

**PICTURE BOOKS FOR INITIAL EFL LITERACY AND RIGHTS  
RECOGNITION**

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LIC. ESPAÑOL Y LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

BOGOTÁ, D.C

2023

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## Abstract

The present investigation aimed to establish how the design of picture books can aid in the development of initial literacy skills for EFL learners while fostering their recognition as subjects of rights. The study was conceived from a qualitative point of view using Action Research as the research method and it was applied to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Magdalena Ortega de Nariño public school. The researcher used Project-Based Learning as the pedagogical approach and the *Educación para la Paz* framework as the guideline to build the content since the topics treated are related to the Colombian internal conflict. Axel Honneth's recognition theory was the theoretical standpoint taken to support the students' development regarding the concept of recognition that crosses the document. Including diagnostic sessions, the study was applied in 9 sessions and the final product was socialized in a school forum. The findings showed an improvement in the children's literacy skills and meaning construction capacity; they also showed a greater awareness and recognition of their own rights and respect for other's rights.

*Key words:* children rights, recognition, Educación para la paz, picture books, writing skills, project-based learning (PBL)

## Resumen

La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo establecer cómo el diseño de libros ilustrados puede ayudar en el desarrollo de habilidades de alfabetización inicial para estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera y al mismo tiempo fomentar su reconocimiento como sujetos de derechos. El estudio se concibió desde un punto de vista cualitativo utilizando como método de investigación la Investigación Acción y se aplicó a estudiantes de 5to grado del colegio público Magdalena Ortega de Nariño. La investigadora utilizó el Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos como enfoque pedagógico y el marco de Educación para la Paz como lineamiento para construir el contenido ya que los temas tratados están relacionados con el conflicto interno colombiano. La teoría del reconocimiento de Axel Honneth fue el punto de vista teórico adoptado para sustentar el desarrollo de los estudiantes respecto al concepto de reconocimiento que atraviesa el documento. Incluyendo las sesiones de diagnóstico, el estudio se aplicó en 9 sesiones y el producto final se socializó en un foro escolar. Los hallazgos mostraron una mejora en las habilidades de alfabetización de las niñas y en su capacidad de construcción de significado; también mostraron una mayor conciencia y reconocimiento de sus propios derechos y respeto por los derechos de los demás.

*Palabras clave:* derechos de los niños, reconocimiento, Educación para la paz, libros ilustrados, habilidades de escritura, aprendizaje basado en proyectos (ABP)

## Chapter I. The Problem

In this chapter, the reader will be introduced to the main components of the present investigation, starting with the context of the population studied which presents also the school's PEI and the opportunities identified, followed by the problem statement, which explains the reason why this investigation was conceived and the main areas of improvement it expects to cover; next the justification for conducting this research will be explained and the investigator will align the areas of opportunity with the importance of tackling them from the EFL classroom. Lastly, the reader will find the general and specific objectives of the study, outlining the goals to achieve during the implementation.

### 1.1. Context

The present research project was performed at Magdalena Ortega de Nariño Public-School, a feminine institution with preschool, elementary, and high school degrees, located in Las Ferias neighborhood, northwest of Bogotá. The school is situated in a stratum three<sup>1</sup> area of the city, and it currently hosts morning, afternoon, and night classes. According to its PEI<sup>2</sup>, the mission addresses women's education and guarantees academic, social, cultural, and technological environments to strengthen personal character, self-esteem, and autonomy.

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<sup>1</sup> Stratification is a classification of the residential estates that must receive public utilities. It is mainly used to charge residential public utilities based on their economic capacity. (Own Translation) (DANE, n.d.)

<sup>2</sup> PEI: It is the navigation chart for schools and colleges, which specifies, among other aspects, the principles and purposes of the establishment, the teaching and didactic resources available and necessary, the pedagogical strategy, the regulations for teachers and students, and the management system. (Own translation) (MEN, n.d.)

The population to which the project was applied were 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, who studied in the afternoon shift. The age of the chosen group oscillated between 10 and 13 years old, and they had one class of around one hour and a half dedicated to English weekly. Based on the observations, their English level was close to an A1, and although they were very participative during the observation sessions, there were areas of opportunity in their English proficiency. To better understand the children's comprehension of the topics programmed for the pedagogical proposal, a diagnostic questionnaire was performed. There it was observed that, although the children identified different words in the language, they evidenced difficulties building full sentences.

In the same observations, it was also noted that the classes focused mainly on the vocabulary and grammatical aspects of the language, aligned to traditional educational models as regarded by Freire: “[The teacher’s] task is to "fill" the students with the contents of his narration— contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance;” (2005, p. 72) a model where the teacher provides content, and the students are only to be receivers instead of participants.

Regarding rights recognition, they showed knowledge of the existence of the most general rights, such as the right to live, and to receive education, mixed with others derived from them like the right to play. Additionally, the researcher could see that the teacher made no mention of the recognition of rights as a fundamental part of their education, although this knowledge is vital to the PEI's objective to foster their autonomy, character development, and self-esteem.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

In Colombia, the *Estándares Básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: Inglés*<sup>3</sup> (MEN, 2006) state that students in 5th grade elementary must have an A2 level of proficiency in English, enabling their ability to communicate, understand, and make use of basic language; however, the students of this research evidenced a lower-than-expected level of achievement, as they required the teacher to translate everything and the exercises were mostly English-Spanish translations.

On a separate note, it was noticed that the school curricula show little regard to the challenges the current social landscape arises for educators in Colombia. For example, the need to link the topics related to peace construction with the different areas of education, including English as a Foreign Language (from now on EFL). In fact, in Colombia, following Mejía's perception (2006), English teaching and learning is still promoted with a formal and grammatical approach. In this EFL classroom, for example, this affirmation was appreciated in the form of vocabulary lists where the children did not have a relevant known topic with which to relate the concepts.

Additionally, the class observations showed that the English classroom did not tackle in any level the topic of Human or Children's rights, which, in a post-conflict context, is key to the principle of non-repetition stated in the Peace Agreements (2016, p.73). This situation reinforces the idea of the EFL classroom as a place where social issues are not treated, and so the use of the language fails to help students express their opinions on relevant day-to-day topics or recognize themselves as social beings.

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<sup>3</sup> Basic Standards of Foreign Language Competences: English



Accordingly, the schooling system does not always guarantee a space for kids to know the issues that affect them and their peers, and to acquire tools to understand and recognize their rights as human beings. So, the students do not have the desired skills, nor recognize themselves as subjects of rights, as the current method of teaching English plays a decontextualized role, ignoring its immediate reality such as the current state of post-conflict. This does not allow students to have real connection with the language, as it does not put their communicative skills into practice with real and meaningful content for their context. For this reason, this research looked forward to providing students with a safe space to learn more about their rights and reflect about their immediate contexts while also putting their English to practice.

### **1.3. Rationale**

In Colombia, English teaching has been centered mainly around the development of the students' linguistic competences<sup>4</sup> (Clavijo, 2016). Consequently, the classrooms focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary, leaving aside the realities that affect students. This investigation is crucial for the EFL classrooms of the future, as it proposes an innovative strategy to influence on the children's written production skills from the *educación para la paz*<sup>5</sup> framework; starting with the guided reading of a picture book created by the research author, the present paper intended to foster awareness about the children's rights that were transgressed during the internal conflict, specifically related to the child recruitment phenomena.

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<sup>4</sup> Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the formal resources of the language as a system and the ability to use them in the formulation of well-formed and meaningful messages. (MEN, 2006)

<sup>5</sup> Education for Peace (Own translation)

As an initial approach to the study, it is important to note that since the signature of the peace agreements in 2016, Colombia has made great efforts to create different public policies to contribute to the reconstruction of Colombian social fabric. One of these efforts is the creation of the *Cátedra para la Paz*, first regulated under the Decree 1038 of 2015 (Santos, J. M., et al), which specifies that the main objectives of the professorship include building the foundations to:

Foster the knowledge and competence appropriation process related to the territory, culture, the economic and social context as well as the historical memory with the purpose of reconstructing the social fabric, to promote general prosperity and guarantee the effectiveness of the principles, rights and duties consigned in the constitution. (Santos, J. M., et al. (n.d.))<sup>6</sup>

Along with this idea and keeping in mind that the child population was, and still is, one of the sectors of society most heavily impacted by the armed conflict in Colombia, this research considered pertinent to relate English learning and the guidelines for the *Cátedra para la Paz*, to Child Recruitment. Opening a path for students to know how childhood occurs in other contexts, Child Recruitment served first, as an inspiration to create the source illustrated book; and secondly, as an instrument to connect the concept of children's rights to a real-life scenario through a final reflection with students.

Additionally, the Human Rights section of the professorship establishes that *educación para la paz* ought to promote children and teenagers to know their rights and

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<sup>6</sup> fomentar el proceso de apropiación de conocimientos y competencias relacionados con el territorio, la cultura, el contexto económico y social y la memoria histórica, con el propósito de reconstruir el tejido social, promover la prosperidad general y garantizar la efectividad de los principios, derechos y deberes consignados en la constitución”.

understand that these rights are protected and cannot, under any circumstances, be violated (MEN, n.d. pp. 27). From this perspective, this study wants to contribute to the recognition of human rights to identify and avoid transgressions or abusive situations, as the researcher considers that the EFL classroom should also be a safe space for children to develop a more holistic view of their surroundings, providing them with tools to analyze the world. As such, taking as a base the *Theory of Recognition* allotted by German philosopher Axel Honneth, teaching students about their rights is not only a way to educate them on their status as citizens, but also a way to help them identify situations where their rights are in jeopardy, to voice their concern or act towards them.

Based on the above, this paper proposes the Project Based Learning (PBL) approach as a strategy for teaching English as a foreign language because, according to Solomon, "to teach core content and raise awareness, PBL projects train students to take complex global issues and break them down into specific local action steps" (2003). The activities aimed for the children to recognize themselves as subjects of rights while working on the creation of their own picture book in English, encouraging the children to talk about their rights both in Spanish and in a foreign language. This dynamic looks forward to helping them grow as capable leaders ready to face the challenges that come along the construction of peace and stability in a country like Colombia, and moreover in the middle of a globalized world.

The concerns mentioned above are also aligned with the school's own PEI, as it encourages students to be participant to the challenges that the current Colombian society presents, strengthening their autonomy and boosting their self-esteem through the realization that they are, in fact, entitled to a minimum set of guarantees for their personal

development. Not only that, but the approach chosen also allows the teacher to evidence the impact to the progress of the children's writing skills while learning ways to expand their voice in society.

#### **1.4. Research question:**

How might implementing a picture book creation, framed on PBL and the *Educación para la Paz*, have an impact on the development of the writing skills of an EFL classroom of 5th graders at Magdalena Ortega de Nariño public school while fostering their self-recognition as subjects of rights?

#### **1.5. Research objectives:**

##### ***Main:***

To analyze the impact of implementing a picture book creation project, framed on PBL and the *Educación para la Paz*, on the development of 5th graders' writing skills and their self-recognition as subjects of rights in an EFL classroom.

##### ***Specific:***

- To generate a space for reflection about children's rights through guided reading sessions and the use of driving questions in each class.
- To develop students' initial accuracy and expression of ideas skills in writing, by using scaffolded activities.
- To create an illustrated book that evidences the appropriation of children's rights in their class work.

## Chapter II. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Literature Review

In this chapter, a variety of projects with a scope of action similar to the present paper will be reviewed, looking forward to establishing the different approaches that the main topics dealt with have received. It is important to note that as there were not any previous studies with the exact same field of action as the one on this investigation, the researcher had to draw upon studies that addressed the topics separately, while keeping a similar population and the EFL classroom as the target setting.

