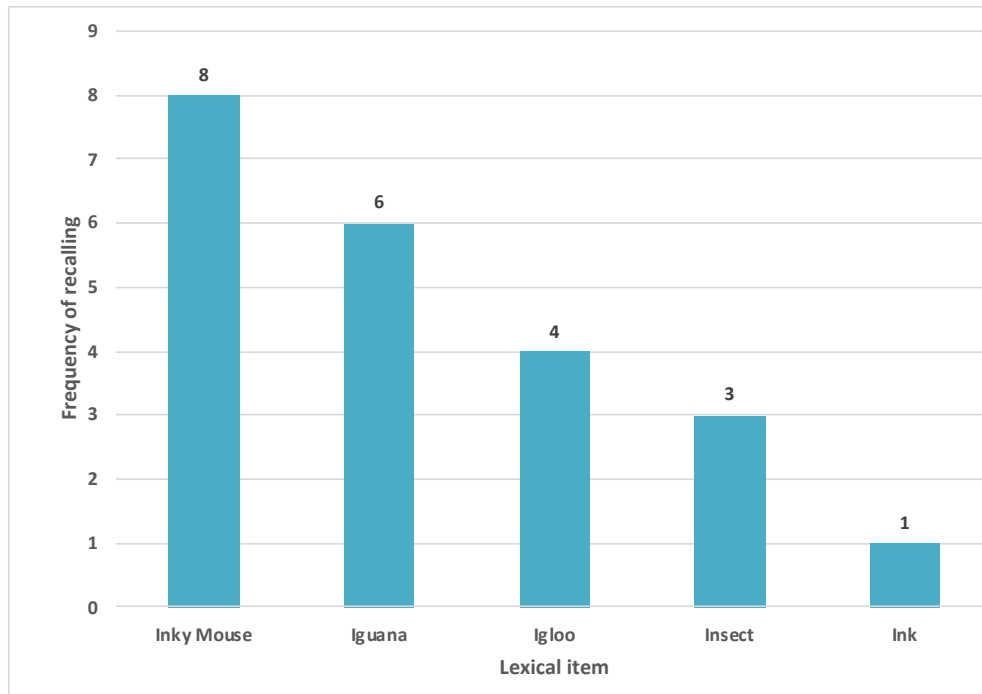
Frequency of lexical items recalled in participants' utterances

Lexical item	Frequency
Inky Mouse	8

Iguana	6
Igloo	4
Insect	3
Ink	1

Figure 8

Lexical items recalled in students' utterances.



Considering the exposed information, it is evidenced that some of the vocabulary elements used in the storytelling approach were recalled in more instances than others, establishing a range from 8 direct recalls to 1 recalling instance. The most recalled item was Inky Mouse (8 recalls), followed by Iguana and Igloo with 6 and 4 recalls respectively. The lexical elements that were least mentioned by the participants were Insects (mentioned 3 times) and Ink, mentioned in 1 occasion (See Table 2 and Figure 7). The difference between frequency of recalls for the target vocabulary elements may be related to the role that the lexical items played in the three stories designed for the approach. For example, Inky Mouse and Iguana were vocabulary elements that referred to main characters of two different stories, therefore the exposure to these words was higher than to words such as Insect or Ink, which referred to secondary elements of the stories. The differences in recalls of the target words may be supported with the graphic evidenced provided by the participants' drawings of the characters of the stories where Iguana and

Inky Mouse also were the 2 most recalled elements. This aspect is further described in the *Dimension Perception of the stories* developed for the analysis of Specific Objective N°2.

Table 7

Extract samples of lexical items recalled in participants' utterances

Source	Frequency	Extracts Sample
Small groups interview	12	Participant 2: (shows 3 stars) me gustó que el <i>Inky Mouse</i> se limpiara.
		Participant 7: (shows 3 stars) porque me encantó la de <i>Penguin</i> , la de <i>Iguana</i> y, y nada más.
		Participant 2: A mí me gustó la de <i>Inky Mouse</i> , cuando los pingüinos lo ayudan a limpiarse el <i>Ink</i> . (Shows scene of the story <i>Inky Mouse Spilled his ink</i>).
Drawings Transcriptions	2	Participant 2: Hice a <i>Inky Mouse</i> porque me gustó la historia de él. Me gustó porque al final se limpiaba. Me sentí muy bien con las historias, que esté limpio [<i>Inky Mouse</i>].

Additionally, when addressing the extract samples of lexical items recalled in participants' utterances, they suggest that the storytelling approach effectively supported lexical recalling and vocabulary learning since students were able to incorporate the target words in their speech. To illustrate this, the following extracts are exposed.

Participant 2:(shows 3 stars) es que me gustó, me gustaría que *Inky Mouse* se limpiara, por eso, quiero tener más historias del *Inky Mouse*.

Participant 6:(shows 3 stars) Si. Porque me gustaba *Insect*, *Iguana* y *Igloo*.

Besides, another interesting element to analyze is the way in which the young participants incorporate the lexical elements to their speech. Code-switching, as a

common pattern of bilingual language expression (Smolak et al., 2020), was identified in children's utterances. The alternation between English and Spanish during language production may be identified in the following examples:

Participant 3: Si, cuando *Inky Mouse* se manchó (riendo)

Participant 2: Hice a *Inky Mouse* porque me gustó la historia de él. Me gustó porque al final se limpiaba. Me sentí muy bien con las historias, que esté limpio [*Inky Mouse*].

In the previous examples, code-switching to English when referring to the target words is identified. Nonetheless, when having to use other linguistic features the participants immediately recur to their first language (Spanish). Further, Participant N°2 makes an interesting selection of language switching, since the Pinguins (*lospingüinos*) were also characters of the story yet had a secondary role in them and were not part of the list of target words to teach to the children. Considering this, it is interesting to notice how the participant code-switches to English when referring to a target lexical item and then uses Spanish to address an element that did not receive a direct teaching treatment.

Participant 2: A mí me gustó la de *Inky Mouse*, cuando los pingüinos lo ayudan a limpiarse el *Ink*. (Shows scene of the story *Inky Mouse Spilled his ink*).

