Información Importante

The Influence of GoAnimate and Cooperative work in A1 Fourth and Sixth Graders' writing skills.

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Research Report submitted

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Abstract

This collaborative action research study analyzed how the use of go GoAnimate in cooperative work activities assisted participants in the development of their writing skills. The study was conducted with 74 students from fourth and sixth-grade with an A1 level at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. Participants showed difficulties with their writing skill when conveying their ideas in English. They also revealed difficulties when engaging in cooperative work activities. Students' artifacts and interviews, along with teachers' and students' checklists, were used to gather data that was analyzed following the grounded theory approach.

Findings revealed that cooperative work enhanced participants' writing skills as they increased their ability to work in groups while taking advantage of their partners' skills and incorporating peer-assessment strategies. Students were able to work more autonomously since they created their video cartoons and developed their writings showing less dependence on the teacher. Their writing productions showed improvements in terms of content, grammar and vocabulary because GoAnimate, together with the influence of cooperative work, helped students enhance their dialogic texts by helping them increase their writing awareness regarding these features.

Keywords: Autonomy, Cooperative Work, Web 2.0 GoAnimate, Writing skills.

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación acción analizó la influencia del trabajo cooperativo para desarrollar las habilidades de escritura a través del uso de la herramienta GoAnimate. Este estudio fue aplicado en un con Colegio público de la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia con la participación de 74 estudiantes de cuarto y sexto grado. Al inicio de la intervención se observó dificultad por parte de los estudiantes para trabajar en grupos así como para escribir textos en ingles puesto que no tenían el hábito de trabajar cooperativamente ni de crear composiciones en segunda lengua. Producciones de los estudiantes, entrevistas y listas de control por parte de estudiantes y profesores fueron los instrumentos utilizados para recolectar datos los cuales se analizaron para identificar la influencia de GoAnimate y el trabajo cooperativo en el progreso de escritura en niños y niñas que se encuentran en nivel A1 de segunda lengua a través del método de teoría fundamentada.

Los resultados demostraron que el trabajo cooperativo a través de GoAnimate tuvo un impacto positivo en las habilidades de los estudiantes para trabajar en equipo puesto que ellos aprovecharon las destrezas de cada miembro del grupo a la vez que incorporaron estrategias de evaluación entre pares lo cual disminuyó la dependencia de los estudiantes hacia el profesor. Los estudiantes pudieron trabajar más autónomamente ya que ellos crearon sus propios videos y desarrollaron los escritos con reducido apoyo por parte del docente. Adicionalmente, los escritos de los niños y niñas mejoraron en términos de contenido, gramática y vocabulario puesto que el uso de la herramienta GoAnimate junto con la influencia del trabajo cooperativo alentaron estos resultados.

Palabras claves: Autonomía, Escritura, Herramienta web GoAnimate, Trabajo Cooperativo.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Currently, learners are facing several challenges regarding the way in which they convey their ideas in spoken and written forms. Students have to communicate their thoughts not only in their first language but also in English to connect themselves with the world. Nevertheless, we have observed how elementary school tutors from our institution are not enabling students to effectively develop writing activities in English or in some cases students face writing activities that are not meaningful to them. Consequently, the students finish their middle school facing big difficulties in writing. Regarding the incorporation of ICT in language lessons, we observed that in spite of facilitating students' access to Web-based technologies in our institution; most teachers do not often teach through technology within the curriculum. Consequently, the incorporation of ICT is often neglected or left aside in the foreign language classroom.

With the intention of filling the gap between fostering writing skills in young learners and using the ICT in English lessons, we decided to implement this study aimed at enabling the learners to write short texts with the help of a Web 2.0 tool named GoAnimate. Several studies have proven that the incorporation of Web 2.0 tools is a successful strategy to increase students' motivation while fostering their productivity in writing. For that reason, we decided to use GoAnimate to create a video cartoon to help students improve their writing skills in English as a foreign language. We also wanted to increase their interest in writing by incorporating this strategy that they had never used before, and that facilitated a good deal of interaction and active use of the language.

Regarding ICT and schooling, previous studies have shown that nowadays students use ICTs to support their learning processes, by using social media and virtual tools. Consequently, students enjoy sharing and establishing relationships through these environments (Solomon &

Schrum, 2007). Therefore, teachers and students see the value of using Web 2.0 technologies in learning and teaching. Consequently, we applied GoAnimate as an aid for quality writing because we wanted students to be motivated and able to improve their writing skills while learning in a different enjoyable way.

In Colombia, research findings over the last 10 years provide some evidence as to the positive effects of the implementation of technology in educational environments (Herrera, 2013; Barrera, 2009; Cordoba, 2006). In addition, these studies report positive results when using Web 2.0 tools to enhance language skills to promote cooperative work and foster students' autonomy. However, no published studies that examine the use of GoAnimate to improve the writing skills of young students have been found so far. Given that fact, the present study seeks to explore how the implementation of GoAnimate in a cooperative learning atmosphere influences students' writing.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

This research study took place at a high school named Colegio Cundinamarca, which is located in Bogota, Colombia. The participants were forty-one fourth-grade and thirty-three, sixth-grade students between eight and thirteen years of age. According to the results of needs analysis carried out prior to the implementation, 50% of these students have been in contact with English as a foreign language since their pre-school years. Their English level was A1, according to the Common European Framework, particularly with respect to listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, their writing skills in English were limited to copying short texts, an activity that evidently restricts their creativity and their meaningful use of the foreign language in a written way; for that reason, we saw the necessity of improving their writing skills by means of one of the Web 2.0 tools to incorporate ICTs into the English language classroom.

This project focuses on helping students and teachers who want to include newer technologies in classrooms and to engage parents in academic activities. Lam & Pennington (1995) claimed that new technologies have brought innovative strategies to education, since these allow teachers to develop different ways to guide students' learning process. Because of that, school staff and parents must be ready for this kind of innovation to be able to guide students in taking advantage of different creative activities. Nevertheless, most children do not use ICT properly, or restrict their use just for leisure and entertainment. Therefore, the teacher's methodology should include ICT to give students an opportunity to apply effective learning strategies while procuring a motivating and meaningful learning environment. Considering that, ICTs might help students engage in learning opportunities because teachers can cater for more varied learning styles and address students' interest through the same tool (Hayes, 2007).

1.2.1 Needs Analysis and Problem Statement

According to the Basic Standards for Foreign Language Competence (Ministry of Education in Colombia, 2006), fourth-grade students are expected to write short descriptive sentences referring to familiar situations. Furthermore, sixth-grade students should be able to write short narratives and descriptive compositions related to their topics of interest. Regarding the school syllabus where this study took place, fourth-grade students are expected to write short descriptions of their routines, whereas sixth graders should be able to describe activities they did at a specific time in the past.

To develop a better understanding on how to improve the students' writing skills, we analyzed participants' writing productions before starting this intervention. The findings demonstrated that neither fourth nor sixth-grade students' writings complied with the national and school standards. As shown below (Figure 1), most students had difficulties in conveying

their ideas when writing, as they used the same phrases repeatedly. Additionally, participants demonstrated difficulties in organizing their ideas in English since some of them turned to their first language to communicate thoughts. This proves that students were not prepared to write compositions at the expected level. Even though they knew what to write, when writing their ideas in English, they had problems. Nevertheless, 30% of students showed to be creative in the use of the language and have the ability to look for different means to communicate their ideas.

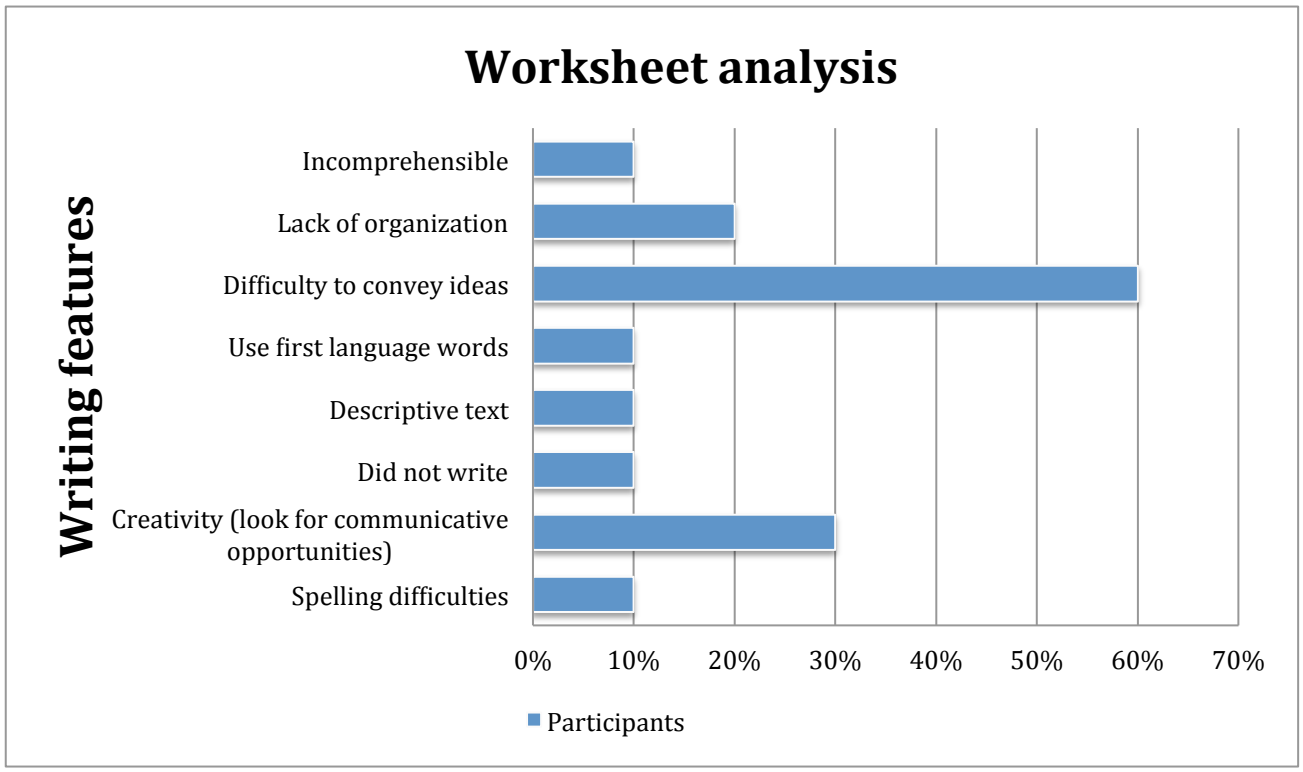


Figure 1. Needs Analysis Results

A survey applied at the beginning of the study (Appendix B) demonstrates that: First, a high percentage of students had not written stories in English. Second, 40% of them selected comics as their favorite text. In the end, we were able to identify that just 60% of students have Internet at home. These findings (Figure 2) were crucial when deciding on this implementation because the majority of the students had selected comics as their favorite text, which motivated

the decision of choosing this kind of writing. Taking into consideration that 40% of students did not have Internet at home, we decided to implement the project wholly at school to enable them to be more effective and have more consistent participation.

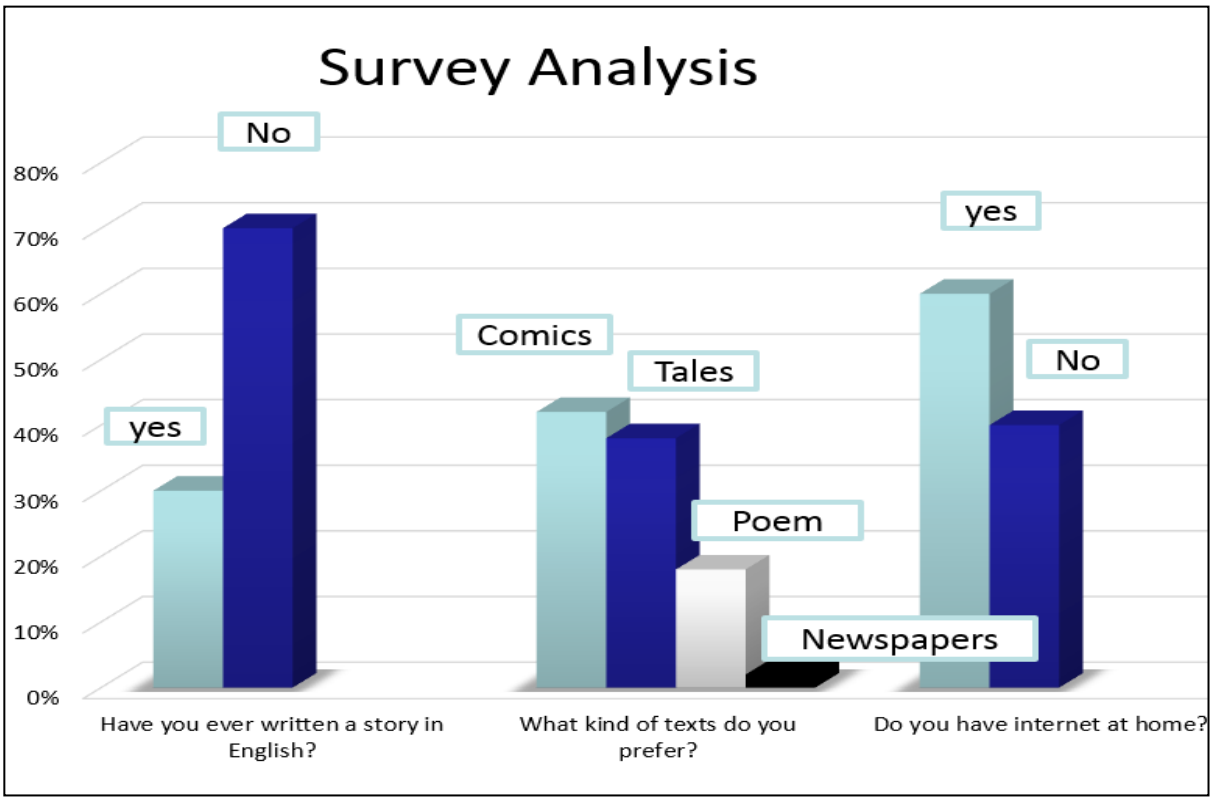


Figure *2*. Needs analysis instrument-Survey analysis

1.2.2 Justification of the problem's significance

Keeping in mind that writing is defined as the *"*act of the mind in which writers create meaning" (Hundelson, 1989, p. 15), learners should have the opportunity to create meaning through writing instead of transcribing paragraphs in writing activities. For that purpose, the writing skill should be stimulated throughout the school years. Nevertheless, we observed that teachers from Colegio Cundinamarca, do not often ask young learners to write in English class mostly because they consider it is time-consuming and also because they consider writing is a naturally complex process. In this respect, Hudelson claims that teachers prefer to "teach children to understand and to speak first, and writing is the last of the language processes to

develop, and it is the hardest for children to master" (1989, p. 11). Consequently, learners start their creative writing process by the end of their high school. As a result, "many students do not write well enough to meet grade-level demands in school" (2013, p. 3).