#### *2.1.1. Project Based Learning: Meaningful student participation*

To begin, Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez (2017) in their study, *Increasing EFL Learners' Oral Production at a Public School Through Project-Based Learning*, discuss the enhancement of speaking skills at a public school in a Northwest neighborhood of Bogotá, Colombia through PBL. Applied to a group of thirty EFL ninth grade students with ages ranging between 13 and 15 years old, the researchers concluded that besides the increased achievement of oral production competence, learners overcame fears of speaking in a foreign language and the projects encouraged the students' interest in learning about their context. This study contributes to the present paper as it demonstrates how PBL can be an effective tool to develop students' consciousness on different topics while also improving their EFL literacy.

Additionally, the study, *Project-Based Learning Activities and EFL Students' Productive Skills in English* carried out at a public junior high school in Bali, Indonesia by Astawa et al (2017), focused on the students' English productive skills through the effect of

PBL. Considering that this research applied a mixed method, the results from the analysis demonstrated that "PBL was found to improve enthusiasm, confidence, creativity, self-directed learning and collaborative learning skills"(2017). This paper helps understand how PBL applications can be relevant to the improvement of the use of the English language in different contexts, as well as in the students' perception of themselves, aiding on their confidence when using the foreign language, which reflected, in this case, an increase on the participants' scores in the tests applied during the project's implementation.

Moreover, *Third Grade Writing Skills and Project Based Learning* by Martin, J (2021) describes how third grade students improved information and opinion writing skills through PBL. The purpose of this study was to combine the advantages of PBL with "the required informational and opinion writing skills mandated by the Common Core State Standards" (2021) in the United States. This research contributes to the present study by illustrating the impact that PBL has as a teaching practice where students have the chance to develop their voice in society. It also outlines the impact that essential design elements can have on writing skills.

Lastly, in relation to the effect PBL has on implementing projects about human rights and empowerment, the article *The Effects of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in EFL Context: General Language Development and Personal Empowerment* by Zaprak, Z, explored in Turkey, the benefits and challenges PBL has on the student's learning experiences, their learning of a foreign language and human rights specifically related to anti-discrimination (2022). The study concluded that PBL was indeed beneficial to the student's acquisition of knowledge about human rights, and this was seen on the

participants' reflection about the process, which according to the investigator, "not only helped them to have a deeper knowledge but also increased their self-consciousness and awareness" (Zaprak, Z. 2022, p.428). This study strongly ties to the present investigation as the goals are similar and they both address rights, initially from a transgression point of view. However, this paper will focus on generating recognition as the final goal and children's rights as the subject matter while also contributing to the improvement of their English vocabulary and use of the language.

Thus, these studies are solid references of the positive impact that PBL has on EFL classrooms and keeping in mind that they were applied to similar populations in opposite sides of the globe, the approach has a great potential to reinforce linguistic competences. The previous projects are also important milestones to determine the way the present research may aim to affect the children's learning process without losing sight of the aim of encouraging them to have their own voice through learning about their rights.

### ***2.1.2. Picture Books & Literacy: Writing skills in the ELF classroom***

Regarding writing, the article *Children Picture Books to implement a first approach to writing*, by Triana A. (2017) reviews the role of picture books on 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' writing skills. The research aimed to measure the success of incorporating children's picture books into the children's learning experience, by having the kids write their own short texts using guided writing activities. The results showed that the use of picture books "assisted beginning foreign language students to develop and to improve their writing skills" (p.73). This investigation was considered pertinent as it provides insight on the way picture books can positively impact students' production skills, which is a great precedent for the present study, as one of the writing approaches that will be implemented in this

project looks forward to having the kids work on writing activities while creating their picture book. Also, since Triana's investigation aimed to build paragraphs, this paper leaned toward reinforcing the creation of simple sentences as a starting point based on the diagnostic results.

Another research that explored a similar topic on writing and picture books is *Making Picture Books to Promote Creative Writing* by Patiño E. (2020). In this study, the investigator used the controlled writing approach to promote students' creative writing applied to the creation of picture books, focusing on the structural aspect of the writing process. The study aimed to develop writing in a sequential manner, starting using substitution and imitation exercises, where the children were limited to certain expressions; continuing with progressively removing control over the topics to allow a more personalized use of the language. The main takeaway from this research was allowing the students to perceive language from the point of view of meaning rather than focusing solely on the grammatical approach. This is one of the main goals pursued during the present investigation, as children did not need to worry about memorizing grammatical categories but could instead focus on communicating sentences and expressing their ideas about the rights treated.

Moreover, several studies focused on the role that illustrated books can play in an EFL classroom. One of the best examples is *The Impacts of Co-creation of Local Culture English Books on EFL 5th Graders' English Vocabulary Ability and Local Cultural Knowledge*, by Yiyjung & Chinfen (2016). In this paper, the researchers used task-based learning aiming to the creation of picture books in 5th grade students, enhancing the



development of vocabulary ability and knowledge about the kids' culture. The results showed that students recognized words, sounds, meanings, forms, and spelling through raising awareness about their local cultural knowledge. Also, it was found that co-creating picture books increased their interest and self-confidence in English writing. In contrast with Yiyjung & Chinfen's investigation, the present study aims to have a similar impact on the children's English proficiency although the main differentiator is the fact that the awareness will be related to children's rights recognition instead of working on their knowledge of local culture.

Following this line, Pérez-Gómez & Vargas Daza demonstrated on their 2019 article *Shaping Narrative Writing Skills Through Creating Picture Books*, how EFL 5th grade students can improve their initial narrative writing processes through the creation of illustrated books. This study took a cognitive perspective of writing, looking forward to enhancing the skill as a structured and mental process through the creation of short stories. The results showed that thanks to the use of illustrations and words, students were able to tell simple, meaningful, and creative stories about characters of their picture books. This is a useful precedent for the present investigation, as it aims to use picture book creation to enhance the students' literacy (reading and writing) although the main focus will be on the construction of sentences and the identification of words through the use of flashcards and picture book content.

Finally, while several of the previously mentioned experiences generated interesting approximations to writing and used various approaches to tackle the need for improvement on their respective groups, they mostly allowed students to focus their writing on a topic of their choosing. On another note, those that conceived the picture books as a

tool had a focus mostly on developing narrative or character creation and only one showed interest in working on a cultural topic. It is precisely for this reason that this investigation establishes a new sight: Firstly, the use of a picture book created by the researcher as the base material, to generate a higher level of engagement with students. Secondly, the writing activities performed introduce the inclusion of rights and *Educación para la Paz*, as the base topics that would enable children to approach the required literacy skills while embracing a new perception of their surroundings.

### ***2.1.3. EFL Teaching: From Human Rights to Educación Para la Paz***

As the present investigation has a strong element related to the identification and appropriation of the participant children as subjects of rights, the focus on rights education implemented in the classroom was a key element for the current literature review. It is important to note that even though there is an extensive corpus on theoretical production about the importance of rights education and *Educación para la Paz*, records on their integration into foreign language teaching and its application on EFL classrooms are limited.

The first approximation to the topic was found on the article *Integrating Child Rights Education and English* by Nurhidayat et al (2022) , which generates a description of the CLIL approach in EFL teaching, along with a description of the legal and theoretical fundamentals and requirements for teaching rights in the EFL classroom, closing with a proposal of integration of the approach with the rights topic. The researchers found that any existing English learning material (textbooks in this study's case) can be used to educate students about rights, as long as the teacher reviews the material and identifies which parts

can be adapted to discuss children's rights education. Following this description, the present paper also proposes an integration of the rights education; however, the researcher created an illustrated book dedicated to cover children's rights based on the Colombian context, choosing as the main pedagogical approach project-based learning and the theory of recognition and *Educación para la paz* frameworks, as the theoretical support.

In order to deepen on the possibilities to enforce rights education in the EFL classroom, *Human Rights Education and Language Learning in Pakistan: An EFL Perspective* by Tehseem et al. (2020), proposes as one of its research questions if the "EFL teaching inculcate specific social values to Pakistani learners"(p. 219). Through a focus on the way EFL textbooks promote Human Rights Education, the researchers noted the great impact these materials can have on the perception of learners on the rights topic.

Additionally, as in one of their findings they state that "human rights education is of great worth as it is a way to teach students about their rights as well as what rights they have to give to others." (p. 224). Tehseem's paper is important for the present research, as it remarks the relevance of teaching human rights in the EFL classroom, especially in countries where this knowledge can shape the leaders of the future. As such, addressing children as active participants of society is one of the steps that the EFL classroom should embrace in its mission to provide a holistic approach to the students' context.

Aldana et al. (2020) in their study *Peace education: Memory artifacts in EFL environments* were able to implement peace education dynamics in an EFL classroom where the population consisted of 5<sup>th</sup> grade children who had been victims of the armed conflict in Colombia. Through the implementation of different pedagogical sequences, the investigators aimed to provide the students with a dialogical space to process the traumatic

experiences they had during the conflict and portray their backgrounds in different types of artifacts and game situations. In their findings, the researchers noted that the children were able to express and process many of the traumatic situations, but also identified that the game dynamics were violent and consistent with those of the victims and victimizers. It is important to note how this investigation demonstrated how EFL can be an important place for internal affairs such as an armed conflict. Although the population of the present study is not part of an officially recognized group of victims, their ages are similar to Adana's group. Moreover, it is important to remark that the use of artifacts, vocabulary about their background, and the existence of reflection spaces are common places in both investigations, and these will be crucial in the implementation of the present project.

In conclusion, throughout this section different studies with a similar scope of action and preoccupation about rights education and *Educación para la Paz* were reviewed, looking forward to determining their impact and their similarities with this investigation. At the end, each effort related to teaching students about the significance of being aware of their rights, or simply to generate a space where their voices regarding vulnerable situations are heard, is vital on the long road toward exploring the ways EFL classrooms can contribute to the construction of a new era of peace and understanding.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

In this section, a description of the main concepts on which this research study was based will be addressed. In the first part, Children's Rights, *Educación para la Paz* framework, as well as Axel Honneth's theory of recognition are defined, both important

milestones on the construction of the research theoretical and pedagogical framework; later, a description of the language approach adopted for the present research is reviewed. These concepts are the foundations from where the pedagogical design took place, as exploring children's rights, from the educational experiences in the *Educación para la Paz*, cover the current need for reconciliation in the country. Additionally, the theory of recognition provides an epistemological standpoint to understand how these topics may be understood at a theoretical level, while the language approach provides the practical applications of the language teaching experience proposed by this study.

### ***2.2.1. Children Rights: A normative approximation***

This section is dedicated to the definition and treatment that the concept of Rights and children rights will have for this investigation. Initially, the definition of human rights will be the starting point to build toward the specifics of children rights and their relevance for the study; this will also serve as an approximation to the sphere of rights, which will be explored in the next section; as well as the basics of the concepts that will be treated from the *Educación para la Paz*.

This investigation will conceive rights from two different perspectives; first, from the conceptual part, where a definition of both human and children rights will set the bases to understand the topic to make way to explaining how these concepts will be conceived during the implementation. Firstly, according to UNICEF:

Human rights are standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings. Human rights govern how individual human beings live in society and with each other, as well as their relationship with the State and the obligations that the State have towards them. (n,d)

With this in mind, and since an important part of the present study is specifically dedicated to children rights education, each lesson was built around one of the rights listed on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. By recognizing children's rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the whole child.

The convention was subscribed by Colombia that same year and was ratified internally through the *Ley 12 de 1991*. Additionally, according to Mariño (2012) the *Constitución Nacional de 1991*, indicates in article 44 that “the rights of girls and boys are fundamental and prevailing rights and indicate the co-responsibility of the family, society and the State. (Own Translation)” (p. 81).