Finally, regarding students' productions it is possible to state that the storytelling approach supports lexical recalling since the participants incorporated the target words to their utterances, showing the incorporation of the elements to their vocabulary bank and using them to express their ideas.

4.3 Specific Objective N°3: To identify students' perception towards their experience of being exposed to a storytelling approach as a support for Early Literacy development.

To identify students' perceptions and address SO3, the transcriptions of small group interviews, students' drawings and the transcriptions of their descriptions were analyzed (See Table 8).

Table 8
Information sources to analyze students' perceptions

Source	Detail
Small group interviews	Interviews transcriptions
Drawings	Drawings Drawings descriptions

Based on the aforementioned data sources, three Dimensions and five Categories have been established on the analysis of students' perception towards their experience of being exposed to the storytelling approach. For two of the categories, Sub-categories have been determined for deeper analysis purposes. As for the original design, two Dimension were considered (Perception of the stories and Perception of the stories as a support for learning), Yet, in the analysis stage the participants' previous experiences emerged as a rich category of analysis (See Table 9). In the following sections each Dimension with its correspondent Category and Sub-Category is described and illustrated with extracts or images, as appropriate. Additionally, original names of the participants have been changed to pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

Table 9
Dimensions, categories, and sub-categories for students' perceptions

Dimension	Category	Sub-categories
Perception of the stories	Memorable characters Memorable scenes Feelings evoked by the stories	Positive feelings Negative feelings
Previous experiences	Life experiences	Perception of their world Literacy experience Story experience
Perception of the Stories as a support for learning	Support for early literacy development	

Dimension 1, Perception of the stories considers 3 categories (See Table 10). Memorable characters, addresses how the participants stated that they enjoyed the stories because of the characters, mentioning Insect, Penguin, Iguana and Igloo. Additionally, during the recalling of the distinctive elements of the Storytelling approach in their Drawings, 6 characters were included in their graphic representations, being the most recalled character Iguana (7), followed by Inky Mouse (5) (See Figure 9 & 10). The number of times these characters were included may be related to their role against the other lexical elements, such insect or Ink, which were included only 2 times each.

Table 10

Dimension 1, Perception of the stories

Dimension	Category	Sub-categories	Source	Frequency	Extracts sample
Perception of the stories	Memorable characters		Small groups Interview	5	Participant 7: Porque me encantó la historia del penguin.
				7	Iguana (Participant N°1, N° 3, N°4, N° 5, N° 6, N° 7, N° 8)
				5	Inky mouse (Participant N°2, N° 3, N° 5, N° 6, N° 8)
			Drawings	4	Igloo (Participant N° 5, N° 6, N° 7, N°8)
				2	Ink (Participant N°7, N°8)
				2	Insect (Participant N° 6, N° 7)
	Memorable scenes		Small groups Interview	2	Ignacio (Participant N°1, N° 4)
6				Participant 2: A mí me gustó la de <i>InkyMouse</i> ,	

				cuando los pingüinos lo ayudan a limpiarse el <i>Ink</i> . (Shows scene of the story Inky Mouse Spilled his ink).
Feelings evoked by the stories	Positive feelings	Small groups Interview	5	Participant 7: Porque me encantó la historia del penguin.
		Drawings descriptions	6	Participant 4: Dibujé esto porque me gustó la historia de la iguana. Me gustó la parte donde no le gustó la carne. Me sentí bien cuando escuché las historias.
		Drawings	3	Participant 2 [Sun, Heart, Flower] Participant 4 [Sun]
	Negative feelings	Small groups Interview	2	Participant 1: (shows 2 stars) porque no me gustó la parte cuando se comió la carne [Historia Iguana doesnotlikeinsects]
		Drawings descriptions	1	Participant 1: (...) Me sentí más o menos con las historias, no me

gustó tanto el Inky mouse, a mi mamá no le gustan las ratas.

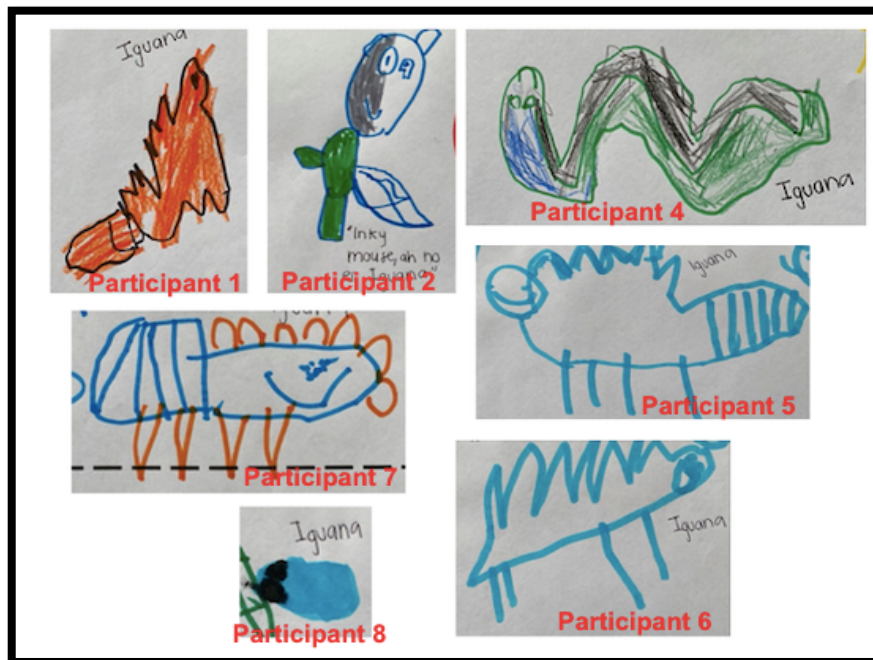
Additionally, the character of Ignacio, which did not belong to the 5 target lexical items selected for the storytelling approach was recalled by two of the participants. This character may be considered as an incidental lexical item for the phoneme /ɪ/. Particularly, this is the father's name of one of the participants who recalled the word, also evidencing how young learners make connections between the stories and their own life experiences (See Figure 11). To exemplify these findings, the following extracts and figures were considered:

Participant 7:(shows 3 stars) porque me encantó la de *Penguin*, la de *Iguana* y, y nada más.