We implemented this pedagogical intervention to help students become more effective writers while fostering the writing skill from early years in their academy life and to enhance learners' creativity, which plays a vital role when students are writing both narrative or descriptive texts.

1.2.3 Strategy selected to address the problem

To incorporate basic standards of the Ministry of Education and school syllabus into this action research study, we selected the Web 2.0 tool GoAnimate to let students create video cartoons based on short stories. Rijlaarsdam (2004) claims that writing should be an enjoyable task; for that reason, we deem it vital for the students to foster their love for writing compositions in English throughout ICTs by enjoying their writings. Nevertheless, we observed that the process of learning to write is a difficult one since students have to follow grammar rules and correct their spelling errors several times. Consequently, our students used the Web 2.0 tool GoAnimate to learn how to write in English.

Accordingly, "writing instruction should be based on a careful needs analysis that considers what the learners need to be able to do with writing, what they can do now, and what they want to do" (Graham & Harris, 2006, p. 94). Hence, for this project we employed the students' abilities and desires to write by helping them develop their writing skills through enjoyable activities.

Learning to write should be an activity in which students express their ideas while avoiding monotonous exercises, such as correcting grammar mistakes several times. We used a

methodology in which the students would acquire and develop writing skills while paying attention to their creative abilities, rather than to grammar rules.

1.3 Research question and objective(s)

This study was focused on strengthening fourth and sixth graders' writing skills by using GoAnimate. On this platform, the students were able to construct texts cooperatively, including topics and objectives designed according to their proficiency levels in the English syllabus of Colegio Cundinamarca. The main objective of this study was to enable the participants to write short texts with the help of GoAnimate. In this light we proposed the following research question:

How might the Web 2.0 tool GoAnimate influence the development of writing skills in A1 young students through cooperative work activities?

The intention of developing writing skills through a Web 2.0 tool comes from the needs analysis in which we realized how some writing activities of elementary graders were limited to copying and pasting short paragraphs. This technique underestimates children's writing abilities since learners do not have to make any effort to accomplish the task successfully. Additionally, learners manifest their contentment when working with Web 2.0 tools. Nowadays, children need new and innovating methodologies in schools that fulfill not only their needs but also their interests. In this sense, teachers need to give students the chance to explore the learning opportunities provided by technology, such as incorporating Web 2.0 tools in their classroom.

During the implementation of this study, we wanted to motivate students to use a Web 2.0 tool to improve their writing skills. Graham (2008) considers that using new technologies to develop writing can increase students' enjoyment. On the other hand, cooperative work can be facilitated by the use of these tools. Lam Pennington claims "newer technologies may benefit collaborative writing by allowing more convenient feedback and revision and a faster response

time, potentially increasing motivation and creativity" (as cited in Kessler, 2012, p. 92). Therefore, collaborative and cooperative writing through the implementation of Web 2.0 tools can augment students' interest to express their ideas in a second language. Additionally, through cooperative activities students could have the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers that might increase their motivation and creativity. In this sense we propose the following objectives for the present research:

1. To determine the potential effectiveness of cooperative work on students' attitudes towards learning.
2. To identify the extent to which the students' written production progressed using GoAnimate after the intervention.

1.4 Conclusion

The arguments stated above support the importance and the necessity of implementing cooperative work strategies when involving new technologies in school dynamics. Students might increase their ability to work in groups, taking advantage of all members' abilities by incorporating cooperative work and technology into language lessons. Therefore, "the motive for becoming a fuller participant in a community of practice can provide a powerful motivation for learning" (Collins & Greeno, 2011, p. 66). In this sense, cooperative learning could be considered as an asset to the students' learning process because they need to become part of a learning community that might help them achieve their motivational and learning goals. Additionally, the fusion of cooperative activities with virtual environments might increase students' abilities to work in groups while recognizing the learning power of the Internet and its pertaining tools, including Web 2.0 tools.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework & State of the Art

2.1 Introduction

Enhancing fourth and sixth-grade students' writing skills by integrating the Web 2.0 tool GoAnimate is the central part of this project, which aims at stimulating autonomous learning through cooperative work. This chapter presents the principal theoretical basis supporting this research. General constructs include writing skills, cooperative writing, Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), autonomous learning and prior research studies on the central topics of this project.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Writing Insights

Writing is considered one of the most important skills that second language students need to acquire to be able to express ideas creatively. According to Graham (2006), the main characteristic of writing is that it allows interaction among people regardless of distance or time. For that reason, a proficient writer can maintain an effective communication with the world. Thus, helping students improve their writing skills is linked to increasing their abilities to become involved efficaciously in different world dynamics.

People have the ability to produce writing compositions from early years. Therefore, the writing skill should be stimulated and fostered in young learners. Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald (2013) consider children as able to be familiar with the power of writing defined as the capacity to express knowledge and ideas. In this regard, Wright (1997) claims that "if the teacher's main motives are to help children to enjoy making stories and to be willing to try to use their limited amount of the foreign language creatively, then the children will respond to this" (p. 4). That implies that teachers' conceptions regarding the writing process and children's abilities

are crucial in learners' writing development. Accordingly, students can develop their writing from a young age.

Writing activities should be used as a way to express feelings, communicate, share knowledge or create new worlds; thus, teachers can make this task enjoyable while stimulating children's writing skill. It is well known that English written production has implications related to vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation among other language features. Although these elements are crucial for writing productions, it is vital for teachers to value learners' creativity more than mechanics. Wright (1997), claims that teachers often use writing activities in the second language to confirm learners' understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation among other language features. Consequently, this has become a boring task for children who focus their attention on avoiding mistakes more than on communicating ideas.

Teachers' conceptions in regards to writing have real effects on how students perceive, and therefore, perform their writing activities. Graham states that an "effective teacher can have a strong impact on a child's writing development" (2008, p. 2). To this end, tutors should have a positive influence not only on learners' writing productions but also on their conception of what writing is. Furthermore, Ohri & Dawes (2009) consider that guiding the writing process is one of the most interesting and difficult challenges for teachers. Although it is true that teaching how to write has several implications for grammar, mechanics, spelling, cohesion, coherence, among others, teachers should offer an enjoyable environment where students can explore their communicative talent, by stimulating their self-confidence rather than focusing their attention on written errors.

Britton (1972) mentions two different writing roles in the school: *learning to write* and *writing to learn.* The first role has a relationship with the different sub-skills acquired through

writing activities, such as punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, word usage and different features necessary for the production of coherent and organized texts. The second role makes reference to the learning approach in which writing activities are used to acquire new knowledge. Consequently, writing is a tool for learning the content material rather than an end in itself (Boscolo & Mason, 2001). The latter methodology has better effects than the former; therefore, writing to learn should be the approach to developing second language writing skills to encourage students to build knowledge and develop creativity.

2.2.1.1 Writing process

When children start writing in school, they get involved in a new system where their ideas need to be conveyed to others. We decided to implement the writing process proposed by Hammer (2004) with the intention of guiding participants through a process in which they were able to transmit their thoughts effectively. This process consists of four phases: planning, drafting, editing and final version. Through this procedure, we aimed to help students to materialize their ideas in an understandable, friendly and creative way. To apply this process, students followed the following steps for each cycle of this intervention:

1. **Planning –** The students planned what they were going to write, including a topic, sentence structure, and a dialog.
2. **Drafting** – The students wrote their first drafting of their cartoon.
3. **Editing** - In this stage the students edited their draft following their teachers' and partners' feedback.
4. **Final version –** After editing the students submitted the corrected and final version.

2.2.2 Cooperative learning

This study adopted Johnson & Johnson's (1987) ideas about cooperative learning, which "exists when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals" (p. 1). Participants worked to develop their video cartoon in teams with the purpose of allowing them to share their ideas and knowledge while helping each other with written tasks. We decided to implement cooperative work because we believe that this approach provides better students' outcomes since they might help each other, taking advantage of their peers' abilities while providing their attitudes to achieve the shared goal. This affordance allows students to "seek outcomes that are beneficial to all" (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.68). For these reasons, we considered it necessary to promote cooperative work among students to create their video cartoon and work together. Hereof, "cooperative learning teams offer pedagogically more effective ways of organizing learners' work" (Nunan, 1992, p. 38). In addition to that, with large groups of children as the subject of this study, its implementation would be positive in terms of distribution and organization of participants.

Some studies regarding cooperative work have shown positive results in students' outcomes, because by implementing cooperative work strategies, students had improved their language skills, as well as their ability to work in teams. For example, Kagan & High (2002) suggest that students enhance their writing process when working cooperatively by accomplishing the same goals because they can provide feedback to their peers and help each other. Similarly, Jones & Carrasquillo (1998) point out that students perform better-written tasks when they use cooperative learning. In this approach, all team members may have different ideas that can be complemented and be useful for the video cartoon development. In this study, cooperative work functioned as a key strategy that helped participants to take advantage of their peers' abilities by complementing each other.

According to Nunan (1992), in the cooperative learning approach "there is a positive interdependence among the members of the group" (p. 34). In this regard, some students needed the others to accomplish their tasks and increased their self-confidence because they could work together focusing on the same goal. Furthermore, they learned from each other while developing their abilities. Thus, students were able to solve "problems under the guidance or in cooperation with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Consequently, in this study, students worked cooperatively to develop their video cartoon, for that purpose, they were organized in groups of two or three students. They worked on the elaboration of their video cartoon by using GoAnimate to enhance their writing skills, to find out if they could learn and interact with each other, and to expand their knowledge.

Studies carried out at La Sabana University regarding cooperative work as a strategy to improve learners communicative skills by means of Web 2.0 tools demonstrated that interaction combined with the use of Web tools "helped learners to improve their vocabulary and took them to use correct and more complex structures when creating their narrative texts" (Herrera, 2015, p.84). Additionally, Lemos (2013) revealed that the implementation of cooperative work strategies had a positive influence on students' decision-making abilities, which in turn, enhanced their writing performance; also, "providing constructive criticism was the manifestation of a new behaviour, that promoted peer and self- assessment practices" (p. 78). These studies support the present intervention, which pretended to combine cooperative work and GoAnimate to foster the participants' writing skills while enhancing their learning autonomy.

2.2.3 Technology Enhanced Language Learning Environment

Using technology to enhance language learning environments is known as TELLE, an approach that "covers all aspects of using technology in language instruction" (Dudeney, 2007, p. 161). Therefore, involving ICT in English lessons implies the recognition of TELLE. According to Bush & Terry (1997) "this is the use of the computer as a technological innovation to display multimedia as a means of complementing a teaching method language teacher" (p. 167). Applying technology in the language classroom has become a vital part of teaching strategies because several studies have proven that by implementing technology, students demonstrated positive results in the development of their language skills. Additionally, governments should prepare young people to become skillful citizens to play a role in modern society (Anderson & Weert, 2002).

Bearing in mind the arguments exposed above, it is necessary to include information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the school curriculum to help students take advantage of the different technological tools' features. If students can use technology while learning, they will be more prepared for the challenges of this age, because "the computer, with its Internet and hypermedia capabilities, is a powerful addition to a second language teacher's resources" (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003, p. 7). It is relevant for tutors to provide students with experiences in which they can build knowledge while using ICT tools. The Internet provides not only different e-learning tools but also language experiences enabling students to "move through the various stages of language acquisition" (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003, p. 8). To achieve such an aim, teachers should adapt materials according to students' needs (e.g., age, learning style and English level). To accomplish that purpose, technology offers different tools to enhance second language learning, some of them are called Web 2.0 tools which are defined as "a

communicative form of the World Wide Web that emphasizes active participation, connectivity, collaboration and sharing of knowledge among users" (McLoughlin, 2007, p. 665). These kinds of tools offer teachers a variety of options to adapt materials to promote communicative exchanges. Therefore, it is suitable to implement a Web 2.0 tool to enhance cooperative writing in this intervention.

The TELLE we used to help students practice and foster their writing skills was GoAnimate, which is a user-friendly Web 2.0 tool. Additionally, it might help students to improve their writing skills in a second language by allowing the creation of stories using characters and landscapes usually attractive for children. Alvin Hung created this tool in 2007 to promote students' cognitive and language skills, and ever since educators from around the globe have used it. Ganci (2013) argues that GoAnimate offers several features, such as character models, backdrops and other resources to create video cartoons which might be appealing for learning purposes. Those features give children the opportunity to explore several environments to create stories that encourage their imagination, and in the case of this study, foster participants' writing abilities.

Implementing technology in class might facilitate the development of the writing ability. Nevertheless, constant practice can be an important factor in enhancing learners' writing. Kellogg (2007) states that "deliberate practice should be a fundamental principle that guides the instruction and training of student writers" (p. 240). Practice must be a regular activity and learners must enjoy what they are doing as a routine. The Internet offers teachers different tools to encourage consistent student practice, some of which are Web 2.0 tools. Therefore, when implementing an optimal methodology together with pertinent teacher guidance, a Web 2.0 tool might let learners collaborate effectively in learning how to write. In this regard, technology

gives teachers opportunities to "support the process approach to teaching writing, providing both cooperative opportunities and individualized skill development" (Butler-Pascoe, 2003, p. 143). Hence, students can improve their language skills while working cooperatively and learning to use technology for educational purposes.

Also, students are easily encouraged to increase their knowledge while using computers. As teachers, we should detect students' sources of motivation and incorporate those motivational factors into educational programs. Montague (1990) affirms, "Attitudinal research provides insight into the effective responses of students toward the computer as a writing tool" (p. 90). Consequently, using computer-assisted language learning can be a helpful instrument to motivate students in creating stories.