Moreover, according to the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (2023), children can be recognized as subjects of rights based on how the state addresses them in public policies. For example, they highlight the *Política Nacional de Infancia y Adolescencia* as:

Their purpose is to contribute to the integral development of girls, boys and adolescents and the commitment of the State to generate the social, human and material conditions that are required to favor it. This mission is achieved through the recognition of minors as prevalent subjects of rights on whom state actions fall to achieve their fulfillment as human beings. (Own Translation)<sup>7</sup> (2018, p.3)

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<sup>7</sup> tiene como finalidad contribuir al desarrollo integral de las niñas, niños y adolescentes y del compromiso del Estado en generar las condiciones sociales, humanas y materiales que se requieran para favorecerlo. Esta misión se logra a través del reconocimiento de los menores de edad como sujetos prevalentes de derechos sobre quienes recaen las acciones estatales para lograr su realización como seres humanos (2018, p.3)

In a related note, the researcher addressed rights from the point of view of the transgressions that are connected to them, rather than simply providing a definition. This is due to the way the base material was conceived; as a work of literature, where the main characters undergo certain challenging situations to finally achieve a goal. These challenges are the foundation on which the lessons built the reflections intended to get the children to debate and discuss. This approach is the main differentiator from other projects related to similar topics, as it not only allows the children to learn, reflect, and express their ideas, but also provides a space of practice for newly gained skills in a foreign language.

### ***2.2.2. Educación para la Paz: an overlooked opportunity for EFL classrooms***

After many years of negotiation and great effort, the 60-year internal conflict ended with the signature of the 2016 Peace Agreements in La Habana, with this unprecedented gesture of reconciliation, the National Government developed a series of practices and institutions dedicated to assisting in the guarantee of the victim's rights to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition after the confrontation (2016, p.73). Amongst these efforts, education becomes an important part of the structure to allow further awareness regarding the role civil society can play in the construction of peace, to avoid further violations of human rights in general.

To begin, the framework called *Educación para la Paz* finds its bases at the end of World War II, on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which remarks the importance of education for justice, peace, and respect for human rights. In Colombia, these same perspectives are consigned on the Constitution of 1991 and are, years later, included in the *Ley General de Educación* of 1994. This concern for education that regards the

importance of the context in its mission to shape young minds has been recently outlined with more detail through the creation of the *Cátedra para la Paz* in 2015 under the decree 1038 of 2015 (Suárez Espejo & González Rodríguez, 2021).

This decree defines *Educación para la Paz* as “the appropriation of knowledge and civil competencies for peaceful living, the participation, democracy, construction of equality, the respect for plurality, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Right,” (Decree 1038, 2015) <sup>8</sup>, which is the base that was taken for this study, as it is vital to revisit the role of school in a society that has undergone a drastic shift on its dynamics, with children as a demographic, often overlooked as a participant but consistently named as a victim.

To understand the way *Cátedra para la Paz* can aid in the EFL classroom, it is needed to understand its contents and the way it is grouped to facilitate its application in the classroom. The topics are listed in the book *Orientaciones Para La Cátedra De Paz* (Chaux & Velásquez, n.d., p. 15), and it compiles different definitions and general recommendations to put into practice in the classroom. The main categories are organized as follows:

**Table 1: Main Topics of *Educación para la Paz* in Colombia**

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<sup>8</sup> La apropiación de conocimientos y competencias ciudadanas para la convivencia pacífica, la participación democrática, la construcción de equidad, el respeto por la pluralidad, los Derechos Humanos y el Derecho Internacional Humanitario (Original text in Spanish, own translation to English)



<b>Categories of <i>Educación para la Paz</i></b>	<b>Topics of Regulatory Decree 1038</b>
Peaceful Coexistence	Peaceful conflict resolution
	Bullying Prevention
Citizen Participation	Political participation
	Social impact projects
Diversity and Identity	Diversity and plurality
	Protection of the cultural wealth of the Nation
Historical Memory and Reconciliation	Historical memory
	History of national and international peace agreements
Sustainable Development	Sustainable use of natural resources
	Protection of the Nation's natural resources
Ethics, Care, and Decisions	Justice and Human Rights
	Moral Dilemmas
	Life projects and risk prevention

For this research, the focus will be on the Ethics, Care, and Decisions Category, working specifically on the Justice and Human Rights topic, focusing on Child Rights, and having as the main concern the need for children to know and understand their rights, as to

provide them with tools to identify when their rights are on the line and raise their voice in these situations. For this reason, the researcher decided to use Child Recruitment as an inspiration for the creation of a literary product which will be reviewed in more detail in the instructional design section. The reason for recruitment to be included is that it is one of the social issues that has more heavily impacted children in Colombia, adding up to over 17.866 children taken from their homes to join different armed groups between 1958 and 2020. However, child recruitment is not a topic that is widely spoken about at schools and much less in the EFL classroom. The *Educación para la Paz* can be an important factor for the EFL classroom to be part of that transition to a society where peace and recognition are key to building a future needed by so many.

In conclusion, the framework proposed by the *Cátedra para la Paz* is a highly underestimated tool for the EFL teacher who aims to provide a holistic learning experience to their students. The way that the youngest members of society conceive what they are or not entitled to receive will affect greatly the way they understand their role within their communities, as much as it will impact the way they address others in terms of respect and acknowledgement of their condition as human beings, in other words, the recognition of their rights.

### ***2.2.3. Theory of Recognition***

Following this idea, it is key to outline how *recognition* will be understood in this study and how it shaped the way of the implementation. First, the activities were conceived based on the Theory of Recognition proposed by German philosopher and sociologist Axel Honneth who, trying to reconcile the limitations within the Critic Theory, explains from

three different spheres how the different social struggles are born. Basing his analysis on Hegel's views on morality, where he conceives the "intersubjective nature of identity formation as emerging in the context of one's relationships [...]" (Fennigan & Fleming, 2011); the concept is pertinent to the investigation as the construction of knowledge about rights and EFL content was conceived as a group effort where the teacher brought to the table a series of activities and goals, but it was in the children's contact with the language, the base material and amongst themselves, who build their own understanding of what rights are, how to identify them and which actions go against them, interiorizing thus, the contents of the course.

Adding more detail, as explained by Robles (2023), Honneth's theory proposes *recognition*, in the first place, from the *Love* perspective which generates self-confidence, as it is the type of *recognition* that comes from the individual's closest circle, mostly reflected on the individual's parents' love and care. Secondly, he refers to the *Rights* perspective, which is the one related to the legal *recognition* of the subject and their rights within their social environment, aiding to the individual's self-respect. Lastly, Honneth explores the *Solidarity* perspective, where the *recognition* comes from the participant's peers related to their role within the social group and helps develop the individual's self-esteem. Additional to these levels and forms of *recognition*, Honneth expresses the existence of a category known as *Disrespect*, which is born from the neglect of any of the previous spheres and takes different forms based on the type of *recognition* that is denying (see Table 2).

### **Table 2: Honneth's spheres of Recognition**

<b>Forms of relating to self</b>	<b>Forms of recognition</b>	<b>Forms of disrespect</b>	<b>Component of personality</b>
Self Confidence	Parent secure attachment & love and care	Neglect, abuse, emotional neglect	Physical integrity & psychological damage
Self-respect	Legal rights	Violation of legal rights, civil and human rights and employment rights	Social integrity And treated as an object
Self-esteem	Community of practice, respect & solidarity	Bullying, ignoring, excluding, constant negative feedback	Honour, dignity,

Finnegan, F. & Fleming, T. (2011, p.5)

According to Honneth, these three aspects of recognition aid the individual on the pursuit for self-realization (PHILO-Notes, 2017, 0:16:30) and keeping them away from the individual may lead to the collapse of the person's identity, which is how Honneth describes the *Disrespect* (PHILO-Notes, 2017, 0:17:03). As part of kids' social development, and due to the importance of the relationship with their surroundings, including their peers, this research focused on the Rights and Solidarity spheres, as they are the ones that are expected to be built in consonance with the recognition provided by the establishment from a legal perspective (Rights sphere) and their community's acknowledgement of their role in its dynamics (Solidarity sphere), deep diving into these spheres will allow the researcher to identify the way their experience regarding rights recognition impacted the students, providing a solid theoretical referent from which to interpret their process.

#### ***2.2.4. Written literacy in young EFL learners***

As described by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, literacy is:

(...) the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. (n,d)

This affirmation illustrates how important it is for any human being to develop ways to communicate and decode information, opening the door for individuals to generate impacts in their communities. From this perspective, for the researcher, it is vital to work on the student's written skill, specifically as it embeds an opportunity to foster their communication, encouraging them to express their ideas and feelings in an organized fashion, also reinforcing creativity and their learning experience. Additionally, as suggested by Tekyi-Arin working children's writing "allows children to express themselves in a creative and personal way, which can help to develop their sense of identity and self-expression." (2023). These capabilities are key to the development of a critic view about the current events that permeate the everyday life in Colombia; thus, play a decisive role in the road to rights recognition.

As this study looked forward to providing significant input for the students' recognition spheres and for their communicative skills, the use of picture books was the mechanism the researcher chose as the final depository of the participants' journey through the understanding of their rights, their implications on their daily lives, and the use of the foreign language to communicate these ideas.

From this perspective, this paper works on writing as a means to create meaning based on the premises described by Shin (2013): on the one hand, using a product-based approach, focused on developing accuracy on the use of the language through guided and controlled writing activities, served to design various activities like unscrambling

sentences, filling in the gaps with the words provided, and completing close activities. It is important to clarify that, for the purpose of the present study, accuracy is taken as an approximation to the grammatical guidelines to compose sentences with full meaning, regardless of the formal flaws derived from the learning process linked to an EFL classroom.

On the other hand, a process-based approach, focused on expressing ideas, constructing meaning, and exploring linguistic resources (Shin, 2013 p.192) was taken as the base for the children to get familiar with the subject matter through scaffolded writing exercises. Scaffolding, as conceived from the PBL approach, “consists of lessons, workshops, activities, and resources that help students master the content and skills needed to complete a Project Based Learning Unit.” (2023). During the classes, this scaffolding process was led by the controlled and guided activities described above, looking forward to allowing children to be creative and authentic while reinforcing meaning-construction.

These approaches to the aspects of literacy are the key foundations of the pedagogical proposal developed. As the research focuses on meaning construction, which is linked directly with the way children learn to use the target language, rather than on the mere passing of rules, the author considered pertinent the conception about language learning proposed by Shin, “children learn language through meaningful exposure and practice rather than through explicit instruction that only focuses on isolated parts of language” (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006; Shin and Crandall, 2014 cited in Shin, n.d ). This point of view focuses on the experience, and so the grammatical contents stop being the

center of the learning process to become a tool towards the realization of a communicative goal.

Through this understanding of the learning experience, the class materials designed allow students to swiftly address the subject matter using the target language, as their learning was based on exposure and constant practice through the different types of activities provided by the teacher. Moreover, the focus on literacy as a way to enhance communication and meaning construction is a valuable step in the implementation of peace education, as it provides a voice to a widely disregarded part of the Colombian society, not only to allow learners to express themselves in a foreign language, but also looking forward to preparing them for addressing such topics within the context of a globalized world.

In a nutshell, the previous theories and practical approaches were the bases on which this paper was built and from which the achievements were evaluated. Keeping in mind the vital role played by literacy skills on the acquisition of a foreign language added to the importance of the children rights topic, well outlined in the *Educación para la Paz* framework, although poorly applied in Colombian EFL classrooms. This project found the best ways to foster understanding in Axel Honneth's recognition theory, as well as in a hands-on type of instruction (PBL). These efforts were ultimately gathered around the creation of a picture book where each student captured their inner world and interpretation of the concepts acquired.

### **Chapter III. Research Design**

In this section, there will be a description of the most important aspects of the investigation design. Starting with the research paradigm and the research type, the following bullet points will deepen the reader's understanding of the conceptual point of view from which the author built the different data collection instruments and procedures.

### **3.1. Research Paradigm**

This project focused on the qualitative paradigm which is defined as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 32 cited by Khaldi, 2019, p.21). To make way for the goal of encouraging the students' self-recognition as subjects of rights, the present paper made use of different mechanisms of data collection such as class observations, diagnostic surveys, field journals, audio recordings and videos, and students' picture books.

### **3.2. Type of Research**

Since the present paper pursued the objective of increasing the students' understanding of a delicate social matter, the Action Research approach was used. Following Burns' definition, Action Research is “a set of approaches to research which, at the same time, systematically investigate a given social situation and promote democratic change and collaborative participation” (2015, p.187); thus, it allowed constant feedback between the theory and the investigative efforts of the author.