Participant 6:(shows 3 stars) Si. Porque me gustaba *Insect*, *Iguana* y *Igloo*.

Figure 9

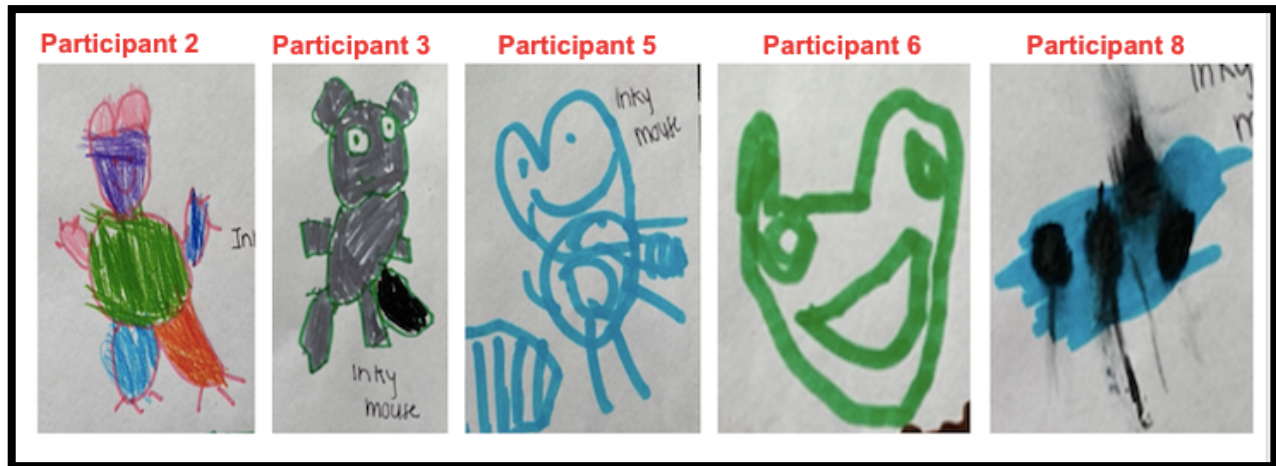
Student's drawings of Iguana



Note. Participants' graphical representation of the character and lexical item Iguana, the most recalled character in children's drawings.

Figure 10

Students' drawings of Inky mouse character in children's' drawings.



Note. Participants' graphical representation of the character and lexical item Inky mouse.

Figure 11

Students' drawings of Ignacio



Note. Participants' graphical representation of the character and lexical item Ignacio.

Furthermore, Memorable scenes refers to those scenes mentioned by the participants as remarkable elements of the storytelling approach. Indistinctively, the graphic design of the scenes was a factor that called the participants attention and that was appealing for the young learners. Correspondingly, the participants make direct reference to graphic elements included by the teacher researcher to represent in a clearer way actions. For example, a splash of water or metacognition processes, such as

imagining and thinking, among others (See Table 10). These graphic elements serve the same purposes as comics' illustrations, bubbles, and vignettes. Some of the scenes references are included below in Figure 12 along with a sample of students' impressions regarding those scenes.

Participant 1: La que imaginaba donde había regalos, pero en verdad no habían (showssceneofthestoryTheperfectgift).

Participant 3: Si, cuando *Inky Mouse* se manchó (riendo)

Participant 7: Me gusto la parte en que saltó el agua.

Figure 12

Sample scenes and graphic elements mentioned by participants



Note. Scene samples of graphic elements mentioned by participants. The first 2 pictures are from the story *Inky mouse* spilled his ink and the last one is from the story *The perfect gift*.

Moreover, the Category Feelings evoked by the stories considers 2 Sub-categories. On the one hand, Positive feelings alludes to reflections which establish that the stories evoked desirable emotions on the students. These desirable feelings mentioned by the participants were not only commented by the young learners yet supported by their drawings and drawings descriptions. Further, children incorporated secondary elements to accompany their characters' drawings, such as sun, heart, flowers, happy faces, which nourish the recognition of their positive perception towards the experience. For example, purposes, sample extracts addressing positive comments along with images in which positive elements are included (Figure 13) are exposed below.

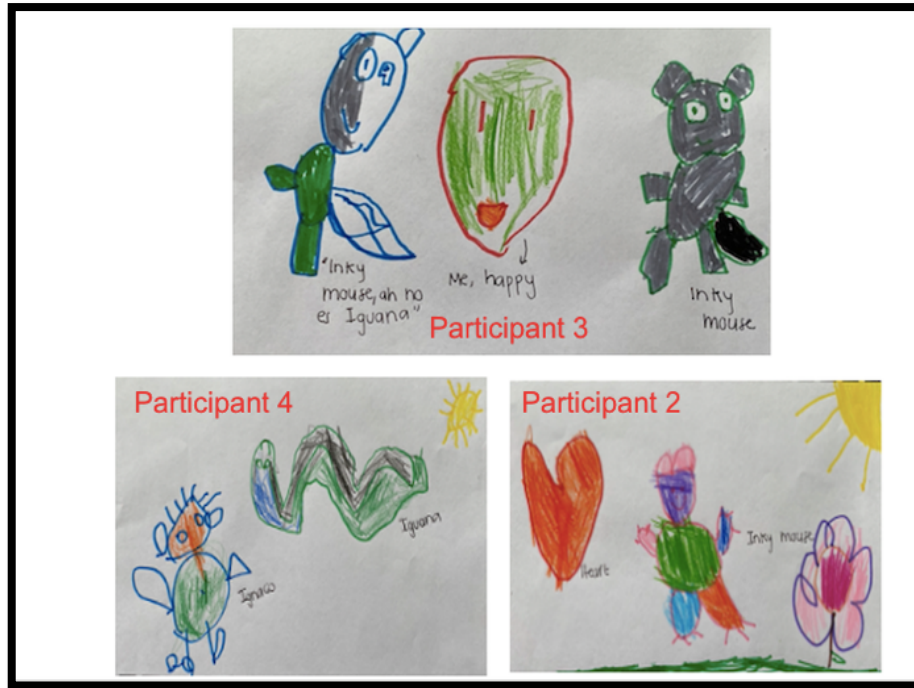
Participant 3: Hice este dibujo porque ellos me gustaron [Iguana, Inky Mouse]. Me sentí *happy*” porque me gustaron esas dos historias.