Implementing the Web 2.0 tools addresses the students' interests and increases their motivation (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes 2009). Additionally, when using Web 2.0 tools, students can find new opportunities to practice and enhance their writing skills. Therefore, through digital technology, students can foster writing skills by the use of Web 2.0 tools. Likewise, Oxford's (2004) study found that virtual tools could help students enhance their communication competence in the second language-learning environment. Accordingly, through GoAnimate we want to involve students in a language-learning environment with the intention of developing their communicative competence, taking advantage of students' interest and motivation to work with these kinds of tools.

Nowadays, students have varied ways to use technology for educational purposes that demand teachers' strategies to address students' interest with the intention of helping them to increase their awareness about virtual learning opportunities while finding enjoyment using technology. Ferlazzo (2013) found that Web 2.0 tools are "accessible to English language

learners, free of charge and appropriate for classroom use" (p. 20). Subsequently, a Web 2.0 tool such as GoAnimate might allow teachers to make different modifications for students effortlessly. In this manner, we can affirm that participants of this project also learned and practiced English stress-free when they wanted to practice at home. Likewise, students enjoy working with Web 2.0 tools because this allows them to communicate their ideas while creating, playing and learning.

2.2.4 Autonomous Learning

One of the main aims of this study is to involve ICT in school dynamics to motivate students to do activities with less teacher's supervision in comparison with the regulation they are accustomed to receiving. Warschauer (1995) demonstrates how by using technology students can increase interest to be part of one specific activity since they can use prior knowledge to build a new one, and they can foster autonomy skills. Little (1991) argues that many teachers consider that being an autonomous learner is doing homework at home on a computer, or assessing themselves without a teacher's supervision. Nevertheless, when students participate in any activity voluntarily, it is necessary to validate if they work autonomously without the teacher's supervision. Little (1991) states that "learning autonomy needs to be seen as a capacity for taking control of learning" (p.23); this means that real autonomy can be enhanced even with the teacher's assistance. For the previous reason, teachers need to give students the opportunity to work voluntarily by enhancing their autonomy.

Accordingly, students can be autonomous even while developing activities in class under the teacher's supervision. Autonomous learning is demonstrated when students assume responsibility for their learning goals. Therefore, an autonomous learner should be able to propose, create, organize and generate some personal strategies to learn. Similarly, autonomy can

be fostered using technology because students can develop learning activities by themselves. To 3support this claim, prior studies developed at La Sabana University revealed that cooperative work has a positive influence on students' independence. To illustrate this statement, a research study in which participants were part of several cooperative activities, with the intention of increasing students self-directed strategies demonstrated that after the implementation of cooperative strategies, participants of this study "were able to develop individual responsibility for their learning … by respecting their teammates' opinions and supporting each other" (Centeno, Montenegro, Montes, & Acero, 2013, p.36).

In the case of this study, we aimed to increase the level of autonomy of our students, based on the understanding that cooperative activities have a positive effect on learners' degree of autonomy. Therefore, the prior finding gives us light about the pertinent implementation of the cooperative approach to foster students' autonomy. In our point of view, fostering some degree of autonomy in students demands the implementation of strategies, such as the implementation of cooperative activities in which participants can assume responsibility for a shared learning goal. This kind of opportunity might allow students to increase their interest in learning while improving their abilities to assume responsibility for their knowledge.

2.3 State of the art

Although numerous studies have looked at the use of Web 2.0 tools and cooperative work to foster writing skills, little specific work has been done on the use of GoAnimate to improve writing skills cooperatively.

In Colombia, different studies regarding the implementation of Web 2.0 tools (Herrera; 2013, Rojas; 2011, Cuesta & Rincon, 2010; Quintero, 2008) used technology with students to enhance writing skills. Quintero (2008) implemented a study in which students were encouraged to write cooperatively using blogs. The researcher found that students could write cooperatively,

mediated by technology in English as a foreign language, and positive results were demonstrated through improvements in their writing compositions. We found it important that by combining cooperative work with technology, students achieved significant progress in their writing skills. Correspondingly, in the present study we intended to implement those strategies to achieve similar results. Therefore, Quintero's study confirms the appropriateness of our intervention.

Another study carried out by Cuesta & Rincon (2010) found that students were able to improve writing productions of short stories by using e-portfolio records. In that study, researchers implemented O'Brein (2004) philosophy consisting in letting students develop their ideas through writing productions instead of following grammar exercises. The writing process approach participants followed in that study consisted of five steps; prewriting, first draft composition, feedback, second draft composition, and proofreading. Through this strategy, learners could become part of their learning process and, therefore, become interested in the development of their writing skills." (Cuesta & Rincon, 2010, p.20)

Likewise, concerning the development of the writing ability mediated by using Web 2.0 tools, researchers such as Sorapure (2010), Sigala (2007), and Harris (2009) found that Web 2.0 tools, enabled to organize, explore, analyze, and encourage students to think critically about the tool they used, providing them with new opportunities for their writing productions. These studies implemented several Web 2.0 tools and strategies such as observation and comparison with the intention of increasing participants' awareness regarding the use of ICT for learning purposes. The teachers helped students identify the Web 2.0 tools benefits for creating writing productions.

We have identified a high potential for implementing a Web 2.0 tool in the present intervention since prior studies revealed that Web 2.0 tools not only improved learners' language

abilities but also encouraged their critical thinking and increased their motivation. Consequently, we expect that participants of this study will be able to explore the learning potential of a Web 2.0 tool while enhancing their writing skills, as well as their level of autonomy.

We found several international studies that are relevant to the topic of discussion. Dabbagh & Kitsantas (2012) state that cooperative activities enhanced students' autonomy by using social media, such as digital and networked technologies to support students' self-regulated learning to seek and share information. This study used different tools such as Flickr, Youtube, Twitter among others, to help students identify the Internet as a channel for communication and the enhancement of interaction. Even though they found a limitation regarding the way students use the ICTs they claim that participants were able to comply with the learning objctives established. According to their study, students tend to spend a high percentage of time on the Internet chatting. Therefore, "instructors might use those tools to scaffold students self-regulated learning" (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012, p.5) that might increase their understanding regarding the high potential of Internet as a communication and learning tool.

Based on the observations accomplished at the beginning of this intervention, we found that participants of this study easily handled some Web 2.0 tools; nevertheless they do not use them for learning purposes. Therefore, we implemented strategies to guide students to increase their awareness about the use of technology, while finding the enjoyable side of a Web 2.0 tool for learning purposes. Additionally, as we mentioned before, we intended to increase students' level of autonomy, since the needs analysis stage demonstrated that participants are dependent on teacher approval and supervision, which affects their performance, and limits their creativity.

Numerous studies have been carried out with the intention of finding the influence of cooperative activities in the fosterage of writing skills. Ahangari & Samadian (2014) conducted a study with fifty students of Islamic Azad University, Maragheh Branch. Participants were divided into two main groups, one of them was part of cooperative activities, and the other one was not. These researchers found that cooperative instructions for writing activities were more effective in comparison with the traditional method. Additionally, findings of this study revealed that by implementing cooperative activities participants increased their motivation, since by doing these activities, students felt more responsibility for their learning process, which fostered students' interest and commitment. Another study conducted by Dabbagh & Kitsantas (2012) revealed similar results; the researchers found that cooperative activities enhanced students' self-regulation and self-monitoring by stimulating students to establish strategies to perform formal tasks. On the other hand, Sigala, (2007) claims that the diffusion of Web 2.0 tools play an important role in the way people search, learn, and use information and knowledge. She found that the integration of Web 2.0 tools developed personalized and cooperative learning, which facilitates the development of new language skills in students. Hence, we consider this implementation to be on the right track since the present study has participants who are in the process of acquiring knowledge. Moreover, a Web 2.0 tool might be an appealing instrument for them to practice writing skills, which might favor the development of autonomy and cooperative work abilities.

2.4 Conclusion

Previous studies have demonstrated the value of using Web 2.0 tools to improve the writing skills of EFL students. These findings allow us to see the effectiveness of GoAnimate in the language classroom when creating video cartoons, as will be explained in detail in the next

chapter. To sum up, we can say that the theory presented above shed light on how we can improve writing skills through the implementation of a Web 2.0 tool in fourth and sixth-grade students. Additionally, the revised theory illustrated that the use of technological tools is effective in engaging and scaffolding the writing process of this type of population. It also represents a challenge for teachers who want to implement ICT in language lessons, since tutors should implement ICT; not as a fashion trend, but as an academic source to enable effective learning.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

To analyse the impact and effectiveness of GoAnimate in cooperative writing activities and to observe different points of view, the study designed questionnaires, students' artifacts, teachers' and students' checklist, and an interview, the decision to implement these instruments was based on the fact that research considers them to be the more suitable to gather information related to the students' progress. At the beginning, these instruments were piloted with the intention of identifying if they were appropriate to be implemented during the three stages pre, while, and post. After that, each instrument helped us to check if students really improved their writing skills through the artifacts and the same way teachers found out if students progressed on their writing by means of the interview.

3.2 Type of study

Carr & Kemmis (2003) claim that action research is a collective self-inquiry assumed by researchers in social situations to improve any problems found in their educational environment. For that reason, this kind of research is a pertinent methodology for this study. It requires reflective teachers to improve their pedagogical practices with the aim of having a high impact (Carson, Connors, Ripley, & Smits, 1989).

The model followed for this study was the one proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (1983), a form of analysis to improve teaching by following four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. These stages helped us to implement action research and develop our study. First, we identified a problem and considered alternative actions to solve it. After that, we selected the strategy to address the problem identified, and the next step was to evaluate the action to recognize general findings. This methodology helped us to structure our intervention bearing in mind that we wanted to achieve the best results possible and to employ data collection

instruments that allowed us to collect objective insights on behalf of participants which could be later on triangulated with their written production.

3.3 Context

This study was carried out at Cundinamarca bilingual school; this is a public institution located in Bogotá; the school is part of a district pilot scheme for implementing bilingual education in public schools. Last year, the institution received approval to become bilingual. For that reason, the school is gradually restructuring its curriculum, with the intention of providing bilingual experiences for students. Furthermore, the school is equipped with ICT tools that the teachers and students can use as they deemed it necessary to develop writing skills, as it is mentioned in the school curriculum. For the previous reason, we anticipated that our children were able to use these tools in class to improve their writing skills.

3.3.1 Participants

Two groups of students participated in this study. The first group consisted of forty-one students whose average age was nine and they belonged to fourth grade. The second group, aged 12 on average, belonged to sixth grade, this group was composed of thirty-three students. Both groups was organized into subgroups of three students to develop this study.

Participants were exposed to English as a foreign language for eight hours per week, divided into five hours of English instruction and three of science classes. Participants' English level was A1, according to the Common European Framework (CEFR, 2011). Furthermore, we observed that a high percentage of the students' attitude towards English classes was positive. Nevertheless, according to the needs analysis results, the students showed difficulties in their written productions, related mainly to the lack of vocabulary, grammar, faulty use of mechanics and difficulties when expressing their ideas in English.

3.3.2 Researcher's role

The role of the researchers in this study was mainly as participant-observers who provided input and helped the students reach their writing objectives. This role implied us to take part in the study by providing input through activities to develop the student's abilities (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). We were also active observers taking part in the possible problem-solutions. Therefore, we observed, took notes, reflected and collected data on every activity the students performed. In the four phases of this study, our role was that of observer-participants because we perceived the effects of our implementation, constantly reflected on how to improve it, and looked for solutions to alleviate students' difficulties.

3.3.3 Ethical Considerations

Considering the ethical principles and values to conduct this collaborative study, we followed Hopkins' principles to reflect on the commitment implicit in the methods of action research. In his view, these principles "go beyond the usual concerns about confidentiality and respect for the people who are the subjects of inquiry" (Hopkins, 1993, p. 221).

The first principle is a protocol of observation. To attend to this principle, we ensured that the school principal and students' parents were consulted and informed. Also, we requested permission and approval of the school principal (Appendix C). The second principle encompasses the participants and has a relation to the importance of including students actively in the study. Therefore, we incorporated students' interests and necessities to involve them in the process of improving their writing skills. The third one has to do with the acceptance of responsibility to maintain confidentiality. For this reason, we used pseudonyms instead of real names to protect the identities of the participants (Appendix D).

3.4 Data collection instruments

For this study we collected data on artifacts, interviews, and students' and teachers' checklists, as they provided a variety of first-hand sources. As there are two types of data collection techniques, first elicitation and second observation. We used the second method to collect information. According to Cooke (1994), this "data collection technique is used in education and many other fields to gather information about people." Thus, in the observation technique we gathered information using the instruments already mentioned, which were used during the writing and at the end of the production of each cartoon.

3.4.1 Artifacts

An artifact "consists of items that are readily available in the research setting" (Craig, 2009, p. 154). When doing collaborative action research, teachers use different artifacts to corroborate the data results. Mills (2007) states that they help researchers to understand what is happening in the school environment. In this study, we used the students' productions (Appendix E) as artifacts to identify their writing process. We analyzed one artifact for each stage with the intention of identifying the learners' process regarding writing mechanics, grammar, and punctuation. To examine these features in students' artifacts, we designed a writing rubric (Appendix F) to condense information and simplify their interpretation. Furthermore, these instruments were convenient for detecting the learners' progress in their writing productions as the implementation took place and their improvement on writing skills.

3.4.2 Checklists

Checklists are everyday instruments that many people use to ensure contemporary information. The significance of checklists is that people can check their progress and find areas to improve. Many professionals in fields such as preschools, schools, social services, and

medical institutions use this instrument as a support to remember key information to apply in future situations (Fraenkel, 1993).

In this study, we used two kinds of checklists. The first one was a teacher's checklist (Appendix G) used to evaluate the students' writing improvement in terms of vocabulary, content, and grammar. The students completed the second checklist (Appendix H) with the purpose of identifying their perceptions during their writing improvement, as well as their point of view regarding cooperative work and the use of GoAnimate. These checklists allowed us have different points of view related to the teachers and students.

3.4.3 Interview

We applied an interview with the students to see their perceptions towards their written activities while working cooperatively. As stated by Bell "The more standardized the interview, the easier it is to aggregate and quantify the results" (2014, p. 93). Consequently, we included questions related to the progress in writing, the use of video cartoon, their possible autonomous level gained during the intervention and cooperative work (Appendix I).