To achieve a proper approximation to the matter at hand, this study considered the phases of the Action Research approach proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988, cited in Burns, 2015, p. 189). The first phase, *planning*, refers to when the researcher carries out the



planning of the project, establishing the premises and the target population where the project is to be applied; *action*, is the phase where the project is implemented in a reflective, systematic, and critical environment with participants who were at the same time members of the research community (Burns, Cornwell 1999 cited in Burns, 2015, p. 188). *Observation* is the phase of collecting data presented throughout the entire project, initially used also to profile the target population and identify their specific needs. Finally, *reflection* refers to the spaces that take place in all the sessions between the researcher and the participants, where issues around rights and reflections that the researcher noted in the field diaries were addressed. Also, this is the phase where the researcher analyzed, interpreted, and explained the research findings. These phases are “interwoven, fluid and repeated throughout the investigation; thus, a researcher conducting Action Research should be prepared for unanticipated variations and reiterations in the process” (Burns, 2015, p. 189).

This approach was chosen, as it allows the researcher to be closely in contact with the population and make them participant of the investigation process. Action Research also has great potential to adapt to any unexpected situations and allows a certain flexibility in the implementation as it was designed to study social phenomena. As such, the insights obtained are based on carefully crafted plans that kept in mind the initial opportunities of action, constant feedback between the implementation and the outcome, all the way to the end and a space dedicated to understanding the data gathered, allowing a holistic approach to the subject and the results obtained.

### **3.3. Data collection instruments and procedures**

This research used the following instruments to collect the data required for the development of the students' learning process, as well as the instruments to develop the project from a PBL point of view. The data collection instruments can be seen from a pre, during, and post implementation perspective.

### ***3.3.1. Pre-Implementation instruments:***

These instruments were used to gather primary (classroom observations, diagnostic tests) and secondary (school curriculum) data sets to properly assess the students' understanding of the children rights topic, as well as their English level and the teacher-student dynamics to which they were used to. The instruments were part of the observation phase as conceived on the action research approach used during the investigation and provided the initial picture of the EFL proficiency level and the children's understanding of their rights before the implementation.

1. *Classroom Observations:* As defined by Hora & Ferrare (2013) "Classroom observation is a method of directly observing teaching practice as it unfolds in real time, with the observer or analyst taking notes and/or coding instructional behaviors in the classroom or from videoed lessons." This instrument allowed the investigator to identify the dynamics used in this school when teaching English as a foreign language to the target population. Four observations were developed prior to the project planning, and they provided a deeper understanding of the areas of opportunity regarding writing, which was the focus of the project, working as a first assessment of the students' language proficiency.

2. *Diagnostic Questionnaire:* As defined by Queen's University, modules on assessment strategies, "diagnostic assessments are sets of written questions (multiple choice or short answer) that assess a learner's current knowledge base or current views on a topic/issue to be studied in the course." (n.d.) With this in mind, the research continued with the implementation of a diagnostic questionnaire whose purpose was assessing the student's knowledge about Children Rights while also allowing the investigator to determine the students' language proficiency by evaluating basic writing skills needed for the development of the project. The instrument also gave insights as to the participants' previous contact with illustrated books written in the target language.
3. *School Curriculum:* As defined by Mulenga (2018), curriculum is "the selected, organized, integrative, innovative and evaluative educational experiences provided to learners [...] to achieve the designated learning outcomes which are achieved as a result of growth, maturation and learning meant to be best utilized for life in a changing society." (p. 20) Based on this description, the school's PEI, Mission, and Vision were studied to align the proposal with the institutional goals. In these documents, the researcher identified that the school focuses greatly on the student's empowerment by engaging autonomy and self-esteem as part of their main goals, along with providing them with tools to achieve a good quality of life, which goes hand in hand with the objectives set for this research. Additionally, the teacher in charge of the grade where the project was applied, provided a list of the expected topics that needed to be covered during the year, from basic questions to the use of some modal verbs. By analyzing the expected learning, the activities designed also

contributed to the advancement of the curriculum, ensuring coverage of the needs of the school syllabus.

### ***3.3.2. During-Implementation instruments:***

During this phase of the project implementation, the data collection instruments were focused mainly on the students' experiences and the documentation of their learning processes.

4. *Field Journals:* In accordance with Phillippi and Lauderdale, field notes “aid in constructing thick, rich descriptions of the study context, encounter, interview, focus group, and document’s valuable contextual data” (2017, p.381). As such, these were of cardinal importance throughout the implementation of the project. For this reason, the author filed different journals where each session was described for future analysis. These were also sources of information that allowed a constant identification of areas of improvement or general comments for next sessions.
5. *Students’ Artifacts:* For this study, an artifact was the final product that students crafted during the implementation of the research. In this case, the artifacts were the picture books that students started to build since session #1. The goal was for the girls to have the possibility to focus every week on a different right whose writing exercise was included in the book, always accompanied by a reading session to also work hand in hand with the base material developed by the researcher.
6. *Audio Recordings, videos, and photos:* Through the use of audio and video recording devices, the researcher created different files to track the students’ progress or conceptions about certain topics during the reflection sessions. For this

reason, the investigator used these devices to keep a record of the student's learning experience and their results for documentation purposes.

### ***3.3.3. Post- Implementation instruments:***

Once the base material was studied completely, and the students had finished working on their final products, an additional step was performed to measure the impact of the activities on the students. Below are listed the instruments used to complete this step.

7. *Final Questionnaire:* This final survey contained questions that involved the students in a reflective exercise where they provided their thoughts on how the investigation had influenced their perception regarding their rights and their self-assessment of the literacy skills.

Afterwards, this project was presented to parents and students in a school fair where three students exposed what they did and learned during the class.

To conclude, the present paper presents a qualitative, Action Research investigation which made use of different kinds of data collection instruments to gather information prior to the design of the activities, recording instruments to keep track of the development of the sessions, and a final instrument to contrast the students' progress with the initial survey. These devices also opened the way to determine the children's involvement with the subject matter, children rights, and their learning process, which concluded with a public presentation of their books, making the project a statement on the role EFL classrooms can have on the construction of peace and the active role children can play when given appropriate guidance.

## **Chapter IV. Pedagogical Instruction**

In this section, the author's visions on key components of the class planning process will be outlined and explained in a way that allows the reader to clearly picture the practical and theoretical approach built for the application of this investigation. Starting with the curricular vision, where the perception of the curricular grid from which the researcher built the implementation, the section will continue to address other three key elements of the class interaction: the Vision of Language, Vision of Learning, and Vision of Classroom. Additionally, in the instructional design section, the specifics of the pedagogical approach are reviewed providing a detailed description of the concepts and materials used for the research.

### **4.1. Curricular Vision**

As conceived by the PBL approach, where student's learning is guided and their efforts are all poured into a final product, the general conception of the curriculum was based on the conviction that students' interest and engagement on the activities would be vital to ensure meaningful learning. In this light, the author considered, as expressed in Dewey's pedagogy of interest, that the curriculum "must take into account student's interests and organize disciplines around the active social life of students" (Buitrago et al, 2018, p. 45).

Since the school did have an expected scope of grammatical topics to cover, the planning also considered this curricular grid as to convey these topics within the project's implementation; thus, assisting on the school's missional purpose without missing the horizon of providing a full learning experience based on hands-on, autonomous contact

with the curriculum. Embedded in this practical conception is a simple yet very potent idea: “[...] school should promote the individual’s personal growth rather than preserving cultural heritage by learning just content” (Buitrago et al., 2018 p.46).

#### **4.2. Vision of Language**

For this investigation, language is considered as “a system for the construction of meaning [...]” (Buitrago et al, 2018) which establishes the opportunity to allow students to explore their own ideas and use the target language as a means to create. According to Tudor, language contains significant information related to the culture of the speaker's context (2001, cited in Buitrago et al., 2018, p. 84), making it an artifact on which a linguistic community encodes their perception of the world and its surroundings. From an EFL perspective, the world views embedded on the student’s native language converse and collide with those embedded in the linguistic system of the foreign language and it is through this struggle that learners acquire new information and adopt it to create new sentences.

As this research took the project-based learning approach for its implementation, language is understood from an interactive point of view as “a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals” (Richards & Rogers, 2001. Cited in Buitrago et al., 2018, p. 70). For this reason and looking forward to using both the native and foreign languages as vehicles to generate interpersonal relations; discussion and reflection spaces were part of every lesson emphasizing on the base book content. This also aimed to help students recognize themselves as subjects of rights through the interaction with their peers, and the creation and socialization of their own picture books.

### 4.3. Vision of Learning

Keeping in mind this language perception, and since the teaching approach utilized for this investigation was Project-Based Learning, learning is viewed from two complimentary perspectives. Firstly, as an experiential process where students learn by having direct contact with the target language and being participants of the construction of class dynamics and materials (Buitrago et al, 2018 pp 85). Since it focused on learning by doing, the implementation was based on five principles proposed by Buitrago et al. (2018 p, 85).

1. *Activities should focus on processing and communicating messages:* Students were expected to acquire vocabulary that was presented and use it to decode and create new sentences.

2. *Holistic learning activities should reflect the multi-dimensional nature of communication:* During each session, students were not only consistently practicing listening and reading via the guided reading section, but also writing and speaking during the production section.

3. *Authentic materials should be used:* The sessions were carried out using a base text created by the author and crafted specifically for this effect.

4. *The use of communication strategies should be encouraged:* Students were always asked to make use of their available resources to understand the instructions before attempting to use Spanish. Likewise, they were given different sentences to request the teacher to repeat or provide needed vocabulary.



*5. Learning activities should involve collaboration among learners:* Each class, the students were asked to participate with their peers when reading the base material or solving short tasks. They were also given a short space at the end of the session to display their work and share their learning experiences.

Secondly, learning is understood as a process mediated by affect and so it was considered that the kids' personal experiences would be helpful when engaging them in the activities to develop their familiarity with the topic treated as "students are individuals whose interaction with learning activities is influenced by a variety of cognitive, psychological, and experiential factors, and these factors give rise to a certain affective interaction with the learning process" (Tudor, 2001, p.95 cited in Buitrago et al., 2018, p. 86). Part of the aim of the project was to allow students to recognize their rights and themselves as subjects entitled to these rights. Of course, the biggest investment was made toward the realization of the vital role this recognition played in their daily lives, so it allowed them to generate connections with the world outside the classroom. To sum up, learning will be understood not only as a process where students can experience learning through activities and materials that help them understand the target language and topics planned, but also a space where their emotions and feelings are considered as well, for the success of the learning process.

#### **4.4. Vision of Classroom**

In this investigation, the author took important components of two different, although not necessarily opposing, classroom visions as described by Tudor (2001, cited by Buitrago et al. 2018, p 86). On the one hand, the classroom was a mostly controlled

learning environment, as the activities were crafted specifically for the development of the subject in this particular classroom setting; additionally, due to the guided reading/writing activities present on the development of the project, it was vital to have continuous teacher supervision in some specific moments of the session. On the other hand, due to the kind of agenda inspired by social content, the classroom was also conceived as a space of socialization. From this point of view, students were also encouraged to share their perception on the class material, the topic, and their own experiences related to how they perceived their rights and other kids' rights.

Lastly, with strong bases on the constructivist theory, PBL materialized the call for a student-centered view of the classroom which potentializes the student's autonomy and creativity (Thu, 2018), this pedagogical approach contains a sort of implied vision of classroom, allowing different space of participation with continuous levels of engagement of the children and different levels of involvement from the teacher, starting with the construction of the project's driving question and the students' *need-to-knows* passing through the guided reading/writing sessions to culminate on the autonomous work dedicated to the elaboration of their own picture books.

#### **4.5. Instructional Design**

As it was previously stated, the implementation of this project took the PBL approach as the base upon which the investigation materials were conceived. In this section, there will be a review of the PBL, defining its essential premises and reviewing the role picture books played during the implementation. Additionally, there will be a description and a definition of the PBL related tools used to build the class activities.