Participant 4: Porque sí, me gustó cuando se manchó y se limpió [Inky Mouse].

Participant 5: Dibujé los monos de la historia. Me sentí “happy” con las historias.

Figure 13

Students’ drawings with secondary elements



On the other hand, Negative feelings addresses those comments which establish that certain elements of the stories evoked undesirable feelings on the participants. Moreover, one of the participants was able to identify the reason of why the story evoked negative feelings, being related to her previous life experience. To illustrate, the following extracts are considered:

Participant 1: Porque no me gustó tanto.

Participant 1: (...) Me sentí más o menos con las historias, no me gustó tanto el Inky mouse, a mi mamá no le gustan las ratas.

Dimension 2, Previous experiences considers 1 Category with 3 Sub-categories respectively (See Table 11). Firstly, the Sub-categories Perception of their world highlight's how children use their personal experiences to construct meaning of the themes and scenes of the stories based on their own understanding.

Table 11

Dimension 2, Previous experiences

Dimension	Category	Sub-category	Source	Frequency	Extracts sample
Previous experiences	Life experience	Perception of their world	Small groups Interview	8	Participant 3: Me gustó cuando come frutas por que también como muchas frutas (shows scene of the story Iguana does not like insects).
		Literacy experience	Small groups Interview	5	Participant 5: Espera, es que estoy pensando. Ya (shows 2 stars) R: ¿Por qué 2 estrellas? Participant 5: Porque aún no aprendemos la /r/. [Hisname]
			Drawings	2	Participant 7 [S, T, Y] Participant 8 [i]
		Story experience	Small groups Interview	5	Participant 5: (shows scene of the story Iguana does not like insects). Me gustó esta porque tiene una moraleja importante. R: ¿Qué moraleja? Participant 5: Que no se comen los insectos.

Besides, it is relevant to notice how they remember elements which are everyday or milestone events for them in this stage of their life. To illustrate, sample extracts are exposed below.

Participant 1: (shows 2 stars) porque no me gustó la partecundo se comió la carne [Story Iguana does not like insects].

Participant 3: Porque la Iguana come frutas, y yo igual.

R: ¿Por qué te gustaron esas dos?

Participant 7: porque aquí está de cumpleaños (shows scene of the story The perfect gift).

Participant 5: (shows scene of the story Iguana does not like insects). Me gustó esto porque tiene un moraleja importante.

Secondly, the sub-category Literacy experiences addresses students' comments in which they evidence they are using their prior knowledge regarding early literacy development. Therefore, they use this knowledge to construct a perspective towards their experience to being exposed to the storytelling approach. Furthermore, their use of literacy knowledge is present in their graphic representations. Two of the participants provide graphic evidence of how they attempt to integrate their knowledge of other phonemes and graphemes or incorporate their new knowledge of this specific grapheme in their drawings. To exemplify, sample extracts and the graphic representations (See Figure 14) are included below.

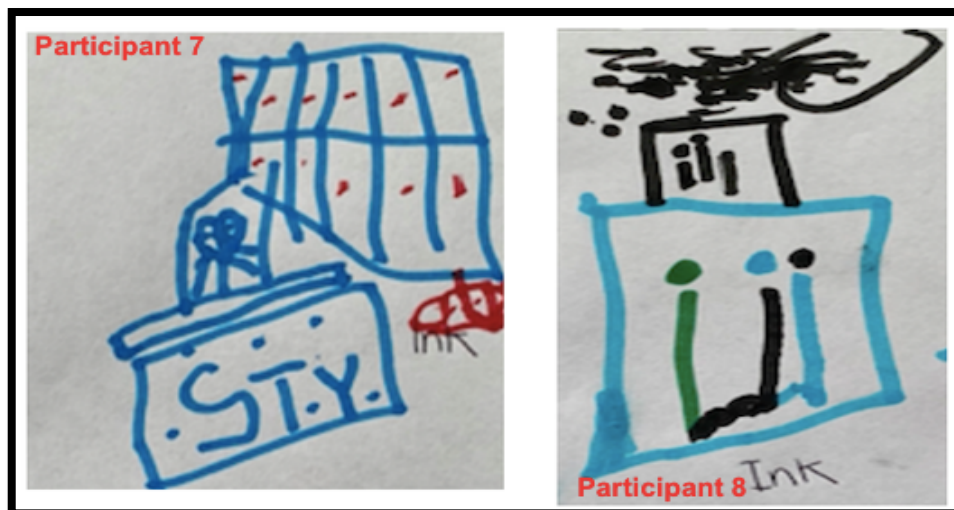
Participant 8: (shows 2 stars)

R: ¿Te gustaría, pero no tanto? ¿Por qué?

Participant 8: Porque me encantaría aprender la /b/ de Bernardo. [His name]

Figure 14

Grapheme incorporations in students' drawings



Note. Both drawings represent a jar of ink with the word *Ink* written as a label. Participant N°7 drawing incorporate two graphemes for phonemes previously learnt in the classroom (/s/ and /t/). The letter Y is a part of her name. Participant 8 uses the knowledge of the grapheme taught in the approach to attempt to write the word.

Finally, Story Experience refers to those reflections which address the relationship between prior knowledge regarding fables and their morals with the establishment of the purposes for the three stories presented for the phoneme /ɪ/. To illustrate, the following extracts can be considered:

Participant 5: Porque las historias tienen moraleja.