Researchers interviewed students to get acquainted with their perceptions of the process, as well as a possible impact on the students' autonomy. Participants expressed their feelings about the whole process. It was the last instrument we applied and helped us to know the students' insights on this study development.

3.5 Validity and reliability

In this study, all data collected had to be examined critically to assess the extent of likelihood, reliability, and validity.

Validity

Validity shows us whether the instrument measures or describes what it is supposed to (Streiner & Norman, 2007). For this reason, we were very careful in the analysis of data to

achieve our objectives and validate this study by taking into account the participants' opinions and outcomes.

Reliability

Reliability "is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results" (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Reliability can be adapted to another context while considering participants, settings, methods and data collection instruments. We identified this reliability using the instruments' mutual functioning.

3.6 Conclusion

Prior studies gave us insights for the design of this research. This study was proposed as a small qualitative scale one that was specifically based on the participants' interests and needs. This kind of study was organized step by step. To accomplish this study with the collaborative action research study characteristics and values, we followed the ethical principles of this kind of research. For that purpose, we solicited permission from the school and parents' participants before the implementation of this project. Additionally, we identified our role as researchers and started piloting the data collection instruments, as well as determining the stages of collecting data. Finally, we triangulated all data collected with the intention of validating and figuring out the findings.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the plan of action and a description of the pedagogical implementation to answer the research question proposed. We also explain the visions related to the development of this study. The explanation of the timeline proposed for the activities during the pre, while and post-stages of the video cartoon. Towards the end, we present a rubric to assess the process of participants regarding the development of the written video cartoon.

During the pre-stage of this study, we identified students' interest in working with Web 2.0 tools as well as their aspiration to create cartoons. These findings together with the National Ministry of Education and school curriculum requirements guided us to select the tool as well as the methodology followed in this study.

4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum

4.2.1 Vision of language

This research study focuses on the use of learners' target language to communicate their ideas throughout the creation of short dialogic texts. That means we are conceiving language as a way to make "an interpersonal transaction that contributes to a large part of every life" (Wells, 1981, p. 22). Conversations are based on initiations and responses (Sinclair, 1975) that children involve in the construction of their target language for communicative purposes.

Communication involves more than focusing on words and sentences, but on the meaning and use of those words to convey ideas for specific purposes. This conception guided the planning, intervention and the orientation of the different activities because we intended to increase students' abilities to use the target language to convey their ideas for communicative purposes in short dialogic texts. Additionally, for this study it is important to bear in mind that one of the vital roles of writing is to communicate ideas across the world. The possibilities to

share thoughts in virtual environments through written texts, such as emails, online conversations, letters, etc. have increased.

4.2.2 Vision of Learning

For this study, we adopted the learning vision based on Vygotsky's postulates. This author stated that people reach their potential development through interaction with adults and peers. The distance between the child's current ability and the level of potential development is called the Zone of Proximal Development (1978, p. 86) where "learning is an active and very social process" (Adams, 1996, p. 191). Consequently, during this study learners interacted with their peers with the intention of grasping knowledge from the ones who were around to build not only conversations but to develop abilities by using language for communicative purposes.

On the other hand, we conceive learning as a process that can occur through TELLE. "As new technologies and related products start to fulfill their promise; students became active participants in knowledge construction across a variety of disciplines" (Adams, 1996, p. 217). Following these lines, we used technology as a tool for fostering learners' writing skills with the intention of guiding students through a learning perspective in which they were the principal protagonists, thus encouraging self-monitoring and increasing students' responsibility for their learning process.

4.2.3 Vision of curriculum

In this study, the vision of curriculum was based on Schubert, who defines the curriculum "as the contents of a subject, concepts and tasks to be acquired, planned activities, the desired learning outcomes and experiences" (1987, p. 86). Its main purpose is to guide students in knowledge construction and skills improvement. During the implementation of the project, there was a series of topics and activities organized by level of difficulty according to the students'

abilities and the implementation of GoAnimate. By using this tool, students practiced topics already studied in class to improve their writing skill.

As technology is a huge subject matter, in this study we have included just one Web 2.0 tool. “Many educators remain unconvinced and continue to struggle with the integration of technology enhanced language learning into the curriculum” (Gillespie & McKee, 1999). We have included GoAnimate to give students the chance to improve their writing skill using technology in the classroom. In agreement with Addams (1996, p. 215) this changes the way computers are used and how information is structured, giving students more control of technology and more responsibility for their learning.

4.3 Instructional design

4.3.1 Lesson planning

Fourth and sixth-grade students worked on their writing skills by following the steps proposed in these six weeks of pedagogical intervention that encompassed three stages; pre, while and post-stage. The while stage had three cycles; during each cycle learners created one video cartoon based on the topics.

During the pre-stage learners became familiar with the platform GoAnimate as well as with the principal phases of writing a video cartoon. Additionally, learners planned and chose the characters and settings they wanted to use for the creation of their video cartoon.

The while stage included three cycles of action. During each cycle, learners had an input session in which they became familiar with topics for the construction of their video cartoon. Following the school syllabi designed for the fourth and sixth grades, we selected the topics participants used to create their video cartoons. Afterward, learners created their first draft, using their target language for that purpose. Succeeding this step, learners had a self-evaluation session, in which the whole group observed all video cartoons to identify mistakes and correct

them (peer-feedback). During these sessions, students did not just listen to the teachers' comments but expressed their point of view regarding their peers' video cartoons (Atay, 2006). The intention of this peer feedback was that students learned from their mistakes and polished their following written video cartoon.

To close each cycle, learners polished their drafts, bearing in mind both classmates' and teacher's advice. During these stages, participants worked cooperatively in the development of their writing productions. This means that every single member of the group was in charge of planning, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating their writing. In this regard, we intended to give all students the opportunity to improve their performance by working in a group of mixed abilities.

For the post stage, learners shared their productions as well as their experience creating a video cartoon. For this purpose, fourth grader students presented their productions to sixth grader students and vice versa, after that, participants completed the students' checklist to evaluate their performance in writing, vocabulary, collaborative work and autonomy.

For this study, the researchers designed lesson plans (Appendix J) with the intention of providing well-sequenced activities; thereof, during each session learners had a warm-up activity to activate their prior knowledge; then, during the study stage, students built knowledge regarding the topic in study, which was applied during the practice stage to create their writing productions. Finally, learners shared their video cartoon. The purpose of this activity was for students to understand better and increase their knowledge.

4.3.1.1 Timeline

Stage	Month	Week-Date	Objective	Data collection instruments
Pre-stage (Preparation)	September 2013	Sept 1st – Sept 4th Consent Letters.	• Getting the institutional permission for implementing the research study. • Asking students about their interest in being part of the study.	• Principal's consent letter • Parents' consent letter
	August 2014	Aug 12th-Aug15th Detailed plan of Intervention.	• Setting the general horizon of the research study. • Presenting the program proposal and to adjust it to the students' needs and interests. • Asking students to create their nicknames.	
Pre-Stage (Intervention)	August 2014	Aug 19th (2 hours)	• Getting students acquainted with the platform, the way to access it, as well as create animations.	
		Aug 21st (2 hours)	• Getting students to learn how to write a cartoon (principal features to use bubbles to express ideas), becoming familiar with the basic structure when writing conversational video cartoons.	• Artifact worksheet
		Aug 22nd-26th (3 Hours)	• Introducing the first topic. • Daily routines (fourth graders). • Ordering food in a restaurant (Sixth graders).	
While-Stage	FIRS August 2014	Aug 28th-29th (2 hours)	• Creating students' first draft (first topic) using the platform.	• Cartoon videos artifacts

	T C Y C L E	September2014	Sept 1st (1 hour)	• Self-assessment. • Letting students observe their first drafts to identify their mistakes (group activity).	
			Sept 2nd (2 hours)	• Based on previous feedback, learners polished their first cartoon.	• Cartoon videos-artifact • Teachers' checklist
			Sept 2nd	• With the intention of obtaining information regarding the learners' process, we will apply the rubric to observe teams 'performance.	• Rubric
	S E C O N D C Y C L E	September 2014	Sept 3rd– 5th (3 hours)	• Introducing second topic. • Exchanging money- (fourth graders). • What did you do on vacation (Sixth graders)	
			Sept 8th (2 hours)	• Getting students to create their first draft (second topic) using the platform.	• Cartoon videos artifact
			Sept 10th (1 hours)	• Self-assessment. • Letting students observe their drafts to identify their mistakes (group activity).	
			Sept 12th (2 hours)	• Based on previous feedback. To polish their draft-second topic cartoon.	• Cartoon videos artifact • Teachers' checklist
			Sept 12 th	• With the intention of obtaining information regarding the learners' process. • Applying the rubric to observe teams' performance.	• Rubric
			Sept 15th	• Identifying students' perceptions regarding their writing process.	• Students' checklist

	THIRD CYCLE	September 2014	Sept 22nd - 24th (3 hours)	• Introducing a second topic. • Exchanging money Countable articles (fourth graders). • What did you do on vacations? (Sixth graders).	
			Sept 26th (2 hours)	• Creating their first draft (third topic) using the platform.	• Video cartoon artifact
			Sept 29th (1 hour)	• Self-assessment. • Observing their drafts to identify their mistakes (group activity).	
		October 2014	Oct 1st (2 hours)	• Based on previous feedback. To polish their draft-third topic cartoon.	• Cartoon videos artifact • Teachers' checklist
			Oct 1st	• With the intention of obtaining information regarding learners' process. • Applying the rubric to observe teams' performance.	• Rubric
			Oct 2nd	• Identifying students' perceptions regarding their writing process.	• Self-assessment
Post-Stage			Oct 3rd-6th (3 hours)	• Sharing their productions. • Fourth graders to sixth graders. • Sixth graders to fourth graders.	
			Oct 8th -10th	• Interviewing with the intention of identifying their perception regarding the process, as well as the possible impact on learners' autonomy.	• Interview

4.4 Conclusion

During the implementation of this study we observed that students were engaged in the activities as well as the tool used. The instruments to collect data were carefully designed to allow both researchers and students to reach the goals proposed for this study. Through the process, we were able to collect all the necessary information to analyze data. Due to the school dynamics, which involved cultural activities that took place during this intervention, we had to adjust the chronogram. The findings of this study illustrate the influence of working cooperatively using GoAnimate in students' writing productions. Those findings will be exemplified in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The procedures followed in data analysis and validation to determine the core category and its sub-categories are presented in this chapter. Additionally, we show findings that answer the research question, as well as some other insights resulting from this study.

For the analysis of data, we used Grounded Theory, defined as a "qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon" (Corbin & Straus, 2008, p. 24). We used this method to build an inductive theory based on information we had gathered. The goal of this approach is "to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior that is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Glaser, 1978, p. 93). Therefore, after analyzing the data gathered and the patterns of behavior participants showed, we identified the categories and subcategories that allowed us to generate a theory regarding the improvement in writing using GoAnimate through cooperative activities.

5.2 Data management procedures

Researchers collected all the data at the end of each cycle; it was organized in virtual folders. We used colors to classify the data and identify different items related to writing procedures, such as mechanics, spelling, and capitalization, completeness of ideas, cooperative work and autonomy. The data was classified using letters and numbers to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity (e.g. G1 for group 1). Data was organized in a matrix (Excel spreadsheet) for effective handling and treatment of information collected.

5.2.1 Validation

We gathered samples from different groups. Due to the large groups selected for this study, participants were arranged in groups of three or four students. In this sense, fourth graders were distributed in eleven groups of three and two groups of four students. Meanwhile, sixth-

grade participants worked in eleven groups of three students. Consequently, we analyzed data collected from thirteen groups of fourth graders and eleven groups of sixth graders. Because the groups of students was not equal, we implemented stratified sampling that allowed us to organize the population into homogeneous groups (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2004). Therefore, we did a random selection of groups to analyze an equal number of data from each grade.

All data was gathered from July to October 2014 in three cycles. The students were able to complete three artifacts by using GoAnimate. To close each cycle, the students completed their checklist while we filled teachers' checklists to analyze the students´ productions (artifacts) and their performance in the design of the video cartoons. At the end of the last cycle, we conducted an interview to identify the students' insights on any possible improvement in their writing abilities, autonomy, and cooperative work. During the interview, they shared their opinions and learning experience in the research project.

Table 1. Open coding stage-color coding 1

Color-coding	Cooperative
	Grammar
	Punctuation
	Mechanics
	Vocabulary
	No relevance
	Students´insights.
	Negative insights
	Reduction of teachers dependence
	Internal Curiosity

To reduce data, we implemented coding procedures framed by the Grounded Theory approach. Three phases were followed: open, axial and selective coding. During the first phase, we followed the open coding procedure. Gibbs (2010) states that this is a strategy for developing categories of information. Therefore, we used this methodology to create specific categories for organizing the information (Table 1).

Next, we classified the different codes to obtain preliminary categories. For that purpose, we used the axial coding procedure that helped us narrow data to proceed further into the theory of this research study. Gibbs (2010) states that the axial coding must follow the open coding that presents relationships among categories. We validated the data through the triangulation process, defined as the contrast of two or more tools. Campbell & Fiske (1959) claim that this process is a powerful way to demonstrate validity. Similarly, we used the information collected from four different tools: artifacts, interviews, and students' and teachers' checklists, which allowed us to encounter similar findings. Finally, we used selective coding to contrast the data that led us to determine the core category and sub-categories.