#### ***4.5.1. Project Based Learning (PBL)***

Looking forward to fostering *recognition* as defined by Honneth, it is necessary the implementation of a pedagogical approach that focuses on the children's voice, participation, reflection, and feedback included in a transversal process. For this reason, *Project Based Learning (PBL)* was chosen considering student participation and the construction of a final product to be key components of building the classroom dynamics that foster the recognition of children's rights. PBL, defined as "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks" (Buck Institute for Education, 2003 cited by Aziez, 2016), allows students to "plan, collaborate, and communicate" (Aziez, 2016) which will help them prepare for being active participants in their context.

Looking forward to achieving an appropriate construction of a PBL structure, the Buck Institute for Education<sup>9</sup> suggests a set of *Seven Essential Project Elements* (Figure 1) which "help teachers, schools, and organizations improve, calibrate, and assess their practice." (2019) These essentials establish the students' acquisition of key knowledge, understanding, and success skills, as the learning goals (Buck Institute for Education, 2019).

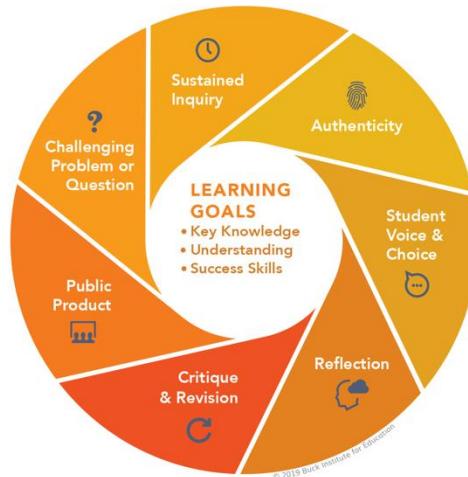
#### **Figure 1. Seven Essential Project Design Elements**

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<sup>9</sup> Now known as *PBL works* is an organization focused on offering "professional development in Project Based Learning (PBL) to teachers and leaders at the school and district levels" (PBLWorks, 2023 p.4)

## Gold Standard PBL

### Seven Essential Project Design Elements



Note. Adapted from *Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements* by Buck Institute for Education (2019), PBL Works CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Each section shown in figure 1 corresponds then to a specific part of the class construction, as such, the *Challenging Problem or Question stage* aims to have the project framed by a meaningful theme that can develop the second element *Sustained Inquiry*, which is where students get involved in the process of making questions, finding information and applying knowledge. *Authenticity* refers to a real-world context project where students get involved and have a *Voice and Choice*. At this stage, students can make their own decisions and contribute with their own ideas about the project. Following this line, students are encouraged to make a *Reflection* about their learning process, as well as to receive, give, and apply feedback to improve their products. Finally, students share their outcome product in public, which gives them the possibility to explain and present it beyond the class. (Buck Institute for Education, 2019).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed the previously mentioned elements, as well as a set of stages listed on a Toolkit<sup>10</sup> created by the Buck Institute for Education to properly develop a PBL project related to picture books. First, *Planning* determined the goals to be taught and assessed during the project, as well as the type of picture book that was to be created; this step was followed by *Launch Project* which described the Entry Event and Driving Question to catch students' interest and build the need-to-knows required for its development; *Build Knowledge, Understanding & Skills to Answer Driving Question* were the steps where students documented their ideas for their books; *Develop & Critique Products and Answers to the Driving Questions* had the students plan, draft, and create their picture books, and finally, *Present Products & Answers to the Driving Question*, which is where students published their picture books, showed them to a public outside the class, and reflected on their process (Buck Institute for Education, 2021).

#### **4.5.2. Picture Books**

To define this concept, the present project followed the view of picture books proposed by Shulevitz, cited by Renck (2004, p. 11): "Picture books, a special category or genre of children's literature, are publications in which the pictures stand alone, the pictures dominate the text, or the words and illustrations are equally important". Additionally, and following up on the PBL approach, the Buck Institute for Education advises on their *Product Toolkit: Picture Books* that "picture books provide an engaging and visually compelling way for students to educate and entertain others, communicate important

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<sup>10</sup> In their website, PBL Works, the Buck Institute for Education, share different documents where they develop the needed steps for different classroom projects. For this study the *Product Toolkit: Picture Book* will be the main reference.

concepts, or raise awareness about an issue.” (BIE, 2021); which aided to the main objective held during this investigation as the main concepts were related to rights recognition.

Furthermore, in the book *Young Children and Picture Books*, Renk explains that “the acquisition of literacy is not only simply accruing a set of skills; it is a progression of realizations about the forms and functions of print and nonprint message” (2004). For this reason, the development of each session contained both a reading and a writing dedicated time where students familiarized themselves with the topics and new vocabulary, as well as with the story of the base text through the analysis of the written word and accompanying pictures, helping them reinforce the Children’s Rights component and trigger the students’ interest and creativity.

As a final product, each kid was appointed to the creation of their own picture book where they had the chance to put into practice the newly acquired knowledge while reinforcing their previous understanding of the language in order to create each character according to their liking, as well as decorating the pages as they saw fit.

#### ***4.5.3. PBL Toolkit***

The main tool utilized was a PBL Toolkit which outlined 5 different work stages (*Planning for Picture Books, Launch Project: Entry Event Driving Question, Build Knowledge, Understanding & Skills to Answer Driving Question, Develop & Critique Products and Answers to the Driving Questions, and Present Products & Answers to the Driving Question*) which were in time adapted to the researchers’ goals and redistributed

into: one diagnostic stage, five guided reading stages, a socialization activity, and a closing session to apply the final questionnaire, spanning a total of 9 sessions (See Table 3).

**Table 3.** *Project Stage Overview*

Driving Question				
How do you guide your tree to know his/her rights?				
PBL Toolkit Stage	Book Chapter	Project Stage	Lesson	School Syllabus Topic
<i>Planning for Picture Books</i>	Pre-Reading	<b>Diagnostic</b>	<b>Diagnostic Video</b>	Questions and answers, common questions, and simple present
			<b>Diagnostic Test</b>	Alphabet, how do you spell it? Simple present
<i>Launch Project: Entry Event Driving Question</i>	Chapter I	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>On a magical planet...</b>	Common questions, simple present, verb to be, how old?
<i>Build Knowledge, Understanding &amp; Skills to Answer Driving Question &amp; Develop &amp; Critique Products and Answers to the Driving Question</i>			<b>I am a magical tree</b> (Right to have an identity)	Common questions, simple present, verb to be, how old?
	Chapter II	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>My leaves are mine</b> (Right to be protected)	To be, can, simple present
			<b>My magical family</b> (Right to have a family)	I have, verb to be, common questions, family members
	Chapter III	<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>My voice matters</b> (Right to have a voice)	Verb to be, adjectives, would, common questions
Chapter IV	<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>My safe place</b>	Common questions, can, would, action verbs	

			(Right to have a safe place)	
<i>Present Products &amp; Answers to the Driving Question</i>	Post-Reading	<b>Stage 5</b>	<b>Art Time &amp; I deserve education</b> (Right to have education)	Common questions, can, would, action verbs
		<b>Socialization</b>	<b>Socialization</b> Product presentation	N/A
		<b>Closing</b>	<b>Final questionnaire</b>	N/A
		<b>School Forum</b>	<b>Project presentation with parents</b>	N/A

Through the structure shown above, the PBL guidelines suggested helped the investigator build mechanisms that permitted a consistent reinforcement of the new vocabulary while encouraging the kids’ participation in class. Also, although the sessions were distributed in a way that linked up with the specific needs of this classroom, there was a constant return to the PBL toolkit for guidance, which helped organize the time as to guarantee a successful closing of the learning process.

#### **4.5.4. Roles**

**Teacher.** Taking the Project-Based Learning approach premises, teachers are responsible for creating a culture of learning in the classroom. As Madoyan suggests “the teacher’s initial role in PBL is to develop realistic and authentic problems and materials, and as soon as this task has been fulfilled, the teacher fades into the background while students engage in solving the problem.” (2016, p.110) Considering that the target



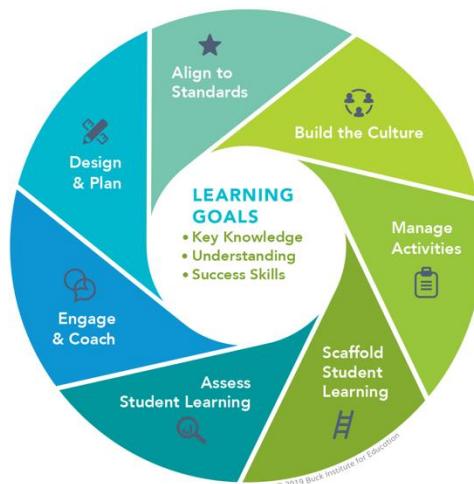
population are beginner level students, teachers must guide and impulse their creative insights while providing learners with opportunities to learn from experience.

As it is described by the Buck Institute for Education (2019), PBL has seven teaching practices: *Design & plan, Align to Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities, Scaffold Student Learning, Assess Student Learning, Engage and Coach* (see Figure 2). From this perspective, teachers design a project based on student's context and give them voice and choice; in this approach, teachers should use standards to plan the project, look forward to promoting students' growth and independence and guide students through activities to answer the driving question. Lastly, teachers provide tools and apply strategies to reach the project's goals; at the same time, they can keep an eye on the student's process and become part of the learning environment by participating in the activities alongside students. From this perspective, the teacher is not only a person who gives instructions and expects results but is rather a guide who provides students with leads on the expected outcome of the activities and participates also as a learner, applying the participants' feedback on the next sessions.

**Figure 2. Seven Project Based Teaching Practices**

## Gold Standard PBL

### Seven Project Based Teaching Practices



Note. Adapted from *Gold Standard PBL: Project Based Teaching Practices* by Buck Institute for Education (2019), PBLWorks CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

**Students.** This role was neatly summarized by Simpson (2001), citing Dewey's conception of student: one where the learner's initiative and involvement are key to the learning process, which is something each student must do for themselves. From this point of view, the student adapts to the activities and subject matter proposed by the teacher, who opens the space for a learning experience based on the needs and characteristics of the students. For the purpose of this study and having in mind that it is founded on a student-centered approach such as Project-Based Learning, students are expected to take ownership of their learning process, their picture book creation, and the search for answers to the project's driving question. Also, students are encouraged to raise their voice and constantly participate by reflecting and sharing their experiences and thoughts around their rights and picture books by using the foreign language.

**Materials.** As mentioned on the PBL premises, authenticity is key when it comes to carrying out the project, this means creating projects based on real-world contents; therefore, as it was not possible to find textbooks that were related to the topic at hand, the researcher wrote and designed the illustrated book that would be used for the development of the classes (Annex A.). Child Recruitment was chosen as the main theme, since it is one of the phenomena that most heavily impacted childhood rights during the Colombian conflict, amounting to over 17.778 recruited children for the war in a 60-year span (CNMH, 2023); due to the importance of the topic, the illustrated book aimed to be not only a part of the class dynamics, but also a long term tool for building resiliency in the Colombian society, contributing to the ultimate goal of non-repetition and conservation of the historic memory. The materials were conceived as *stimulus materials* which, as defined by Hyland, “are commonly used to involve learners in thinking about and using language by provoking ideas, encouraging connections and developing topics in ways that allow them to articulate their thoughts.” (2013, p.393)

Additionally, each activity was scaffolded to ensure proper assimilation of the language. According to Hyland “materials which scaffold learners’ understandings of language provide opportunities for discussion, guided writing, analysis and manipulation of salient structures and vocabulary” (2013, p.392). This process is also one of the most important steps on the PBL structure, as the idea is to provide students with a structure that slowly allows them to put into practice the knowledge acquired in exercises that gradually increase in difficulty. Additionally, this facilitates students’ engagement, as they can see their own progress and slowly increase their class participation.