Participant 5: Como las historias que cuenta mi mamá, pero ya no cuenta más con moraleja.

Participant 5: (shows scene of the story Iguana does not like insects). Me gustó esta porque tiene una moraleja importante.

Since these stories do not specifically share a moral at the end, the establishment of them may be related to the characteristics that fables share with the stories used to implement the storytelling approach, mainly having animals as main characters. Consequently, this participants' previous experiences with stories, considering distinctive characteristics of them as well as their communicative purposes, evidence how young learners use their prior knowledge to create meaning while being engaged in new learning instances.

Table 12

Dimension 3, Perception of the stories as a support for learning

Dimension	Category	Source	Frequency	Extracts sample
Perception of the stories as a support for learning	Support for early literacy development	Small groups Interview	6	Participant 7: (shows 3 stars) porque aprendí de los cuentos y me gustó mucho las historias.
		Drawings descriptions	2	Participant 6: Hice estos dibujos porque las palabras empiezan con /ɪ/, las aprendí en la sala.

Dimension 3, Perception of the stories as a support for learning evidence that students were able to verbalize that they considered that this approach supported the development of their early literacy skills (See Table 12). Furthermore, the contribution for learning and for the acquisition of the 5 target lexical items was acknowledged on the comments sample included below.

R: ¿Y cómo te ayudaron las historias?

Participant 6: a aprender las palabras.

Additionally, one of the participants directly addressed literacy development and how he considered stories are useful resources to develop those skills.

R: ¿Y te gustaría tener nuevas historias para eso?

Participant 3: Si, porque no sé tanto leer.

R: ¿O sea crees que con las historias podrías aprender a leer?

Participant 3: Si.

Further, two participants state that the approach did not contribute to their learning of the target lexical items, due to the use of other learning methods which they were more comfortable and because one already knew the words.

Participant 3: (shows 1 star) no, no me hicieron aprender, porque ya estoy aprendiendo con otra cosa, con el *silabario*.

Participant 5 (shows 1 stars) Si porque ya me sabía esas palabras hace rato.

R: ¿Y cómo las aprendiste? ¿Con Antonio? [Hermano]

Participant 5: No, las aprendí yo solo, es que son muy fáciles para mí.

Chapter V: Discussion

In this chapter, the findings presented in the previous chapter are discussed in light of each specific objective. In addition, limitations, implications and suggestions for further investigations are provided.

The purpose of this AR was to examine the contribution of the “Plan-Do-Review Model” as a storytelling approach designed to support EFL Pre-kindergarten students’ ability to recall lexical items. Thus, the contribution of the Storytelling Approach to students’ recalling was determined.

5.1 Group performance regarding vocabulary retrieval

Firstly, regarding specific objective N°1, which aimed to analyze group performance regarding vocabulary retrieval, results evidence that the “Plan-Do-Review Model” as a storytelling approach is an effective method to support lexical recalling, since all participants were able to recall the words. Accordingly, this study’s results indicate that 100% of the students successfully recalled the five lexical items in a receptive task with no distinction in the lexical element they were recalling (See Chapter 4, Section 4.1). The results may answer to some key elements that will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the nature of the recalling task, Susanto (2017) defines receptive vocabulary as the type of vocabulary that learners can recognize and understand, but that not necessarily can produce. In other words, these lexical items are the ones that can be identified when seen or read, however, they will not certainly be available to use them while speaking or writing. Correspondingly, in the current study, the fact that 100% of the participants successfully retrieved the target vocabulary may be because the test was supported with pictures of the lexical items in a classic receptive task. Therefore, this required a lower cognitive demand than the one implicated in a regular productive retrieval task. In addition, the review stage of each of the six intervention sessions considered a receptive task as closing and practice of lexical retrieval, suggesting that the participants were already familiarized with this type of task.

Furthermore, results obtained for group performance are consistent with previous findings regarding the use of storytelling in early years EFL teaching. For instance, Burton & Mastellotto (2016) have established that stories are a useful tool for language teaching because of their rich communicative function in the cultural and linguistic domain. In other words, storytelling provides a nourishing frame for students to understand vocabulary elements embedded in the stories with the support of the contextual information that is also begin provided.

These scholars also conceive the storytelling process as a co-creative and interactive one, where both teller and listener are creating their own narrative of understanding, where psychological, linguistic, metalinguistic, and metacognitive skills are fostered (Burton & Mastellotto, 2016). Consistently, in this AR with the implementation of the “Plan-Do-Review Model” participants were engaged in a communicative learning experience, which based on interaction with their classmate, teacher-researcher, and the

stories they effectively created their own understanding of each lexical item. This meaningful understanding was later evidenced in their performance in the Lexical recalling test. To illustrate, the implementation of the six intervention sessions considered that the students participated in the creation of puppets, a bingo board game, guessing game, “swatting words” game, the creation of a group graphic summary and modelling the vocabulary words with plasticine. All the aforementioned activities aimed at students to participate in a co-creative and interactive process for them to further experiment with the target vocabulary.

Similarly, the current study results are aligned with prior investigations in the field. For instance, Abasi & Soori (2014) found that the storytelling approach proved to be an effective strategy to improve kindergarten students’ vocabulary abilities. Additionally, Maya & Al Halim (2021) reviewed the implementation of digital storytelling as a support for vocabulary learning, evidencing a significant improvement in students’ mean scores when comparing pre and post-test, therefore, an important effect on the vocabulary domain was identified.

5.2 Presence of target lexical elements in students’ language production

Secondly, following specific objective N°2, the contribution of the storytelling approach was analyzed in terms of the presence of the lexical elements in students’ language production. Since the participants incorporated the target words to their utterances, this shows that these elements are part of their vocabulary bank as they use them to express their ideas. Consequently, it is possible to state that the lexical retrieval support was also evidenced in the expressive vocabulary domain. The results may answer to some key aspects that I shall discuss in depth in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the nature of students’ utterances, Vatalaro et al. (2017) defines expressive vocabulary as the lexical items that are mentally retrieved and will be present in expression, such as speaking or writing. Likewise, Dapretto and Bjork (2000) add that production requires the retrieval of a pattern of sounds associated to a specific meaning. Thus, vocabulary retrieval has been also evidenced in the expressive domain. In addition, Ellis and Brewster (2014) state that stories allow the introduction of new vocabulary, since they provide a varied, memorable, and familiar context which enrich students thinking and progressively generates that the new words integrate their speech. Consistently with this AR’s findings, storytelling provided a memorable context for students not only to recall the lexical elements, but also to reach a comprehensive level where words were successfully incorporated to their vocabulary bank and where easily retrieved by them when needed in their speech.