5.2.2 Data analysis methodology

By using Grounded Theory, we formulated a theory from the participants' outcomes and perspectives that explained the influence of cooperative work on writing improvement using GoAnimate. Based on those outcomes and perspectives, we identified concepts and categories, which are defined as a "group of incidents/concepts that are grouped together" (Campbell, 2011, p. 9). They helped us minimize and formulate the data. For the analysis of students' productions while creating their video cartoons, we designed a writing rubric (Annex H) in which the main characteristics of their writing development were included. We used a code to assess each video cartoon, according to participants' performance of each feature (M minimal, A adequate, S strong, O outstanding). The information collected in the writing rubric was organized into visual graphics to facilitate its analysis. The graph shows the information obtained during the first, second and third cycle of this implementation. (Figure 3)

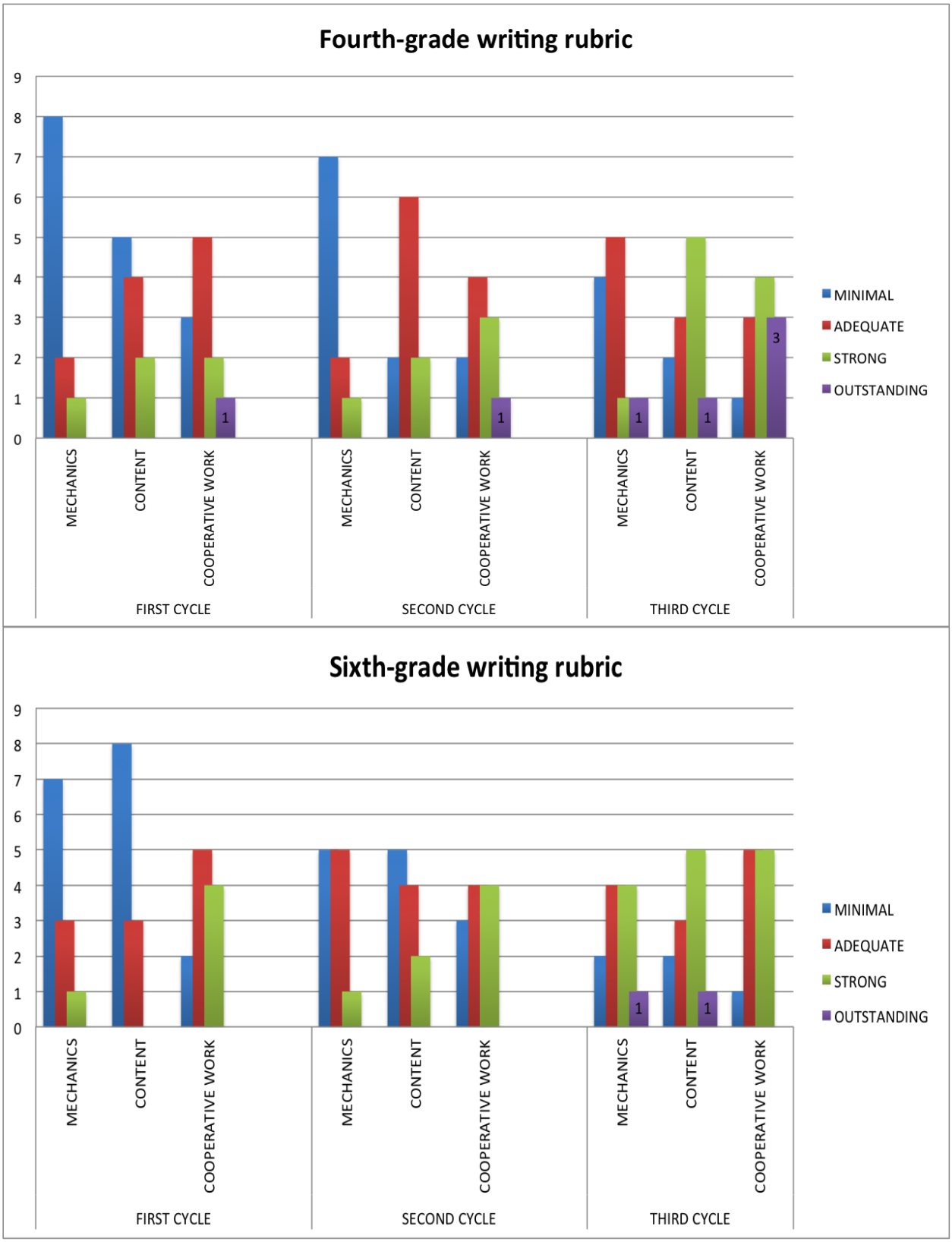


Figure 3. Writing rubric- artifacts performance analysis.

We classified different features of the video cartoons to analyze the students' artifacts at the end of each cycle. We organized the information using the codes used for the writing rubric to identify students' potential improvement in grammar, content, and mechanics (Figure 4).

For the analysis of the data gathered through checklists and interviews, we collected the students' answers and teachers' perceptions, and we categorized those responses according to similar patterns.

STUDENTS WRITING PROCESS (CHECKLIST) ARTIFACTS ANALYSIS FOURTH GRADE

FEATURES		GROUPS																																				
AS		G1			G2			G3			G4			G5			G6			G7			G8			G9			G10			G11							
C1: First cycle		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
C2 Second cycle			1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
C3 Third cycle																																						
Grammar	Structure	A	↑	=	M	=	=	A	NP	=	A	↑	↑	M	↑	=	M	↑	=	M	↑	=	A	↑	↑	S	=	=	A	↑	↑	M	↑	=					
Mechanics	Spelling	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	NP	=	M	↑	=	A	↑	↑	M	=	↑	M	↑	↑	M	=	=	M	↑	↑	A	=	↑	M	↑	=					
	Punctuation (Question mark)	M	=	=	A	↑	↑	M	NP	↑	M	↑	=	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	=	M	↑	↑	S	=	↑	M	=	=					
	Capitalization	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	NP	↑	M	↑	=	M	↑	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	=	M	↑	=	M	↑	↑	A	↑	↑	M	=	=					
Content	Sequence of ideas	M	↑	=	M	=	↑	A	NP	↑	A	↑	↑	A	=	↑	M	↑	=	M	↑	↑	A	=	=	S	=	↑	A	↑	↑	M	↑	↑					
	Vocabulary	A	↑	↑	A	↑	↑	A	NP	↑	A	↑	↑	A	↑	↑	A	↑	↑	M	↑	↑	A	↑	↑	S	=	=	S	↑	↑	A	=	↑					

STUDENTS WRITING PROCESS (CHECKLIST) ARTIFACTS ANALYSIS SIXTH GRADE

FEATURES		GROUPS																																				
AS		G1			G2			G3			G4			G5			G6			G7			G8			G9			G10			G11							
C1: First cycle		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
C2 Second cycle			1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
C3 Third cycle																																						
Grammar	Structure	M	↑	=	A	=		A	↑		A	↑		M	↑		S	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	M	↑	↑	A	=	↑					
Mechanics	Spelling	A	=	↑	M	↑	=	A	↑		A	↑	=	M	=	↑	M	↑		M	=	↑	A	=	=	M	=	↑	A	=	↑	M	=	↑					
	Punctuation (Question mark)	A	=	↑	A	=	↑	M	-	↑	A	-	↑	M	=	↑	S	=	↑	M	=	↑	A	=	↑	M	=	=	A	=	↑	M	=	↑					
	Capitalization	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	A	-	↑	A	-	↑	M	=	↑	S	=	↑	M	=	↑	A	=	↑	A	=	↑	A	=	=	A	=	↑					
Content	Sequence of ideas	M	-	↑	M	=	↑	M	=	↑	A	=	↑	M	=	↑	S	=	=	M	=	↑	M	=	=	M	=	↑	M	-	↑	M	/	↑					
	Vocabulary	A	-	↑	A	=	↑	A	=	↑	A	=	=	M	=	↑	S	=	↑	M	=	↑	A	-	↑	A	-	=	A	=	↑	M	=	↑					

Figure 5. Artifacts analysis

5.3 Categories

5.3.1 Introduction

The procedures described previously let us identify the core category and sub-categories, which emerged from the participants' coded answers to provide support for the core category, after exercising the coding treatment to the data gathered.

5.3.1.1 Category mapping

Following the open coding, the analysis was based on a contrast and comparison procedure. The students' artifacts were analyzed, compared and contrasted with the other tools. In Table 1, we organized these preliminary codes based on the main components found.

Table 2. Preliminary codes after the open coding procedure.

Research study objective	**Preliminary Codes**
Identifying the extent to which the students' written production has progressed using GoAnimate.	● Improvement of grammar structure. ● Improvement of punctuation. ● Improvement of capitalization. ● Improvement of spelling. ● Improvement of vocabulary. ● Improvement of content. ● Use of web tools in the creation of their cartoon. ● Reduction of teacher dependence. While creation video cartoon (at school). Post creation video cartoon (at home).
Determining the potential effectiveness of cooperative work on students' attitudes towards learning.	● Students' perceptions of their performance. ● Cooperative work. (Students' perceptions). (Teachers' perceptions). ● Internal curiosity.

During the axial coding procedure, we grouped the preliminary codes based on their similarities. Therefore, we examined, compared and made connections among categories. Based on those relations we established the following categories and sub-categories (Table 3).

Table 3. Preliminary categories and subcategories after the axial coding procedure.

Research Objectives	Categories	Sub-categories
Identifying the extent to which the students' written production has progressed using GoAnimate.	Fosterage of writing skills.	❖ Improvement of mechanics, grammar, and content.
Determining the potential effectiveness of cooperative work on students' attitudes towards learning.	Reduction of field dependence.	❖ Promotion of learner autonomy. ❖ Incorporation of peer assessment practices. ❖ Internal curiosity.

5.3.1.2 Identification of the core category

According to Corbin (1990), the core category denotes the central phenomena of the research study. After analyzing the previous categories and subcategories, the core category that emerged was named as *GoAnimate and Cooperative work foster writing skills while reducing field dependence in students*. We identified two subcategories that emerged from the core category: *GoAnimate,* which fosters writing skills about grammar, mechanics and content, as well as *Cooperative work,* which enhances autonomy by increasing students' independence.

5.3.2 Analysis of categories

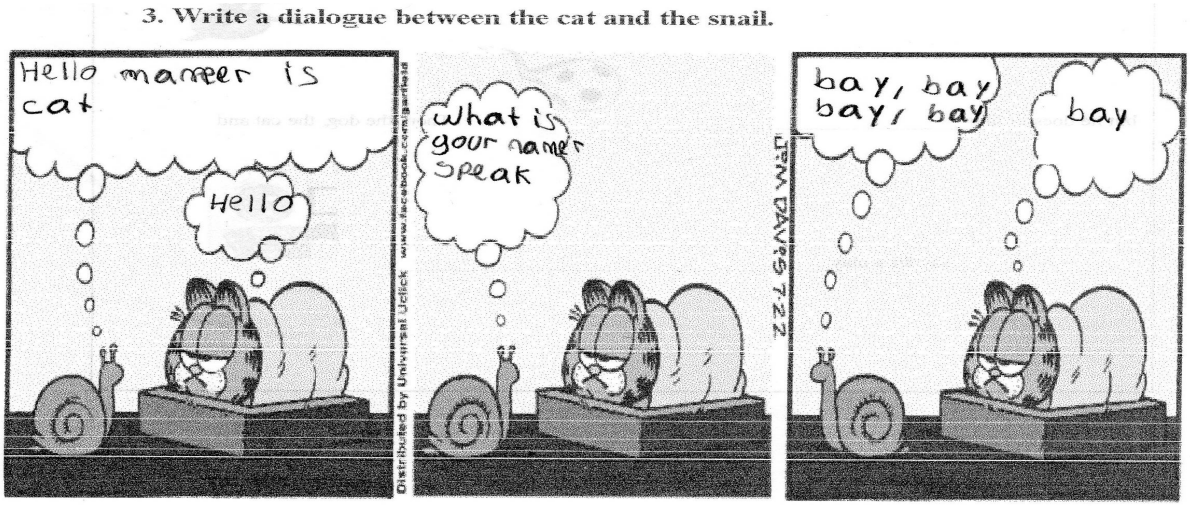
5.3.2.1 Description of categories

After the open and axial coding, two mid–level categories emerged: *Fosterage of writing skills,* most specifically in terms of writing mechanics and lexis. The former has a relationship with improvement in punctuation, and the latter, enhancement of vocabulary. The second subcategory is named *reduction of field dependence***.** This was observable in the peer assessment

strategies and the internal curiosity demonstrated by students, which led participants to be enthusiastic about using ICTs. Results revealed how the use of GoAnimate fostered students' writing skills using cooperative work in short dialogic texts and how it allowed them to acquire some degree of autonomy.

5.3.2.1.1 Fosterage of writing skills

After analyzing the students' artifacts and their responses to the interview, we found improvement in their writing skills in terms of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, capitalization, spelling and content. Excerpts below show participants' writing productions before and after the implementation of this study.



Excerpt 1. Worksheet. Needs analysis stage. August 2014

As Excerpt 1 showed during the needs analysis stage, students demonstrated difficulties in content, it was evident that there was not a conversational exchange. Additionally, the participant did not use a question mark nor capitalize the question. Some spelling problems are also evident in this sample. In contrast to that, it is observable how participants' writing productions improved through this intervention. Excerpts two and three demonstrated that from the second cycle participants started involving question marks as well as capitalization to write

proper names and start sentences. Additionally, we identified that students began to be involved in a conversational exchange, which demonstrates improvements in content. Moreover, students' productions involved more vocabulary throughout the process, which allowed students to construct more structured conversations.

To explain in detail, in Excerpt 2 it was noticeable that participants improved their productions. During the first cycle, they used some features of a dialogic text (greeting and farewell). Nevertheless, a conversational exchange was not evident, and an unclear intention was evident in this video cartoon. During the second and third cycle the progress was evident; both conversations had a clear purpose, and they achieved the principal characteristics of a dialog text, which are (greeting, conversational exchange and farewell).

First cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle
Hello, Sebastian, How are your today Fine thank you Daniel Hello friends Hello danna Go to the school friends how do you feel I feel excited Good bye	Hello Matt Hello Tom May I help you? Yes, how much is the soda? It is one thousand pesos Can, ¡ two please? Here, you are thank you Your welcome	Hello Lisa- Hello Maria Hello girls may ¡ help you? How much do the dinner cost? It is $5.600 (five thousand six hundred pesos Where can you buy salad at the restaurant? Yes, can you buy salad at the restaurant Thank you very much bye bye

Excerpt 2. Artifacts transcription. Participants fourth grade Group-4. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB2gIPXgaoo

Another important finding was students' enhancement in terms of the grammar structure. As Excerpt 3 showed, during the first cycle students did not use the proper structure for questioning, for example, they employed the auxiliary *will* after subject, besides some utterances were written without complement. During the following cycles, it was evident how students

started the process of producing sentences using a proper structure (subject + auxiliary verb + main verb + object)

First cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle
Nothing comes It can not be I am late Hello Hello I will you go to brazil Yes, I will No, I won´t Will you graduate? Yes, I will Bye,,, Bye	Hello, Hi What will you in ten years? I will teach and you what will you in ten years? I play basketball Ohh congratulations ok bye Bye	Will Laura have a home? Yes, I will have a home Will you practice in enterprise? Ni, I won´t practice in enterprise Will Laura visit South Korea? Yes, I will visit South Korea. Will angelica have a yacht? No, I won´t have a yacht. The end.