#### ***4.5.5. Lesson Planning***

For the implementation of this project, a total of nine lesson plans were designed based on the needs identified via the class observations and the diagnostic activities applied during the first two sessions. The group was composed of 25 fifth-grade students who received one English class of one hour and forty minutes weekly. The class was divided into two 50-minute slots as there was a 30-minute break in the middle. Following this distribution, starting on Stage 1 (lessons 3 & 4), each lesson plan dedicated the first portion to reading and reflecting, and the second portion to writing and sharing. On the one hand, the reading was focused on the text *I have a dream* (Annex A.) and the main vocabulary related to the right treated in each session and the base text was introduced, as well as reflective questions about the story and the students' contexts. On the other hand, the production part was mainly focused on guided activities where students would work on the right discussed during the reading time and they would create a page of their picture book, making sure each written exercise covered a certain topic of the school curriculum. Additionally, this portion included a space for students to share their advances of the picture book with their classmates.

Depending on the type of session, a specific type of lesson plan was built. One for each diagnostic session, another focused on the reading/writing sessions, and another kind for the closing activities. The stages were defined as follows:

- a. **Diagnostic:** Within the PBL toolkit this would be the *Planning for Picture Books* stage, where the project's learning goals are defined. For this research, the goals were partly defined by the diagnostic test and the observations made before the

implementation. Additionally, this stage defined what type of picture book was going to be created.

- b. **Stage 1:** This stage covered Chapter One of the base material. For starters, during session number 3, the investigator performed the *Launch Project: Entry Event Driving Question* activity where students were formally introduced to the project and to the driving question, as well as the reading resources. This session was also the first guided reading session of the base material. During session 4, students were introduced to the most important steps within the PBL Toolkit: *Build Knowledge, Understanding & Skills to Answer Driving Question* and *Develop & Critique Products and Answers to the Driving Questions*. These are constant within stages 1 through 5, and they involve the children building their final products, while acquiring the skills needed to answer the driving question. Through sharing and receiving feedback, students interiorized the comments received by classmates and applied them to their own picture books. At this stage, the class worked around the right to have an identity and reflection spaces about the topics covered were inaugurated.
- c. **Stage 2:** This covered Chapter Two of the base material. During this stage, students continued to be involved in the continuous creation and revision process that was started in stage 1. The right to be protected and the right to have a family were covered and reflection spaces to talk about them continued.
- d. **Stage 3:** This stage covered Chapter Three of the base material, as well as the right to have a voice.

- e. **Stage 4:** This stage covered Chapter Four of the base material, as well as the right to have a safe place.
- f. **Stage 5:** This stage provided students with a space to fully decorate their picture books, looking forward to the socialization phase. Here, a reflection about the right to education was given and they created a sentence related to it for the final page of the book.
- g. **Socialization:** This stage was where the final presentation was completed, complying with *Present Products & Answers to the Driving Question*, as described by the Toolkit. In this space, children had the chance to present their books and newly acquired knowledge to another class. This socialization effort allowed students to share their knowledge about the topic, as well as show their commitment with their English learning process; additionally, it was an opportunity for schoolmates to learn more about their rights from the perspective of the participants involved.
- h. **Closing:** This stage was where students answered a final questionnaire about what they learned during the implementation. This allowed the researcher to better understand the real impact of the investigation. Details on the findings derived from this stage will be shared in the Data Analysis section.
- i. **School Forum:** There was one last socialization of the project which occurred in a school promoted forum, where some of the children had the chance to share their experiences and findings with the entire school. The presentation consisted of a fair where each curricular area had a classroom to display the projects developed, the participants had a stand in the English room and were visited by students, parents,

and other relatives. Once more, this open space allowed other children to learn about their rights; however, this last forum also opened the doorway for parents to learn or renew their knowledge about the topic.

Apart from this structure, the spaces of reflection at the end of each session were key in the construction of the children's perceptions and interiorization of the subject matter. This lesson planning was built with the idea of having constant feedback between the content and the expected achievements, guided by the driving questions, looking forward to allowing each child to process the information at their own pace and create their very own portrait of what impacted them the most.

#### **4.6. Ethical Issues**

Considering that this study is of a qualitative nature, ethical issues took place in the implementation of the project, due to the interaction with children. This project obtained informed consents to protect the data and identities of underage participants.

#### **4.7. Expected Impacts**

##### *Short term*

The purpose of this work is to achieve an improvement in the proficiency of foreign language knowledge, mainly written production, as well as generating students' self-recognition as members of society while being aware of a relevant topic in the Colombian context: Recruitment of minors.

##### *Long term*

It is sought that this project transcends in the framework of *Educación para la paz* by contributing to the recognition of the rights of the children of our society. This project

also works as a background for new research and perspectives in the EFL classroom. In addition, the creation of books is meant to be a tool for resiliency in the Colombian context.

## **Chapter V. Data Analysis and Findings**

In this chapter, the reader will find the definition of the approach used to analyze the data, the steps taken to categorize the data collected and the insights and conclusions drawn from the data analysis performed.

### **5.1. Data Analysis Approach:**

This study chose the Grounded Theory as the vantage point to analyze the information gathered, because its procedures “are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study approach” (Cobin & Strauss, 1990 p. 5). During the investigation, the researcher constantly readapted the instruments to ensure all the information gathered was valuable. This way, to carry out the data analysis, the researcher followed the coding stages suggested by Cobin & Strauss (1990) as required by their Grounded Theory cannons and procedures.

1. **Open Coding:** During this stage, the researcher looked over the data collected through the different research instruments and started by generating an organized set of codes and keywords that were eventually gathered on bigger categories and subcategories related to the main topics and objectives of the project.



2. **Axis Coding:** At this stage, the researcher started to link each category with their composing subcategories to start discovering how, in working together, they answered, or not the research questions. It is important to note that, as required by the theoretical approach, these sets of relationships were constantly revised with the data to ensure accuracy at the time of confirming or discarding their validity for the research purpose.
3. **Selective Coding:** Lastly, the researcher identified a “core” category linking the other categories built, thus providing a key concept linking the project’s findings with this central piece. This is achieved by auditing the existing categories and subcategories, making sure they are properly constructed to add density to each concept, making a robust set of categories and so widening the research’s applicability in other scenarios.

This process aimed to answer the research question proposed by the researcher and generate a reflection around the insights gathered during the application of this study. The main data collection instruments used were a diagnostic questionnaire, different field journals where the events of each session were documented, video and audio recordings performed in specific sessions, an interview with the homeroom teacher, and a final questionnaire. The tool used to organize and classify the data is called *Notion*, which is a free, online notation tool that allows different levels of classification, which enables a deeper understanding of the relationship between the different sets of data.

## **5.2. Categories and subcategories of analysis:**

The present research study aimed to analyze the impact of implementing a picture book creation, framed on PBL and the *Educación para la Paz*, in the development of 5th

graders' writing skills and their self-recognition as subjects of rights in an EFL classroom.

The following table shows the relationship between the research objectives and the categories identified during the interpretation and analysis of the data collected.

**Table 4.** *Categories and subcategories of analysis*

Research Question and General Objective	Research Objectives	Category	Subcategories
How might implementing a picture book creation, framed on PBL and the Educación para la Paz, have an impact on the development of the writing skills of an EFL classroom of 5th graders at Magdalena Ortega de Nariño public school while fostering their self-recognition as subjects of rights?	To generate a space of reflection about Children rights through guided reading sessions and the use of driving questions in each class.	Recognition through Educación para la Paz	Love
			Rights
			Solidarity
To analyze the impact of implementing a picture book creation project, framed on PBL and the Educación para la Paz, on the development of 5th graders' writing skills and their self-recognition as subjects of rights in an EFL classroom	To develop the students' initial accuracy and expressing ideas skills in writing by using scaffolded activities.	Writing as a literacy skill	Accuracy through scaffolding
			Expressing ideas through scaffolding
	To create an illustrated book that evidences the appropriation of Children rights and the writing improvement process in the students' class work.	Picture Books as a learning appropriation tool	Ownership Representation

### **5.2.1. Category 1. Recognition through Educación para la Paz**

This first category is linked with the first specific objective of this project, as it frames the classroom inside the bigger aim to generate a space of reflection about

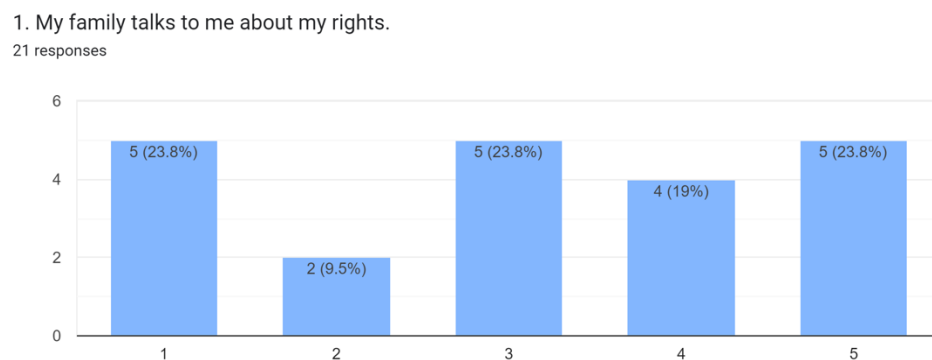
children's rights, providing different moments where the children could explore and understand their own rights during guided reading sessions. Moreover, this reflection was led from the Recognition point of view as described by Axel Honneth, who proposed three different spheres where recognition could be appreciated, and which helped on the development of a specific aspect of the individual's growth. The researcher identified, through a thorough review of data collection instruments such as field notes, audio transcripts, student artifacts (illustrated books), and excerpts from the initial and final questionnaires, that all three spheres were present during the implementation of the project and from this realization came the subcategories listed below.

#### **5.2.1.1. Subcategory 1: Love:**

According to Honneth's theory, the sphere of Love is related to the individual's closest circle and it is linked to their self-confidence. In this sphere, the recognition is seen through the bonds and relationships built by the individual, mostly in the form of their parents' love and care, as shown in Table 2, but these can also be extended to relatives or friends that contribute to their growth. As a first step toward understanding the status of this sphere in the classroom, the diagnostic questionnaire asked children to measure in a scale from 1-5 (being 1, I disagree and 5, I totally agree), if they were told about their rights at home. The results showed that a total of 57.1% (responses 1, 2, and 3) of the participating students had never been told about rights or had seldom received any information about their rights, while the remaining 42.9% (responses 4 and 5) of the students had some knowledge about rights acquired at home. This initial assessment provided an idea of how close children were to the main topic of the study, as well as how favorable their home environment had been to the topic in question. It is important to note that although the

school has the potential to provide the children with a safe space to keep learning about rights, it is their family the first and most important source of knowledge, as it is in the midst of their relatives where the children may acquire the basic skills that will allow them to develop a strong sense of recognition toward the other, but most importantly, toward themselves, which is the focus of the sphere of love.