In a deeper analysis of students’ utterances, some of the vocabulary elements used in the storytelling approach were recalled in more instances than others, establishing a range from 8 direct recalls to 1 recalling instance. The most recalled item was Inky Mouse (8 recalls), followed by Iguana and Igloo with 6 and 4 recalls respectively (See Chapter 4, Section 4.2). The difference between frequency of recalls for the target vocabulary elements may be related to the role that the lexical items played in the stories

designed for the approach. For example, Inky Mouse and Iguana were lexical items that referred to main characters of two different stories, therefore, the exposure to these words was higher.

Interestingly, code-switching was identified in children's utterances when referring to the target words. Nonetheless, when having to use other linguistic features, the participants immediately switched back to their first language (See Chapter 4, Section 4.2). Smolak et al. (2020) define code-switching as a common pattern of bilingual language expression. It was remarkable to notice this pattern of expression in students' productions since they deliberately chose to recur to English and the target lexical items when speaking, and yet immediately switched back to Spanish for other language structures. This suggests that the storytelling approach successfully catalyzed language learning at a level where participants felt comfortable enough to recur first to the lexical elements in English than in their first language. Consistently with these findings, Yow et al. (2017) conducted a study with children aged between 5 and 6 to observe their code-switching behavior, obtaining correlational findings which suggest that code-switching works as a marker of linguistic competence. Similarly, Read et al. (2021) studied the effect of code-switching storybooks on dual-language learners' retention of new vocabulary establishing that when exposing young learners to this pattern of expression, learners developmental stages in both first and second language should be taken into consideration, since it was found that within an age range from 2 to 5 years, the older children were more likely to successfully retain words from the stories.

5.3 Participants' perceptions of the use of stories

Thirdly, following specific objective N°3, the contribution of the storytelling approach was established in terms of what students thought regarding their experience of being exposed to the storytelling approach. Consequently, their perception of the stories, previous experiences, and perception of the stories as a support for learning emerged as Dimensions from their view towards this learning experience.

Regarding participants' perceptions of the stories, 3 Categories emerged (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3). Memorable characters, addresses how the participants stated that they enjoyed the stories because of the characters, mentioning Insect, Penguin, Iguana and Igloo, and including six characters in their graphic representations. The most drew character was Iguana (7), followed by Inky Mouse (5). Again, to the role that the lexical items played in the 3 stories seems to clearly influence the range of recalling. Besides, an incidental lexical item for the phoneme /ɪ/ was identified. The name Ignacio was included in the stories and was recalled in students' comments and drawings. This evidence the nature of the phoneme /ɪ/, as one that may also be accessed in their first language.

Additionally, Memorable scenes referred to those scenes mentioned by the participants as remarkable elements of the storytelling approach. Indistinctively, the graphic design of the scenes was a factor that called the participants attention and that was appealing for the young learners, who made direct reference to graphic elements

included by the teacher researcher in the illustration design. This is consistent with Ellis and Brewster (2014) acknowledgement of storybooks function as an ideal source to meet students' learning needs with their visual attractiveness and authenticity. Likewise, students become personally involved in a story, identifying with the characters and interpreting narrative and illustrations.

Moreover, Feelings evoked by the stories considered positive feelings, alluding to reflections which establish that the stories evoked desirable emotions on the students. However, some negative feelings were addresses by comments of one participant which established that elements of the stories evoked undesirable feelings. In this regard, Burton and Mastellotto (2016) state that reading stories in early years bring linguistic, social, and affective benefits since they are an enjoyable and motivating tool that contributes to the development of a positive attitude towards the language. Similarly, Solemani and Akbari (2013) found that storytelling is an effective method to nourish vocabulary learning among children, since results evidence that students' vocabulary mastery increased along with the implementation of the method. Furthermore, the strategy was perceived positively by the students who participated in the intervention. Likewise, Siahaan (2012) found in her AR with Kindergarten students that the story reading technique improved students' vocabulary after implementing three cycles of storytelling. Besides, in a qualitative analysis , Siahaan (2012) found that students enjoyed listening to stories and stories with pictures. Additionally, an increment of their enthusiasm and involvement was evidenced along with the implementation of the reading technique.

Referring to previous experiences, Dimension N°2 considered 1 category with 3 Sub- categories respectively (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3). Perception of their world highlighted how children use their personal experiences to construct meaning of the themes and scenes of the stories based on their own understanding. Correspondingly, literature endorses the statement that storytelling addresses universal themes that go beyond daily dialogs and activities, allowing students to experiment with ideas and feelings that are relevant for them (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). Particularly, students seemed to identify with important events for their age, such as birthdays.

Moreover, participants' literacy experiences addressed students' comments in which they used their prior knowledge regarding early literacy development to portray their experience of being exposed to the storytelling approach (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3). Regarding early literacy development, Ellis and Brewster (2014) state that Stories lay foundations for future consolidation of literacy skills, providing students with early knowledge about language structures, functions, language learning skills and vocabulary. Therefore, the implementation of the approach allowed participants to express and further experiment with their early literacy skills, since the stories triggered their use of early literacy skills to communicate their perceptions and understandings of the narratives.