Excerpt 3 Artifacts transcription. Participants sixth grade Group-11. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7rnWndkvmc

The examples below show students' perceptions regarding their improvement in mechanics related to punctuation and lexis. The participants seem to have increased their writing awareness. For instance, one of the improvements was evident when they were able to identify how and when using a capital letter and a question mark. Students realized that the question mark was used at the beginning and at the end in Spanish but only at the end in English. They also could use a capital letter when writing proper names and when they started a sentence, as illustrated in Excerpt 4. Regarding lexis, we noted that students increased their vocabulary. One of the strategies students used was Internet searching to find the meaning of some unknown words in English. For that purpose, they took advantage of different Web tools such as translators and online dictionaries, as demonstrated in Excerpt 5.

Crees que mejoraste tus habilidades para escribir en Inglés? Si ____ No ____ ¿Por qué?

Do you think you improved your abilities to write in English? Yes, X No____ Why?
*"*A mi GoAnimate me enseño que un nombre se empieza en mayúscula y nunca en minúscula."(Participant fourth grade- Group 6) *"GoAnimate taught me that to write a proper name we always use capital letter and not lower case."* (Participant fourth grade- Group 6)
*"*Si porque puedo escribir en el GoAnimate, porque supe poner los paréntesis y escribir en mayúscula." (Participant sixth grade- Group 10) *"yes, because I can write in GoAnimate, and I could put parentheses and I used capital letters."* (Participant sixth grade- Group 10)
*"*Ahora, yo se que tengo que usar solo un signo de interrogación al final de la pregunta en Inglés" (Participant fourth grade- Group 11) *"Now I know that we must use a question mark just at the end in English"* (Participant fourth grade- Group 11)

Excerpt 4. Interview. November 2014

¿Aprendiste vocabulario y crees que mejoraste tus habilidades escritas en inglés? Si_X_ No__ ¿Por qué? *Did you learn vocabulary? And Do you think you increased your writing skills while writing Video cartoons? Yes, X No____ Why?*
"Si, porque algunas me quedaban difícil escribirlas, pero aprendí a escribirlas en GoAnimate." (Participant sixth grade-Group 1) *"Yes, because some words were difficult to me, but I learned how to write them in GoAnimate."* (Participant sixth grade-Group 1)
"Si. cuando no sabíamos alguna palabra en inglés, usábamos un diccionario online"(Participant fourth grade-Group 3) *"Yes, when we did not know how to write some words in English, we used an online dictionary."* (Participant fourth grade-Group 3)

Excerpt 5. Interview. November 2014

After analyzing students' productions and their survey responses, we identified significant improvements in both fourth and sixth-grade students. Advancements regarding mechanics were significant because a high percentage of participants increased their awareness and showed better outcomes, most specifically in terms of punctuation and capitalization. Additionally, we detected similar findings after the examination of students' performance (figure 3) and artifacts (figure 4). These results indicate that the students' writing production was

positively influenced by this intervention because the percentage of students' productions classified as minimal decreased, and some elaborated production arose during the implementation.

Comparing the results explained above with the students' checklist results (Figure 5), it is evident that a high percentage of students considered that they have improved their writing skills, most specifically in terms of vocabulary and grammar findings that were also evident in their writing productions. Moreover, participants perceived that writing was easier after this intervention.

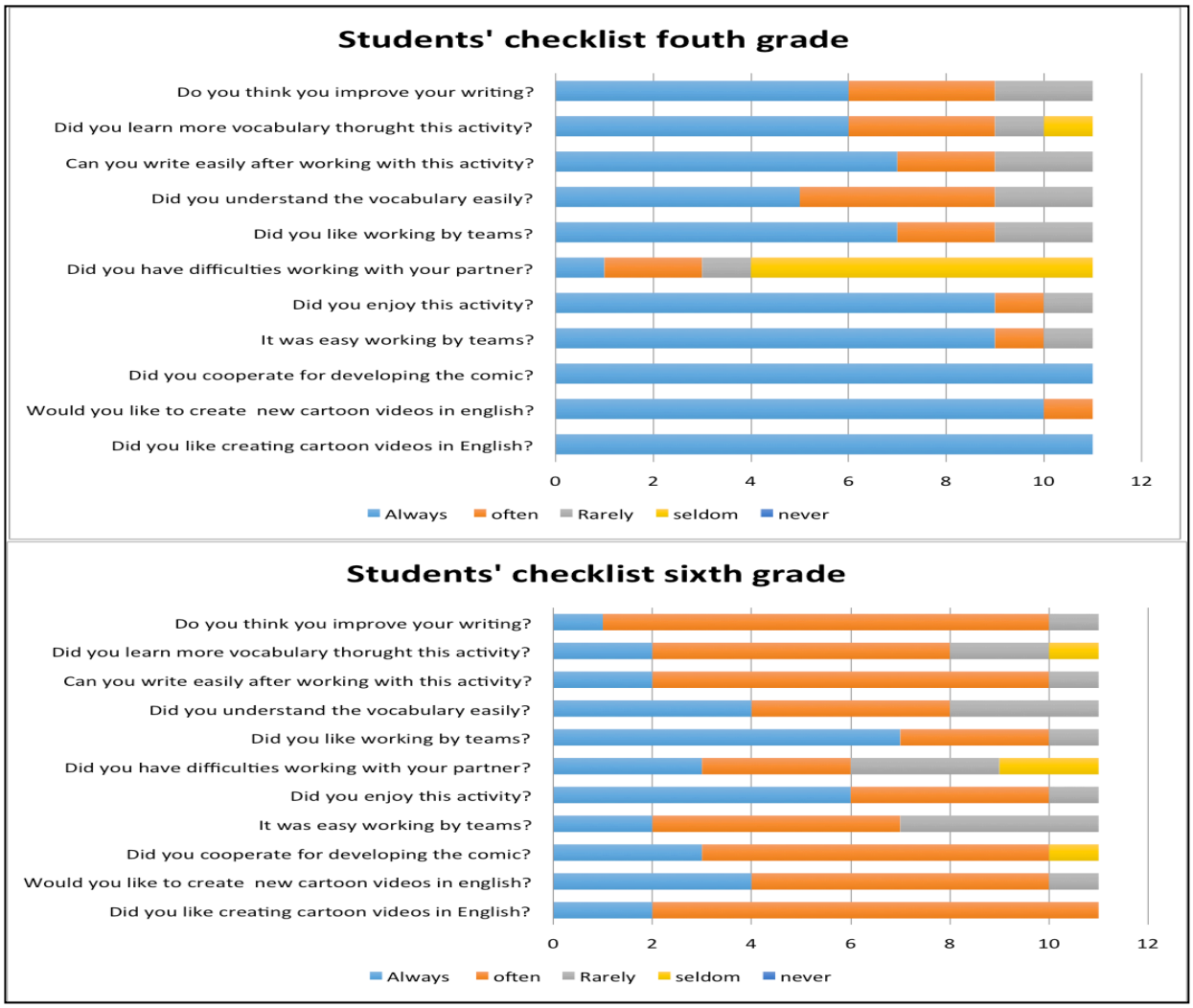


Figure 6. Students' checklist results.

As stated by Cox (2002) the use of ICT is a good tool to improve writing because it allows students to learn in different ways. This analysis supports the findings gathered from the analysis of students' productions and their video cartoons creation.

5.3.2.1.2 Reduction of field dependence.

Findings revealed that cooperative work helped students improve their autonomy through the reduction of field dependence because they were able to create their video cartoons with limited teacher's assistance. At the beginning of the implementation, the teacher guided them to develop their work, but through the time the teacher's support was less necessary. Findings revealed that students were able to complement each other in their groups since their mixed abilities allowed them to distribute tasks according to the strength of each classmate. This fact assisted participants in the development of their writing productions, using little teacher assistance because participants tried to solve their doubts and difficulties by themselves, which demonstrated that they started to trust in their own abilities.

Similarly, participants helped and encouraged each other to write their cartoons in English by implementing strategies like sharing ideas, making decisions, explaining, peer-feedback and giving technological assistance since the most experienced students gave explanations and support about the use of the tool that helped them both in the use of GoAnimate and by giving ideas and explanations. The strategies used by participants, as shown in Excerpt 6, assisted students to acquire some degree of autonomy by increasing their abilities to solve difficulties without teacher intervention. Correspondingly, Slavin (1991) found that strategies in cooperative learning allowed students to complement each other by using their abilities to reach the same goal. Additionally, students' performance is positively affected by the different

learner's skills. Therefore, students used diverse strategies to improve their writing to accomplish their goals.

¿Trabajaste de manera cooperativa con tus compañeros? Si ____ No ____ ¿Por qué? *Did you work cooperatively with your partners? Yes X No Why?*
"Si, por que tomamos decisiones que nos gustaban a los dos y mi compañera me explicaba." Participant fourth grade- Group 12. "*Yes, because we made decisions that we liked together, and my classmate explained to me."* Participant fourth grade- Group 12.
"Si, por que Jacqueline no sabía y yo le explique, nosotros compartíamos ideas y todo." Participant sixth grade- Group 3. "*Yes, because Jackeline did not know, and I explained to her. We shared ideas and everything*." Participant sixth grade- Group 3.

Excerpt 6. Interview. November 2014

In the beginning students were hesitant and lacked confidence, and they always needed the teacher's guidance to know what to do. But in time, starting the second cycle, they knew what to do, and they used their power of choice when making decisions to create their video cartoons. They looked for new strategies to improve their writing and correct their partners' mistakes. Boud (2012) affirms that "students can learn as much or even more from their peers as from their teachers" (p. 12). Thus, it was observable that students were able to work cooperatively every time by sharing their own ideas to complement their work. We found out that through this intervention participants gradually began to reduce their dependence on teachers since they started to work and solve their difficulties together. Furthermore, various participants created video cartoons at home; some of them even taught their families how to use GoAnimate to create video cartoons, as observed in Excerpt 7.

¿Creaste video cartoons en casa de forma autónoma? Si X No ____ ¿Por qué? *Did you create video cartoons at home autonomously? Yes X No____ Why?*
"Si, cree muchos con mi prima, mi mama y mi familia. Yo les enseñe como hacerlos." Participant fourth grade- Group 9. "*Yes, I created many video cartoons with my cousin, my mom, and my family. I taught them how to do it*" Participant fourth grade- Group 9.

"Si, porque fue divertido, ponerles dialogo a los muñequitos y hacerlos mover." Participant sixth grade- Group 7. "*Yes, because it was funny to write the dialog and make the characters move.*" Participant sixth grade- Group 7.
"*Si por que no necesité que me dijeran lo que tenía que hacer.*" Participant sixth grade- Group 5. "*Yes, because I did not need anyone to tell me what to do.*" Participant sixth grade- Group 5.

Excerpt 7. Interview. November 2014

Even though we observed a promotion of learners' autonomy, it is important to state how several factors affected the development of independence negatively. As Excerpt 8 indicated, some students were not able to work autonomously because they did not have Internet access at home. Additionally, some participants developed the target activities just to receive their teacher's approval or to obtain a good grade; otherwise, they considered that the task completion had no intrinsic value.

¿Creaste video cartoons en casa de forma autónoma? Si __No __X_ ¿Por qué? *Did you create video cartoons at home autonomously?* Yes __ No X Why?
"No, Porque no tenia Internet en mi casa y mi mamá no me deja salir a un café Internet." Participant fourth grade- Group 10. "*No, because I did not have the internet at home, and my mom does not allow me to look for an Internet facility outside.*" Participant fourth grade- Group 10.
"No, porque solo lo hago cuando es tarea." Participant sixth grade- Group 11. "*No, because I just do it when it is homework."* Participant sixth grade- Group 11.

Excerpt 8. Interview. November 2014

Contrasting this finding with the data collected in the writing rubrics (figure 3), we observed that participants increased their abilities to work in groups from the first to the third cycle. The number of groups that worked together without difficulties and used cooperative strategies increased, resulting in improved student writing productions, and some outstanding groups enhanced their independence since they wanted to create their video cartoons by themselves.

There was a reduction of the number of field dependent students because most participants started to use their strategies to avoid teacher's assistance. Dickinson (as cited in Benson, 1987) affirms that autonomy is present when the teacher is not necessary to take control of the students' learning, Therefore, to promote autonomy, group work can help negotiate learning (Breen & Mann, 1997). The participants in this study became more autonomous to control their learning, not only in class but when they produced their cartoons at home with the help of their relatives. Those findings were similar to the ones gathered in the students' checklist. Figure five illustrates how 100% of fourth-grade students helped each other when developing their video cartoon, and almost 90% of sixth-grade students had the same perception. Thus, we can affirm that most of the participants developed an ability to work cooperatively.

5.3.2.1.3 Incorporation of peer assessment practices

During the development of pedagogical intervention and use of GoAnimate to engage writing skills, participants used different peer assessment strategies, like clarification of doubts, correction of mistakes, and decision-making, when they were writing new versions of video cartoons. Liu, & Carless (2006) state that peer feedback is an excellent strategy when correcting writing mistakes to enhance student's learning. This fact was evident through this intervention since students discovered peer assessment strategies to promote peer-correction. As demonstrated in Excerpt 9, it is noticeable that some of them explained and corrected each other, not only in terms of writing skills, but also in the way they should use GoAnimate.

¿Pudiste trabajar de forma cooperativa con tu compañero? Si _X_ No __ ¿Por qué? *Could you work cooperatively with your classmate?* Yes X No ____ Why?
"Si, porque él me explicaba y le corregía en lo que no estaba bien" Participant sixth grade- Group 4. "*Yes, because my classmate corrected me and explained to me when I was wrong.*" Participant sixth grade- Group 4.

"*Si, ella sabía mejor como escribir pero yo le ayudaba con los muñequitos y el uso de GoAnimate.*" Participant fourth grade- Group 1.
"*Yes, she knew how to write better than me, but I helped her with the characters and the use of GoAnimate.*" Participant fourth grade- Group 1.