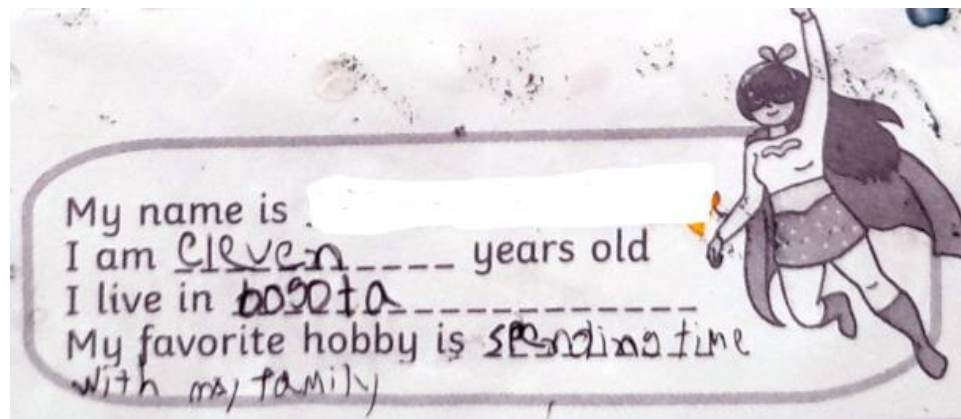
**Figure 3. Family and rights: *Diagnostic questionnaire***



During the investigation, this subcategory was mainly evidenced in the students' artifacts, as well as in their class participations which displayed an important presence of this sphere, especially on the sessions about the rights *to have a family, to have a safe space, and to be protected*; rights consigned on UNICEF's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and ratified by the Colombian government in the *Ley 12 de 1991*. To get started, students were introduced to the story of a little tree which was abducted and taken away from its family to be part of an army of alien machine-like beings. This storyline, accompanied by an illustrated book crafted by the researcher, worked as an anchor to start addressing the topic of children recruitment through the life events that the character had to endure while also stimulating the students' imagination and engagement with the class; this

resulted on the children sharing personal reflections as seen in the following Field Note: “I asked them what they would do in the position of the little tree, they told me that they would flee and go home with their family or with their uncles, grandparents, etc.”(Field note 7, 2023). Through such an experience, the kids showed a secure attachment to whom they considered members of their family, expressing they feel safe with them and listing them as the place-to-go during difficult times. For example, in Figure 4, a student artifact can be seen where she denotes that her hobby is *spending time with her family*.

**Figure 4. Student’s artifact: *All about me***



This dynamic also evidenced a bond which denotes protection and safety, as shown in the following Field Note: “The girls responded that they would always return to their families if they did not feel in a safe place. The family or some members of their family are key when it comes to recognizing the right to have a safe place.” (Field note 7, 2023). The fact that the children relied on their families when facing potential danger or uncomfortable situations, the basis of this initial level of recognition, was also registered on the student artifacts under the session *My Safe Place*, in an activity where children were asked to list all the places where they felt safe and to build sentences using the newly learned vocabulary. (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Student's artifact: *My safe place***

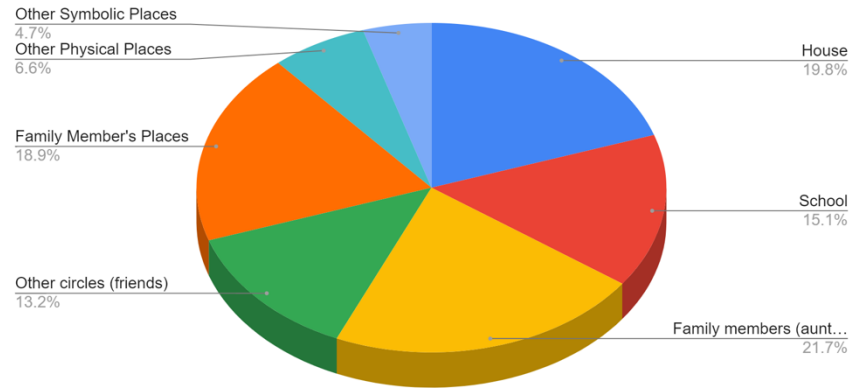


Regarding this activity, out of 106 answers gathered amongst 22 students' artifacts, 7 categories came up from the data: house (19.81%), school (15.09%), family members (21.70%), family member's places (18.87%), other circles (13.21%), other physical places (6.60%) and other symbolic places (4.72%)<sup>11</sup> (See figure 6). Unsurprisingly, the students listed their house and their school as safe locations; however, the sites that appeared the most were not physical places but rather relatives (family members, 21.70%), or other people with whom they have established a close relationship (other circles, 13.21%), confirming that the children had already established foundations of the Love sphere prior to the implementation of the project.

**Figure 6. Safe places by category**

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<sup>11</sup> Please note that this section only considered the categories related to close relationships and the rest will be revisited in the next subcategories.



While the data collected in this activity showed that the children already had a strong connection with their close relatives and friends, it is noteworthy that one of the students also included herself as a safe place, demonstrating her self-confidence was linked to a strong recognition from her intimate circle which was also included, specifically as *my mom*, *my sister*, and *my friends*. Another indicator of a strong sense of self-confidence was the inclusion of symbolic places such as *my sing* and *my music* (See figure 7), which are related to their own sense of self.

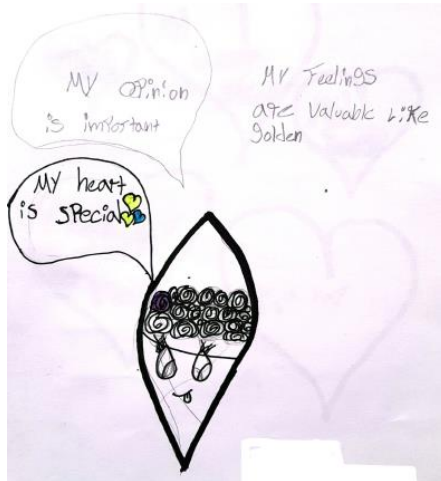
**Figure 7. Student's artifact: *My safe place***



In relation to the use of the language, it is important to note that the children acquired and used new vocabulary, being always encouraged to create new sentences. This gave way for them to be creative and give new meaning to the vocabulary introduced. A good example of the children generating new meaning can be seen on the following student artifact: during the session called *My Voice Matters*, the children were given a set of words that they could choose from to make simple sentences; however, this girl inquired for additional vocabulary to generate the new sentence “My feelings are valuable like golden” (See figure 8). The new meaning, likely born from the bonds nurtured in the individual by her closest environment and reflected as a reaffirmation of her *self* is a great example of the impact the Love sphere can have on the child’s recognition process. Other important milestones were noticed on the final questionnaire, in the question *write down one sentence in English that you liked from the sessions*, as two students created a new sentence related to their families, indicating “My family is unique” but also other students crafted sentences related to positive statements about themselves, also denoting a materialization of the self-confidence received from their families and friends which was key for the students to relate with the material regarding rights. For example, sentences like “I am unique,” “My feelings are important,” “My body is strong” and “My ideas are special,” just to name a few, were identified during the data review.

**Figure 8. Student’s artifact: *My voice matters***





Following the idea of self-confidence, it was found that students were open to discussing uncomfortable situations with trusted people, a behavior that fosters their judgement about possible transgressions to their rights. This incipient recognition process was documented in the Field Note #5: “We talked about how sometimes it is difficult to know when our rights are being transgressed, but we reflected that if a situation makes us feel uncomfortable, we should discuss it with someone we trust to try to find out what made us uncomfortable.” (Field Note 5, 2023). Reflecting on these situations during the teaching process also allowed their language learning process to be more relatable. For example, during the session *My Leaves Are Mine*, students had to unscramble affirmations related to the respect for their physical boundaries, exercising their accuracy<sup>12</sup> understanding while setting the bases for the identification of their rights from a legal perspective (See figure 9). This was an important part of the process, as the investigation was based on the need to bring to school scenarios where children could be made aware of different situations experienced by others and which occurred under the armed conflict, making the base

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<sup>12</sup> This concept will be studied in depth in the writing category analysis.

components of the *Educación para la Paz* framework an integral constituent of the pedagogical development of each session, specially the last reflection.

**Figure 9. Student's artifact: *My leaves are mine***

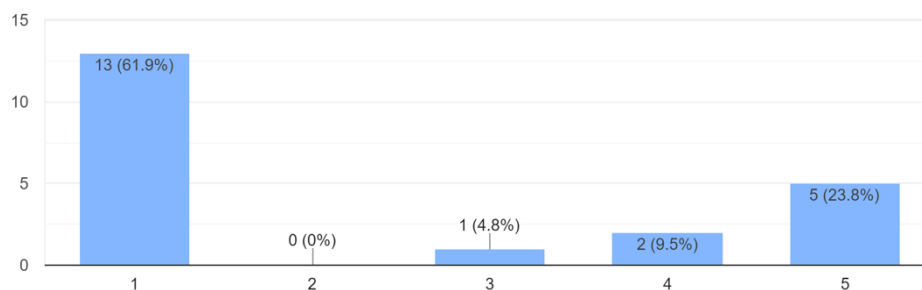


Students were explained how the background of the base book read throughout the sessions was in fact part of the realities in Colombia and they generated some contributions as shown in the following field diary note: “for many of them it was not an unknown subject. They began to tell me that they had relatives whom they had not seen again for that matter, (...) at home they sometimes talked about the realities of those children.” (Field note 9, 2023) showing that their homes are spaces open to discussion and reflections about child recruitment, and other social issues that affect children. This was also noted on the diagnostic questionnaire, in the question *I consider that the living conditions of other children in other places in my country are the same*, measured in a scale from 1-5 (being 1, I disagree and 5, I totally agree); where the 66.7% (responses 1, 2 and 3) of the children disagreed to some degree with this affirmation which shows the importance of what is

learned at home, how this denotes recognition from the sphere of Love and how this contributes to *Educación para la paz* from the family.

**Figure 10. Students' awareness of other living conditions**

3. I consider that the living conditions of other children in other places in my country are the same.  
21 responses



Although this study could not generate recognition from the sphere of love because it talks about family relationships and their impact on the girls, it did identify that most of them had already interiorized this sphere in their daily lives, which facilitated the development of the project, as it was the fuel for children to work on the recognition of the legal rights and an approximation to solidarity.

#### **5.2.1.2. Subcategory 2: Rights.**

This subcategory was key for the investigation as it is the subject matter of the sessions that had a direct relationship with the *Educación para la Paz* framework, due to its direct consideration of the Colombian conflict through the base material and its focus on building the Recognition proposed in the theoretical framework. According to Honneth, the Rights sphere is the legal recognition of the individual and their rights which takes place in the social environment, nurturing the individual's self-respect. This legal recognition, as shown in Table 2, is also linked to certain forms of disrespect, related to the violation of

legal, civil, and human rights. It is worth reminding that in the Colombian context, children's rights were ratified through the Ley 12 de 1991 and it is a duty of the State to protect them according to article 44 of the Colombian Constitution (1991).

This subcategory was identified mainly through student's artifacts, class participation, questionnaires, final socializations and in reflections made by the researcher in her field diaries. The data collected with these instruments showed that the appreciation of this sphere was possible thanks to the discussions held about the base book, in the previous ideas and background that the girls brought to the reflection sessions, as well as the creation process of their own illustrated book. The debates held were about the transgressions evidenced both in the material and in real life, based on Honneth's view of the forms of disrespect for this sphere, making way for the construction of three basic concepts related to transgressions and which were the starting point for this subcategory's analysis. The newly identified concepts were 1. *Rights identification*, related to the student's previous knowledge, intuitions about their legal rights and the student's understanding about rights throughout the implementation; 2. *Rights within the school*, related to the identification of transgression or acknowledgement of rights inside the school; and 3. *Women's rights spotting*, related to the identification of transgressions or acknowledgement of women's rights.