Similarly, story experience analyzed those comments which referred to students' prior knowledge regarding literacy elements, such as fables and their morals (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3). Having a participant explicitly referring to morals illustrates how students

interact with the literary genre to identify the meaning of a story and use their previous experiences to give meaning to their new encounters with the same type of texts. Consistently, Al-Hajji and Shuqair (2014) state that authentic literature for young learners can be used to further develop discussions, sharing opinions and feelings since its elements have several meanings. Additionally, most children are interested in the stories, and they are eager to access to their meaning, developing gist, context guessing and prediction skills. The exposure of students to these literacy elements lead questioning, answers, and personal responses regarding story elements.

For the Dimension perception of the stories as a support for learning, students were able to verbalize that they considered that this approach supported the development of their early literacy skills (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3). Nonetheless, two participants stated that the approach did not contribute to their learning of the target lexical items, due to the use of other learning methods which they were more comfortable with as they already knew the words. Even though in both cases they do not recognize the contribution of the approach, it is remarkable to notice that the metacognitive process of identifying which elements are involved in their learning is present either way.

As a final analysis for this section, as Teacher-researcher it was impressive to evidence how the well-established in literature benefits of storytelling came to life with students' performances and comments during the implementation of the intervention and after it was conducted. The storytelling approach provided a rich context for the embedded lexical items which allowed students to successfully incorporate them into their lexical bank. In addition, the information collected allowed for a proper analysis of these very young language learners opinions and verbalizations of their metacognitive processes.

5.4 Limitations and Further research recommendations

While this AR's findings provide relevant insights into the development of literacy; some limitations were found. Firstly, there was no implementation of a pre-test to establish certainly the starting point of the participants regarding their knowledge of the lexical items used for the phoneme /ɪ/. Secondly, this research considered the implementation of six cycles of the "Plan-Do-Review" model as a storytelling approach to support lexical retrieval exclusively for the phoneme /ɪ/. The nature of this phoneme could imply knowledge transfer from students first language to their English learning activities since this phoneme may be found in Spanish. Therefore, it could be recommended to study the implementation of the storytelling approach considering the other sets of phonemes used in the English teaching program. This would be useful to confirm the benefits reported for teaching phoneme /ɪ/ and would deepen the evidence regarding the usefulness of the approach as a support for lexical learning.

Further, this AR was implemented in a bilingual context, with participants that followed an English immersion program. Therefore, the results obtained for this research might not be the same for other EFL teaching contexts. Studying the influence of the use of this storytelling approach in other EFL contexts would nourish the understanding of

how this resource interacts with contextual factors such as hours of exposure to the language, number of students per class, socioeconomic level, among other factors. Additionally, analyzing the use of code-switching in emergent English production would nourish the knowledge of how young learners begin to implement different strategies in an EFL context.

5.5 Implications

The implications of this AR for the teacher- researcher's practice as an Educator relay on the participants' declaration of the beneficial potentiality of the storytelling approach for language learning. Therefore, this resource will be used as a catalyzer of learning experiences and more opportunities to take into consideration young learners' reflections will be provided, since they vastly proved to be able to express their opinions regarding the learning process, they are being engaged in.

Besides, this AR exemplifies the design of data collection techniques which efficiently trigger very young learners to communicate, reflect and construct an opinion of their learning processes from an early age. Therefore, the efficient use of resources that allowed for the participants to communicate their perceptions and views towards the Storytelling approach motivates this teacher-researcher to continue to embrace her role of leadership in the design of this type of instruments and in the acknowledgement that children have the right to communicate their thoughts and be active participants in their learning processes.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of main findings

This AR aimed to examine the contribution of the “Plan-Do-Review Model” as a storytelling approach designed to support EFL Pre-kindergarten students’ ability to recall lexical items. Thus, the contribution of the Storytelling Approach to students’ recalling was determined.

Firstly, results evidence that the “Plan-Do-Review Model” as a storytelling approach is an effective method to support lexical recalling, since all participants were able to recall the selected target words. Accordingly, 100% of the students successfully recalled the five lexical items in a receptive task with no distinction in the lexical element they were recalling.

Secondly, the contribution of the storytelling approach was analyzed in terms of the presence of the lexical elements in students’ utterances. Since the participants incorporated the target words to their utterances, this shows that these elements are part of their vocabulary bank as they use them to express their ideas. Consequently, it is possible to state that the lexical retrieval support was also evidenced in the expressive vocabulary domain. Additionally, it was interesting to identify in students’ speech a code-switching pattern when using the target words. This evidenced the language strategies very young language learners begin to implement to initiate their communication experiences in the foreign language they are learning.

Thirdly, the influence of the approach was analyzed in terms of student’s perceptions of being exposed to this specific model to support vocabulary learning and recalling. As for children’s perceptions the relevance of memorable characters, remarkable scenes and the feelings evoked by the stories emerged as aspects that the participants highlighted when sharing their opinions towards the teacher-designed stories. Additionally, children previous experiences, life experiences, perception of the world, literacy and story experience acquired special relevance considering that children used all their prior knowledge in these specific domains to construct meaning and a posture towards the stories they were being exposed to. Besides, participants were able to share their opinions of the efficiency of the model as a support for early literacy development. It was interesting to notice that even when 2 participants verbalized that they felt more comfortable with other literacy methods, it was still possible to evidence the metacognitive process they went through and verbalize even at this young age.

Finally, considering the aforementioned findings, it is possible to state that the “Plan- Do- Review” model is a beneficial storytelling approach to support EFL very young learners’ early literacy development, vocabulary learning and lexical retrieval. This statement may be supported by this study’s findings, where the storytelling approached proved to support students’ vocabulary recalling in the receptive and expressive domain and it was also perceived as a valuable method to support early literacy development by the young participants of this study.

6.2 Personal reflections and further recommendations

On a personal note, the development of this AR has been extremely rewarding from the beginning to the end of the process. Firstly, one of the main elements I may reflect upon is the development of high-thinking skills that I was able to apply inside my classroom and I will continue to do so after this research process is finished. Metacognition processes and analyzing my students' daily comments from a critical point of view allowed me to discover interesting insights for the development of this AR and further consolidated my standpoint that, in order to design effective teaching and learning experiences, where learners need to have a protagonist role regarding their experiences. Similarly, being able to evidence elements associated to the benefits of storytelling, which I studied for months in a theoretical manner, come to life and being present in my students' opinions motivates me to continue to look for teaching methods that truly respond to their needs and interests.