Excerpt 9. Interview. November 2014

The analysis of the data gathered using the teacher's checklist helped us to recognize how participants increased their peer assessment abilities during this intervention. Excerpt 10 illustrated that during the first cycle most of the students asked for teacher's approval, while at the end of this study participants demonstrated advancements in regards to the incorporation of peer assessment strategies. These progressions were possible because they helped and consulted each other to clarify doubts. These peer-feedback strategies encouraged the reduction of field dependence because students were able to create their strategies, worked by themselves, and created their own cartoons autonomously.

Teacher's checklist				
	Yes	Not		
Did students use peer-feedback during the creation of their video-cartoons?		x	They always asked the teacher for approving their productions.	Sep-14
	x		Learners helped each other. This time, few students asked for teacher approval. Most of them asked their classmates when they had doubts	Nov-14

Excerpt 10. Teachers' checklist.

5.3.2.1.4 Internal Curiosity

Internal curiosity was another important finding encountered throughout this intervention, even though we did not attempt to measure this feature. During the analysis stage, we identified that students were curious and highly interested in using the tool GoAnimate. Based on Carver (1999), one of the categories embedded in the analysis of human motivation addresses the development of cognitive goals, which are used to increase individuals' knowledge to have the

ability to apply, synthesize, evaluate, and create. Hence, we found that students were able to use their knowledge since they could create their video cartoons by using their previous knowledge.

Those aspects have a close relation with the development of autonomy, as students seem to have increased their desire to learn, motivated by internal satisfaction, which enhanced the learning process (Brophy, 1998). The findings revealed that students were interested in creating written cartoons using GoAnimate because they found that the tool was really funny and interesting. Furthermore, Brophy (1998) claimed that sharing their productions with the whole class and being corrected by their peers might be an interesting and entertaining activity for students. Those aspects enhanced the learning process because they evidenced students' internal curiosity and interest in creating writing productions. Excerpt 11 represented better how the fourth and sixth-grade students were able to create writing productions in English by using GoAnimate.

¿Te gustaría crear más video cartoons en inglés utilizando GoAnimate? Si _X_ No __ ¿Por qué? *Would you like to create more video cartoons in English using GoAnimate?* Yes X No____Why?
"Si, es muy divertido se aprende mejor es como un juego" Participant sixth grade- Group 5. "*Yes, it is very funny; I can learn better, it is like a game.*" Participant sixth grade- Group 5.
"Si, porque podría aprender más palabras en inglés, es divertido cuando dialogan y cuando cometen errores todo el salón empieza a corregir." Participant fourth grade- Group 2. "*Yes, because I could learn more words in English. It is fun when they converse and make mistakes; the whole classroom starts correcting mistakes.*" Participant fourth grade- Group 2.

Excerpt 11. Interview. November 2014

5.3.2.2 Core category

After analyzing and reducing data, the core category emerged, which was identified as *GoAnimate and Cooperative work foster writing skills while reducing field dependence in students.* Learners' independence is in contrast to their dependence on teachers. Candy (1991)

claims that an independent learner should have a high degree of learner control, which implies the ability to make decisions on content and methodology. Similarly, Rogers (1983) states that for learners to become independent, teachers should provide them with a student-centred class. This author proposes strategies to help students decrease their dependence on teachers: "significant learning is acquired by doing, and when students assume responsibility for their learning process, this is facilitated" (1983, p. 162). Through this study, we identified that students were able to improve their writing productions, mediated by the implementation of cooperative work strategies together with the use of GoAnimate tool. When participants were working in groups, they were able to increase their independence by asking their peers and looking up for unknown words, which had positive results in their writings. Those strategies helped them to look for new ways of increasing vocabulary and using the correct lexis to write short and complete sentences that demonstrated that participants assumed some degree of responsibility regarding their learning.

5.4 Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that cooperative work supported students to become more independent, which positively affected their writing productions. Additionally, the implementation of GoAnimate helped students create short dialog texts while improving their writing skills in terms of vocabulary, content, grammar and mechanics. Furthermore, participants of this study were working together to create their video cartoon since they helped each other and created peer feedback strategies, which let them reduce their dependence on the teacher as well as increase their confidence when producing writing texts. Similarly, by using GoAnimate students realized that there are many other online tools such as online dictionaries, which can be useful for them to increase their vocabulary and clarify doubts.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

6.1 Introduction

This study investigated how the development of writing skills in A1 young students was influenced by the use of GoAnimate and the promotion of cooperative work. To this end, participants were prompted to take part in writing activities aimed at fostering, developing and enhancing their writing skills in terms of content, vocabulary and mechanics by working cooperatively. These activities followed the structure of a dialogic text. According to Martin (1992), a dialogic text exchange must have a complete meaning; for that reason, through this study, learners improved their writing since they were able to write short sentences with a complete meaning.

The implementation of these activities enhanced student's written production, mainly in terms of mechanics, content, and vocabulary. Additionally, the use of virtual tools such as online translators and dictionaries reduced the field of dependence, whereas cooperative work encouraged the use of peer feedback and peer consultation that in turn increased students' possibilities to produce the expected writing outcomes autonomously.

6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies

The use of GoAnimate helped fourth and sixth-grade students develop their writing skills, fostered their cooperative work and increased their autonomy. These findings support previous studies in which the use of technology, cooperative work, autonomy, and language skills were positively influenced. Regarding the use of technology to enhance writing productions, we found that during the second and third cycle of this intervention, the use of virtual tools, such as online dictionaries and translators, assisted students in the organization of their ideas, which significantly improved their written productions to the extent of helping them transit from the writing of very short fragmented sentences to the production of complete sentences in terms of

mechanics, content, and vocabulary. These findings supported previous studies in which students improved their writing since they became part of the process by using technology (Herrera, 2013; Rojas, 2011; Cuesta & Rincon, 2010; and Quintero, 2008).

During the peer assessment sessions, students edited their video cartoons. These Peer assessment sessions supported participants' writing awareness, which helped them with their decision making (e.g., students were able to monitor their learning process by giving feedback to their partners and creating new ways of correcting their writing). They also increased the students' independence since participants found self-monitoring strategies to work cooperatively. For that purpose, learners used peer assessment strategies when they were presenting their video cartoons. These decisions helped them select appropriate sentence structures, capitalization and use of question marks, as well as sequencing their ideas more appropriately. This conclusion supports the findings of a study about cooperative activities enhancing students' self-regulation and self-monitoring by stimulating learners to establish strategies to perform formal tasks (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012).

We realized that through this intervention students' writing awareness increased, more specifically in terms of content, mechanics and vocabulary explained before. We identified that GoAnimate together with the influence of cooperative work encouraged these results. These findings support the previous study (Ahangari & Samadian, 2014), in which cooperative activities fostered writing skills in EFL lessons in the components of organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.

6.3 Significance of the results

The results of this study demonstrate that the implementation of cooperative work activities should be incorporated directly into the EFL curriculum to help students develop their writing skills. The integration of cooperative work will help students' progress in terms of

independence, fostering learning skills and promoting lifelong learning. According to Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne (2000), cooperative work can be used with any subject; any grade, and it also can be adapted to all curricular areas.

The promotion of cooperative work enhanced with Web-based activities should be included in school syllabi when teaching a first or second language at any age. The National Bilingual Program was created in Colombia in 2004; this program is expected to be worked during fifteen years, from 2004 to 2019; by the end of 2019 students will reach the level B1 after high school (MEN, 2006). Therefore, the implementation of these kinds of studies might address the National Ministry of Education's proposal while learners will improve English not only in writing skills but in reading and listening. Moreover, English standards proposed by the Ministry of Education involve the challenge for teachers to work in the development of skills and competencies to use new technologies to be an active part of social interactions (Vargas, Tejada, & Colmenares, 2011).

Furthermore, this study revealed that in spite of the difficulties related to Internet accessibility and infrastructure evident in many public schools in the local and national context, teachers could incorporate ICT into their classes. Notwithstanding, some of the difficulties and limitations, stated before that these institutions might have, teachers can implement technological tools in language lessons. Similarly, teachers should be aware that the Internet is not the only opportunity to incorporate ICT in class because it is also important to consider how students can improve using Web 2.0 tools and digital multimedia software such as Encarta and Tell Me More, among others, without Internet. These kinds of tools might also increase learners' internal curiosity and develop language skills.

Extensively, this study provides significant evidence that working with ICT in the wider national ELT community by implementing it in the language classroom to develop writing skills gives both students and teachers the opportunity to explore new and effective possibilities to build knowledge. In this regard, researchers show that integrating cooperative work activities to develop a skill by means of using Web 2.0 tools generated positive results in participants (McDougald, 2013; Clavijo & Quintero, 2012; Gonzalez, 2007). The results of this research also support findings from national studies that showed how ICT have several opportunities for the development and enhancement of English language skills, which generated a crucial change in the way languages are taught in Colombia.

Another important issue which we should consider is to increase teachers' awareness regarding the importance of working with ICT and implementing cooperative work strategies when teaching. In the case of the institution where we implemented this study, we identified that some tutors are starting to incorporate either ICT or cooperative work strategies into their lessons after the implementation of this study. This fact has strengthened students' abilities to interact with small groups and their partners to work together to accomplish a goal.

On the other hand, students and teachers will take advantage of different technological tools. They demonstrated that it has been a good strategy to incorporate learning by fostering students' literacy skills, increasing their accessibility to online tools, and integrating ICT as part of teaching (Al-Munawwarah, 2015; Hjalmarsson, 2015; Zhiwen Hu, 2009). Hence, autonomy can be introduced in the use of ICT to be developed and used by increasing students' motivation.

6.4 Pedagogical implications

An important pedagogical implication we identified during this implementation was that peer assessment strategies helped participants increase their awareness regarding writing facts and self-monitoring. Additionally, this feature may lead students to increase their participation in

lessons in order to identify their progress; “in giving learners control over the initiation of feedback, student self-monitoring is a valuable way of increasing the element of autonomy in the learning of writing” (Cresswell, 2000, p. 235). In fact, children were able to monitor progress and correct writing mistakes supported by their group feedback.

Even though it seems clear that writing skills were fostered when using GoAnimate and reduced students’ dependence on teachers in the present study, it is important to mention that one of the biggest challenges related to the implementation of cooperative work was capturing and retaining students’ attention. Cooperative strategies implemented with large groups demand and let students focus their attention on the learning task. Sometimes when working in small teams, students centered their attention on other issues and considered these kinds of activities a space to play. Thus, it might not be an easy task to implement group work if learners do not understand their role and their contribution to their group. It was evident that students created new knowledge, such as to write their video cartoon aided with the inclusion of cooperative work. For that purpose, researchers should provide participants with clear and organized instructions, as well as to identify students’ learning styles and abilities to take advantage of each participant’s skill, while promoting the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1987).

On the other hand, throughout this study the use of GoAnimate to teach language lessons not only increased students’ motivation, but also promoted their abilities to use other Web-based tools for learning purposes. Nevertheless, incorporating these tools for pedagogical intentions might be a demanding task for both teachers and students. Regarding teachers, we demonstrated that a Web 2.0 tool could be useful for subjects such as technology and systems lessons. This fact might be difficult to conceive of many teachers who consider that technology is not relevant to their subjects. Therefore, it is recommended to generate strategies to get teachers’ awareness

regarding the use of technology. For this study, technology was a fundamental pedagogical tool that gave students the opportunity to profit from the interactive features of GoAnimate to cooperatively create their video cartoons. Also, they were guided to perform extensive practices outside the classroom. The challenge is to help both students and teachers recognize the potential effectiveness of the Internet as a learning tool.

6.5 Limitations of the present study

When considering the idea of promoting cooperative work to develop writing skills through GoAnimate, teachers may face certain restrictions about the training, implementation, and uses of ICT. During the training phase of this intervention, we realized that participants had limitations in regards to the use of computers. Even though some of them have Internet access at home, they were not aware of the fact that they could use it for purposes different from gaming and leisure. Consequently, having them realize that they could use Web-based technologies for learning purposes was a demanding task, since from the beginning participants needed time to explore, get acquainted with the use of ICT, and incorporate a strategy to use it for their learning routines.

During the implementation of this study, we faced a second limitation represented in the students' conception of writing. Throughout this phase, participants conceived writing texts as a boring task. Accordingly, it is important to mention that these groups of students was not used to reading or writing at home probably because parents are not used to promoting learning habits among their families. Consequently, the production of short written texts demanded not only training in writing abilities but also in the implementation of strategies to increase students' motivation.

During the first stage of the cooperative work activities, we faced disciplinary difficulties that generated conflicts in some groups. Since participants in this study were young learners,

they usually had difficulties when making decisions. At the beginning, learners faced a challenge when listening and considering their classmates' ideas. After participants had understood their role they were going to have when working in groups, and the importance of the contribution to the product, as well as to others' opinions, they started changing their minds and accepting other's opinions. This allowed them to take advantage of their teamwork abilities.

A third limitation of the study was time restraints. The school dynamics affected the sessions with students because there were activities that interrupted the planning. On the other hand, the Internet provided by the school usually failed, and we did not have time at school to create their video cartoons in GoAnimate, which forced participants to look for different spaces to develop them. Those difficulties caused modifications in the timetable of our pedagogical intervention and forced us to use two extra weeks.

6.6 Further research

Despite the difficulties students faced when working cooperatively, participants revealed that they were able to work with their partners because they could complement, understand and tolerate each other. Thus, it is suggested that further research should investigate the effectiveness of grouping students according to their learning styles and interests to promote cooperative work while developing writing skills through a Web 2.0 tool. Findings from such a study might shed light on how teachers use cooperative work in language lessons to apply appropriate strategies that might help students work in groups in a peaceful and friendly environment.

To extent this study, and based on the analysis of students' increment of their inner curiosity to explore new features of the Web 2.0 tool, it is recommended to conduct a study in which language skills can be fostered, considering students' interests and needs by promoting cooperative work to motivate them to work with the use of ICT. The activities based on ICT might enhance learners' internal curiosity. That would be very beneficial for students at any age,

especially in modern contexts where capturing students' interest to involve them in effective learning activities is more and more challenging.