Secondly, it was possible to evidence my students' enthusiasm while being engaged in this experience, especially when participating in the shared readings of the stories designed by me, as their teacher. The teacher designed stories acquire special relevance for this AR since they were a fundamental piece of the implementation of the approach. Yet, they played a much more crucial role in a personal aspect, since the creative process of writing stories designed for Chilean young learners of English motivated me to continue this creative journey with other themes and storylines that successfully respond to our national EFL context.

Thirdly, one of the most challenging instances of the development of this AR, yet rewarding and thought-provoking was the design and implementation of data collection instruments and techniques for very young learners of English. It is undeniable that I hesitated on whether it was going to be able to truly access to my Pre-kindergarten students' perceptions, considering the high cognitive load that metacognitive and reflective processes imply. Nonetheless, I am able to state that I was successful in the selection and design of a Lexical recalling test and small groups interviews to retrieve my students' progresses and opinions. Regarding this matter, I would recommend Language teachers, and in a stronger sense to Early years' educators, to listen and engage children in design and decision making of their learning processes. In this sense, we are able to take advantage of our very young learners' characteristics, who are usually eager to participate, communicate their thoughts and not afraid of making mistakes while experimenting with language.

Additionally, as further recommendation, it is important to mention how relevant is to consider conversation triggers and concrete samples to support recalling when designing data collection instruments for young learners, because if we provide them the right elements, they will deeply verbalize their opinions and we will support their understanding of the metacognitive processes they are beginning to develop.

Overall, the implementation of the “Plan-Do-Review” model as a storytelling approach to support EFL students’ lexical recalling was a successful intervention. It was satisfying to notice that the approach not only supported the participants’ early literacy development, but it also nourished their metacognitive and reflective skills, being a starting point of them of directly reflecting upon the learning experiences they are exposed to. As their teacher I will continue to engage my students in this kind of reflective and critical process; therefore, I strongly advice language educators to do so, since in this way children are not only learning, but becoming protagonists of the process. Consistently, the development of this AR motivates me to share its finding in knowledge communities to validate the premise that very young learners should be protagonists of their learning experiences from very young age.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Lexical Recalling Test.

Lexical Recalling Test

Procedure:

1. Conduct this test individually in a proper environment.
2. Completion time: 5-10 minutes.
3. Write the solicited identification information in the answersheet.
4. Explain the examinee the procedure:
"I am going to tell you a word and you have to point out the picture that you think represents the word the most out of the four pictures that you will see. Let's practice".
5. Start the test with two practice items (A&B). Say each Stimulus word twice. Encourage the examinee to provide an answer.
6. Continue the test with the test items (1-5). Say each Stimulus word twice. Encourage the examinee to provide an answer.
7. Register each of the examinee's answers in the answersheet.
8. Calculate the final score obtained.

KEY ANSWERS

Practise items (A&B)

Item A

Stimulus word: Sun

Answer: 1

Item B

Stimulus word: Snake

Answer: 3

Test items (1-5)

Item 1

Stimulus word: Inky mouse¹

Answer: A

Item 2

Stimulus word: Igloo

Answer: D

Item 3

Stimulus word: Iguana

Answer: D

Item 4

Stimulus word: Insect

Answer: C

Item 5

Stimulus word: Ink

Answer: A

1. Inky mouse is one of the main characters of the Jolly Phonics Method.









Lexical Recalling Test

Student's name: _____









Date: _____













Examiner's name: _____

Practise items (A& B)

<p>A¹</p> 	<p>2</p> 	<p>B¹</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 	<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 

Test items (1- 5)

<p>1 A</p> 	<p>B</p> 	<p>2 A</p> 	<p>B</p> 
<p>C</p> 	<p>D</p> 	<p>C</p> 	<p>D</p> 

3 A 	B 	4 A 	B 
C 	D 	C 	D 
5 A 	B 		
C 	D 		

Lexical Recalling Test

ANSWERSHEET

Student's name: _____

Date: _____

Examiner's name: _____

ANSWERS

Points (2 each correct answer)

Item A	_____	
Item B	_____	
Item 1	_____	_____
Item 2	_____	_____
Item 3	_____	_____
Item 4	_____	_____
Item 5	_____	_____

Total Points ___/10 p.

Appendix B: Small groups semi-structured interview.

Procedure 1: Warm-up Stage (Individual drawing of Storytelling experience).

Instruction: Ask students for an individual drawing about what they remember was occurring in the classroom while the storytelling approach was implemented. Register the description of their drawing.

Student's name: _____

Date: _____



Description:



Procedure 2: Semi- structured interview

Interview

Instructions: Arrange students in a semicircle for them to be able to see each others' faces.

Present Star tokens (3 stars) for concrete support and as a conversation trigger for the questions that require rating from the participants. Explain the rating scale to the children first. Verbalize Children's selections for audio-recording purposes.

1 star: "No mucho" "Not that much"

2 stars: "Si, pero no me encantó/ encanta" "Yes, but I did not love it/ do not love it".

3 stars: "Si, me encantó / encanta" "Yes, I loved it / love it"

Present scene pictures of the story to support students' answers to the questions that address specific elements of the story.

Questions

- 1. ¿Qué piensas de la historia para las palabras con el sonido "i"? ¿Por qué? (Star tokens)**

What do you think about the story for the sound "i"? Why?

- 2. ¿Qué fue lo que más te gustó de la historia? ¿Por qué? (Scene pictures)**

What did you like the most about the story? Why?

- 3. ¿Qué piensas sobre tener historias como esta para aprender los nuevos sonidos y palabras? ¿Por qué? (Star tokens)**

What do you think about having stories like this for the new sounds and vocabulary? Why?

Optional Question

¿Crees que la historia te ayudó a aprender las palabras? ¿Por qué? (Star tokens)

Do you think the story helped you to learn the vocabulary? Why?

Star tokens sample



Scene pictures sample