Similarly, it is also suggested that other Web 2.0 tools, such as Story Bird, Ted-ed, Blogs, Edmodo, among others, be used to facilitate the development of writing to encourage collaborative writing. These computer-based tools may assist students in creating written tasks connected with other teachers to promote collaborative learning. Taking into consideration that one big limitation of state schools in Colombia is the restriction of Internet access, we consider it pertinent to implement a study in which students have the opportunity to work cooperatively by using the software offline. There are some tools that teachers can install in computers and use with students to foster language skills and promote cooperative work. It is vital to take advantage of the tools we have. Therefore, teachers should implement face to face strategies, blended activities and give students the opportunities to share recordings or handwrite letters to learn from each other.

6.7 Conclusion

Constant transformations, inventions, and developments have changed people's way of life, thinking, interacting and expressing ideas. Those transformations have been motivated by the implementation of new technologies. ICT continues prompting new ways of interaction that have important effects on language use. Teachers should not ignore those changes; therefore, it is important to involve technology in school routines. Additionally, according to the National ICT Plan 2008 - 2019 proposed in Colombia "the most important aims are to get all Colombians to be informed and communicated by using ICT efficiently and productively in order to improve social inclusion and increase the competitiveness" (Rodríguez, 2009). Consequently, students need to be ready to face challenges of this society.

Accordingly, it is vital to provide students with an experience in which they increase their awareness regarding the role of technology as a learning tool. Through the present intervention participants explored new ways of technology; they had the opportunity to identify a learning possibility through a Web 2.0 tool. This fact might contribute to the purpose of UNESCO in the incorporation of technology in learning environments. For that reason, this study contributed to the understanding of how virtual tools can be incorporated in language classrooms.

To sum up, this study shows the contribution of cooperative work to young learners' writing skills. Working in groups assists learners in the improvement of their writing productions and reduces their field dependence on teachers when tutors implement peer-assessment strategies. This study generated positive impact in participants' development of autonomy; during each cycle of the intervention students not only increased their ability to work by themselves but also gained experience in solving difficulties and making decisions.

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Appendix A: Worksheet

Cundinamarca I.E.D Bilingual School
"Human development, a life Project"
English- fourth and sixth grade
Designed by: Olga Toro and Marcela Quiroga

This worksheet has the aim of identifying students' writing abilities related to creating stories; it will be used just in educational purposes and maintain the anonymity of the student

Nick name: _____

Complete a story using the images as reference to write the word

2. Create a story

Once upon a time, there is a little _____  , his name is _____ ,

he likes to play with his friend _____  and go to the

 _____, they like to _____  . On

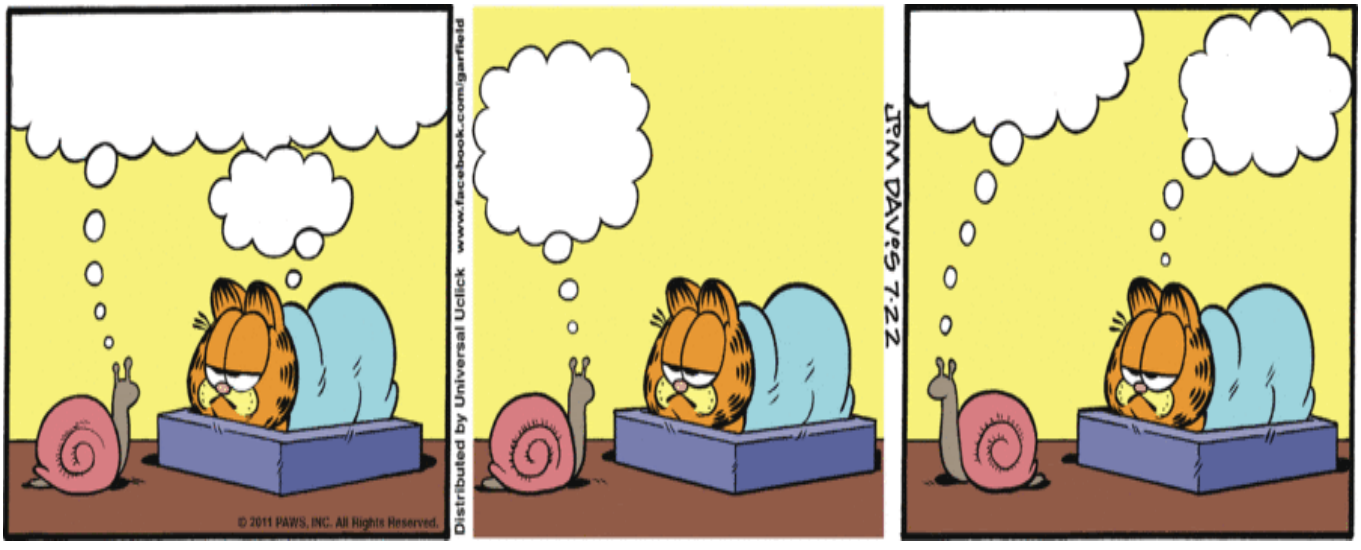
Sunday they meet a new _____, he is a _____ 

 But, he doesn´t like _____ , then the dog, the cat and

 _____ say let´s play_____ .

What are the bee, the mouse, and the snake, talking about?

3. Write a dialogue between the snail and the cat.



Appendix B: Survey

1. ¿Alguna vez ha escrito alguna historia en inglés? (si) (no)

2. Si alguna vez ha escrito una historia:

A. ¿De qué trataba la historia?

_____

B. ¿Qué fue lo que más disfruto al escribirla?

_____

C. ¿Qué fue lo más difícil de escribir la historia?

_____

3. ¿Qué clase de textos le gustan más?

A. Poemas

B. Cuentos

C. Caricatura

D. Textos informativos (periódicos)

4. ¿Tiene computador en casa? (si) (no)

5. Si tiene computador ¿Tiene internet en casa? (si) (no)

Appendix C: School Principals' Consent Letter

Carta de Consentimiento

Universidad de La Sabana

Bogotá, 9 de Septiembre del 2013

Señor
William Galvis
Rector Colegio Cundinamarca Bilingüe IED
La Ciudad

Respetado Rector:

Como estudiantes de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con énfasis en la creación de ambientes para el aprendizaje autónomo de la Universidad de la Sabana, solicitamos respetuosamente se nos permita realizar en la institución la intervención pedagógica como parte del proyecto de investigación que se llevará a cabo en el año en curso. El proyecto apunta a la adquisición práctica de la Lengua Inglesa y tendrá como participantes a los estudiantes del grado 401 y 603 año 2014. Con este propósito, se realizaran actividades que faciliten el desarrollo de las habilidades escritas de los estudiantes a partir de la construcción textual escrita y uso de las Tics (Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación) en pro de una comprensión real de una lengua extranjera y un aprendizaje permanente.

De igual forma, las actividades planeadas ya sean video grabadas y/o de producción textual escrita serán analizadas con el propósito de evidenciar ciertos aspectos del lenguaje que corresponden a los objetivos de la exploración .Otro aspecto importante a mencionar, es el uso de seudónimos para nombrar a los estudiantes ya que el componente ético de la exploración así lo demanda. Cabe anotar que dicha información se mantendrá en reserva y será utilizada solo para propósitos educativos. Así mismo, los estudiantes que formen parte de la investigación, no serán calificados ni evaluados.

Por la atención prestada, agradezco de antemano su colaboración.

Cordialmente,

Gina Marcela Quiroga
Docente de Inglés- Curso 301

Olga Stella Toro
Docente de Inglés- Grado 503

William Galvis
Rector Colegio Cundinamarca I.E.D

Appendix D: Parents' Consent Letter

Carta de Consentimiento informado

Universidad de La Sabana

Bogotá, 13 de septiembre del 2013

Señores
Padres de Familia
La ciudad

Estimados Padres de Familia:

Como estudiantes de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés en pro de la creación de Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo, solicitamos respetuosamente se permita la participación de su hijo (a) en la intervención pedagógica como parte del proyecto de investigación que llevará a cabo durante el próximo año. El proyecto apunta a la adquisición práctica de la Lengua Inglesa y tendría como participantes a los estudiantes de los grados 401 y 603 año 2014. Con este propósito, se realizaran actividades que faciliten el desarrollo de las habilidades escritas de los estudiantes a partir de la construcción textual escrita y uso de las Tics (Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación) en pro de una comprensión real de una lengua extranjera y un aprendizaje permanente.

De igual forma, las actividades planeadas ya sean video grabadas y/ó de producción textual escrita serán analizadas con el propósito de evidenciar ciertos aspectos del lenguaje que corresponden a los objetivos de la exploración .Otro aspecto importante a mencionar, es el uso de seudónimos para nombrar a los estudiantes ya que el componente ético de la exploración así lo demanda. Cabe anotar que dicha información se mantendrá en reserva y será utilizada para propósito educativos. Así mismo, los estudiantes que formen parte de la investigación, no serán calificados y/ó evaluados en ningún momento de la misma, ni positiva ni negativamente.

Por la atención prestada, agradezco de antemano su colaboración.

Cordialmente,

______________________________ ______________________________

Gina Marcela Quiroga
Docente de Inglés- Curso 301

Olga Stella Toro
Docente de Inglés- Grado 503

- -

Yo________________________________ Autorizo a mi hijo________________________________ del grado________________ a formar parte del proyecto de investigación que se realizara en el año 2014 bajo la dirección de la profesora____.

Firma de padre de familia: ____________________________ C.C.__________________________

Appendix E: Artifacts

Fourth graders sample

Sixth graders sample

Appendix F: Writing rubric

With the intention of obtaining information regarding learners' process and observe teams´ performance, we applied the following rubric at the end of each cartoon (final version).

WRITING RUBRIC

Names: _____ **Grade:**_____

	1. Minimal 	**2.Adequate** 	**3.Strong** 	**4. Outstanding** 
Mechanics	Many spelling, grammar and punctuation errors Incorrect use of capitalization.	Some spelling errors uses of upper and lower case.	Few amount of spelling and grammar errors. Correct punctuation.	Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar and capitalization.
Ideas and Content	Ideas are not ordered either comprehensible.	The sequence is understandable.	Good main idea and details are sequential.	Interesting and complete idea of the cartoon.
Cooperative work	Uncooperative work.	Works with the partner most of the time	Efficiently works with the partner.	Consistently and actively works with a partner.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix G: Teachers' checklist

While students finish, their video-cartoons teachers observed and registered their findings regarding, students' performance, outcomes as well as efficient feedback.

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Did students work cooperatively?			
2. Did students ask for vocabulary?			
3. Did students have difficulty with the teacher´s Instruction?			
4. Did students enjoy the activity?			
5. Did students work on the development of the cartoon video more than what the teachers thought?			
6. Did students have problems working with teams?			
7. Did students improve their writing through this activity?			
8. Are the current writing productions progressed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and creativity?			
9. Did students use peer feedback during the creation of their cartoon videos?			
10. Did students use some virtual tools for the creation of video cartons?			

Appendix H: Students' checklist

Tick on the corresponding face according to your activity development.

	Always	Often	Rarely	Seldom	Never
1. Do you think you improved your writing?					
2. Did you learn more vocabulary in this activity?					
3. Can you write comfortably after working with this activity?					
4. Did you understand the vocabulary easily?					
5. Did you like working in teams?					
6. Did you have difficult to work with your partner?					
7. Did you enjoy this activity?					
8. Was It comfortable working by teams?					
9. Did you collaborate in developing the comic?					
10. Would you like to create new cartoon video in English?					
11. Did you like to create cartoon videos in English?					

Appendix I: Interview

At the end of the intervention, we interviewed learners with the intention of identifying their perception regarding the process as well as the possible impact on learners´ autonomy.

Student´s interview

Did you improve your writing? Yes____ No____ why

_____

_____

Did you enjoy creating cartoon videos? Yes ___ No___ why

_____

_____

Could you work cooperatively with your partners? Yes _____ No _____ why

_____

_____

Did you learn vocabulary and improve your skills to write texts? Yes___ No____ Why

_____

_____

Did you create cartoon videos at home? Yes___No ___ Why

_____

_____

Did you create cartoon videos at home helped by your relatives? Yes___No ___ Why

_____

_____

Appendix J: Lesson Plans

Cundinamarca I.E.D Bilingual School
"Human development, a life Project"
English-Second cycle fourth grade
Designed by: Olga Toro and Marcela Quiroga

Written Comic

Level : Elementary

Materials: Worksheet (word document) - access to the Internet (platform)

Time: 5 hours August 17 - 23

Focus : Writing, reading, collecting information, discussing a topic

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity
WARM-UP **15 min**	To identify learners' previous knowledge about the scenes where people spent their vacations.	Students will list the names of the places where they have gone for vacations.
STUDY **(economic exchanges)** **15 min**	To identify the different places (on the platform) where people can order food.	Students will observe some images and they will describe the activities that the waiter and the customer do. Students will associate those images with places to order food.
STUDY **15 min**	To identify the different characters of the platform. To identify the different bubbles used in comic texts to express	The students will *identify* the characters; they will name them and select their favourite. Students will be aware of the

	ideas and thoughts.	difference between the bubbles. (Thinking bubble and speech bubble).
STUDY **20 min**	To identify the principal features of a comic text (conversational exchange).	Students will identify the main characteristics of a comic text when writing a conversation.
PRACTICE **20 min**	To create a conversation using comic structure.	Students will create a comic, using the landscape, and the character chosen during the previous stages.
SOCIALIZATION **15 min**	To share, observe and self-evaluate comics' productions.	Students will go to the classroom to share and see their classmate's comics.

Cundinamarca I.E.D Bilingual School
"Human development, a life Project"
English-Second cycle Sixth grade
Designed by: Olga Toro and Marcela Quiroga

LESSON PLAN 2

Ordering food in a restaurant

Level : Elementary

Materials: Worksheet (word document) – Use of GoAnimate (platform)

Time: 5 hours September 2 - 9

Focus : Writing, reading, collecting information, discussing a topic

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity
WARM-UP **10 min**	To recognize city places where people can do economic exchanges.	Students will observe different scenes, and then they will match them with the main activity people do there.
STUDY **(economical exchanges)** **20 min**	To identify different products' prices as well as the way to buy them.	Students will identify some products and their prices as well as the way to buy them.
PRACTICE **30 min**	To identify conversations with economic exchanges.	Students will perform some situations in which they buy and sell some products.
PRACTICE AND ASSESSING **20 min**	To recognize and create a conversational exchange.	Students will write a short conversation (conversation exchange).