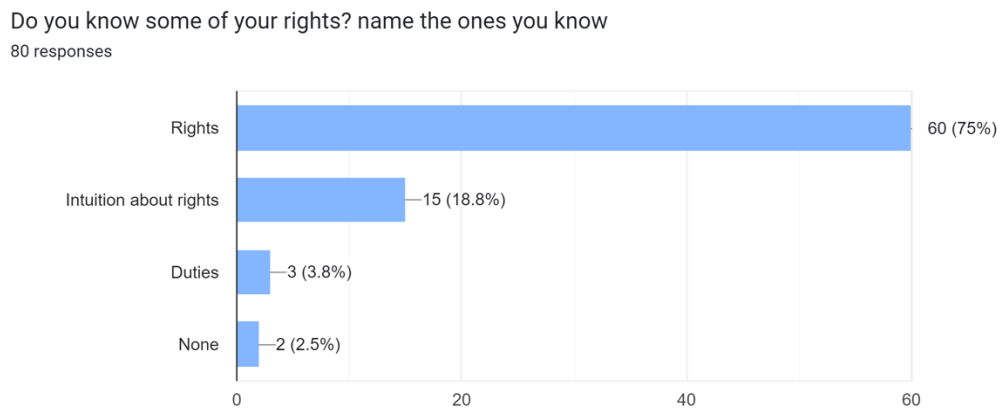
#### ***5.2.1.2.1. Rights Identification.***

Based on the data, student's previous knowledge, intuitions, and understanding about rights was key for them to have an initial identification of what the legal rights were allowing them to reflect about transgressions or possible ways of disrespect. The diagnostic

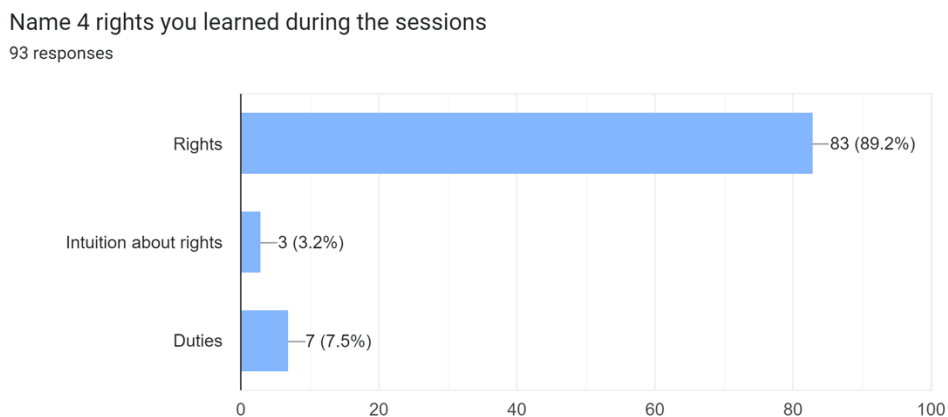
questionnaire was the main tool for the researcher to observe the children's existing knowledge about rights by having them answer the question: do you know some of your rights? name the ones you know. The data collected was grouped according to the accuracy of their responses into rights, intuition about rights, duties and none. As shown in Figure 11, there were 80 answers gathered from 22 questionnaires, and 60 (75%) of them were accurate responses about rights with answers like the right to study, to have food, to have a family, to live and to have a place to live, which demonstrated that many children were familiar with the main rights. In second place, there were 15 (18.8%) answers where students compiled concepts that could be associated with rights, without naming a right in particular. For instance, some kids' responses were to do homework, to build a school model, to write, to read, to have notebooks, which in essence are notions related to the right to have education. Some other answers were the right to speak, to sleep, to know new people, to have a pet, to choose those people around me, which could be associated with the right to express opinions, to health, to be free and to have a family. These intuitions about rights were quite pertinent for the investigation, as they allowed the girls to establish connections between their prior knowledge and the experience they had in the sessions more easily. By way of illustration, one of the student's responses in the diagnostic questionnaire were the right to study, to read, to do my homework, and to learn. However, answering the question, name 4 rights you learned during the sessions of the final questionnaire, she answered, the right to study and to be free showing a new understanding of the concepts studied. This trend was noticed all through the final questionnaire, as shown in Figure 12, where the total student's responses went from 80 to 93 and the rights group compiled a total of 83 (89.2%) responses.

It is worth mentioning that there were students whose answers in the diagnostic were related mostly to duties; for example, *I have the right to respect, to help my family, to wash the dishes*, just as there are rights, there are duties which became the base for the construction of the Solidarity sphere and they will be studied in depth in the next subcategory. Lastly, there were 2 students who claimed not to know any right but, when reviewing the final questionnaire, these students in particular were able to provide responses aligned with the topics treated during the project.

**Figure 11. Prior knowledge about rights**



**Figure 12. Knowledge about rights after implementation**



On a related note, the narrative of the project's base book was designed so that transgressions and injustices could be identified when reflecting about the story. For this reason, the researcher based the background of the illustrated book on the recruitment of children in Colombia. This way, the investigation could approach the *Educación para la Paz* from a contextualized perspective, and so each chapter of the book had the purpose of generating reflections while providing insights for the girls to create a section in their rights book. Thanks to this approach, it was noted that though all the rights were relevant, children connected more deeply with *the right to be protected* and *to have a safe place*.

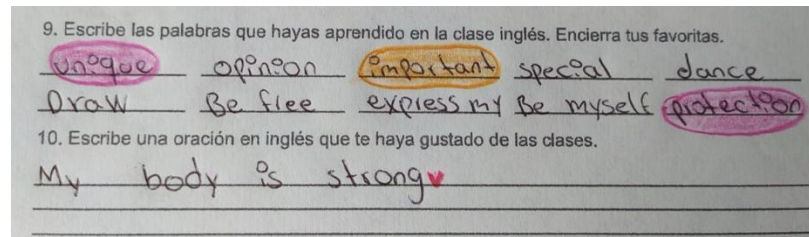
This connection can be evidenced in the session *My Leaves are mine*, where students read chapter II from the base material and during their participation, the girls showed an intuitive understanding of the scenarios of transgression as it is noted in the field notes: “I asked them what they thought had happened to the little trees when they were taken far from their homes, they told me that they had probably been killed or abused or turned into wood for tables. One girl commented that the leaves had surely been removed.” (Field Note 4, 2023). Until this part of the story, the girls already knew that the characters in the story had been taken apart from their home, allowing them to connect one transgression to another. They intuitively related the fact of having been removed from their home with some violation of their bodies.

In the same session, the girls went a little deeper into *the right to be protected from abuse*, as seen in the following field diary note: “When they noticed that their leaves had been removed and they had been painted black, they had comments like: it's as if a part of our body was taken from us or as if they cut our hair and we didn't want to”. (Field Note 4, 2023) alluding again to possible transgressions towards the body. During this session, the

children reflected about how “their bodies are a temple for themselves concluding with comments like *Don't keep quiet! Speak up!*” (Field Note 4, 2023) identifying rights and looking forward to helping others which will be discussed in the next subcategory.

This chapter of the book really had a great impact on the girls, as it can be seen on their final questionnaire where *the right to be protected from abuse* appeared on the question related to the rights, they learned during the sessions contrasting with the diagnostic questionnaire where it did not appear whatsoever. Also, in the final questionnaire, words related to that right were mentioned repeatedly when they were asked about the words they learned during the class and the sentences they liked the most. See figure 13.

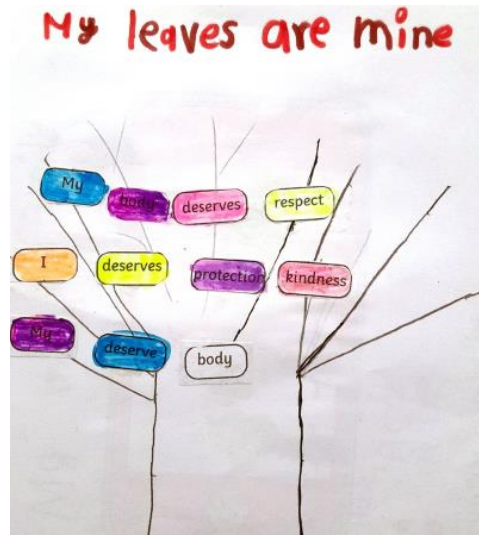
**Figure 13. Final questionnaire sample**



Another example was in the use of the language. The students had to put the leaves back to their tree through their 3 favorite sentences of the activity. In a student's activity, it can be identified the creation of a new sentence, *I deserve protection kindness*, related to *the right to be protected from abuse*, and generating new meanings using the words she had at her disposal to speak her mind up.

**Figure 14. Student's artifact**





Another right that demonstrated to be a milestone in rights identification was *the right to have safe place*, as according to the data, this was an axis that crossed all the other rights, in their participations the girls identified that an unsafe place is a place prone to various violations of their rights. In session *My safe place*, the kids were asked the question: *why do you think the Hunter Machine's planet was not a safe place for the trees?* and “they mentioned that they were not family of the little trees, and they took their leaves and did not treat them well. They also told me that the little trees were not there by decision but had been imposed by the hunter machines and that made the place unsafe.” (Field Note 7, 2023). As well as in an audio transcription, students were socializing their picture books and one of the kids stated, “it is about a tree that was taken away from her house because she was kidnapped, they removed her leaves, they removed her rights, and she was taken away from home (Own translation)”<sup>13</sup> (Audio Transcription, 2023). There is a relationship between the right to have a safe place and other rights like *to have a family, to be protected*

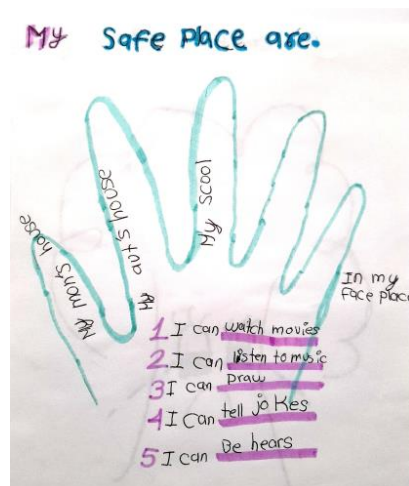
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<sup>13</sup>“se trata de un árbol que fue alejado de su casa ya que la raptaron, le quitaron sus hojitas, le quitaron todos sus derechos y la alejaron de su hogar” (Audio Transcription)

from abuse, to be free, which is related to the activity about safe places described in Figure 6, where the places students considered as safe spaces are their house, their family, their school, themselves, each space related to their identity, but also associated with a right.

Another example was related to *the right to have a voice*. Students were asked to write sentences about the actions they could do in their safe places. Most of the children wrote actions related to their likes such as *I can dance*, *I can listen to music*, *I can watch movies* and some others wrote sentences about expressing themselves and having a voice as in Figure 6, with *I can express myself*, *I can be myself* and as shown in Figure 15, *I can be heard* [heard]; showing a connection between legal rights and *the right to have a safe place*.

**Figure 15. Student's artifact: My safe place**



Moreover, during the reflection that took place on the last session, the girls were made aware of the real background of the base book "I have a dream", having the researcher explain to them that the topic of armed recruitment in Colombia was taken as a reference, "they made an immediate connection to the issue of rights saying that *this was*

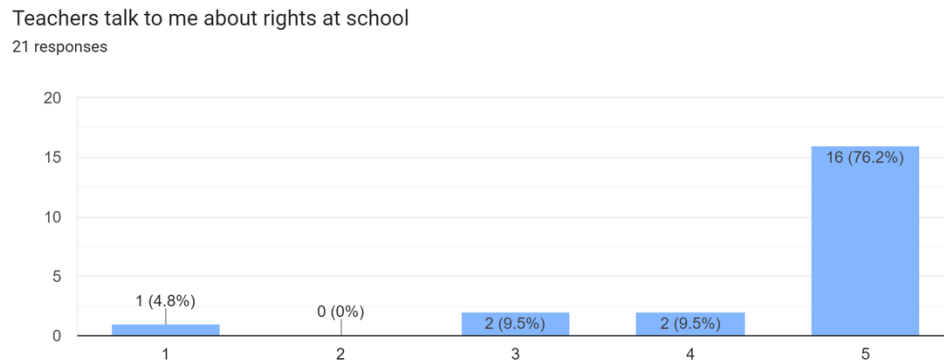
*the reason why we had to understand our rights.*” (Field note 9,2023). They also referred to their own family’s experience indicating there had been relatives that they had not seen again due to this phenomenon, their reflection also went down to “how vulnerable children were in our country and immediately included how vulnerable women are in our country.” (Field note 9, 2023).

The notes shown above help define the way the implementation of this project impacted the students’ approach to rights recognition, keeping in mind that transgression emerged as a horizontal axis during the application, playing an important part on the involvement of the *Educación para la Paz* framework used to nurture constant reflection of students about the Colombian context and its impacts on children. Naturally, since this was also a part of an EFL classroom project, the researcher took this opportunity to ensure the participants developed the needed tools to express this knowledge in a foreign language.

#### ***5.2.1.2.2. Rights Within the School.***

During the implementation, rights in the school took place through the girls' participation, their responses in the questionnaires, the field diaries, the girls' artifacts and the interview with the homeroom teacher. The rights to have a safe place, to have a voice and to have protection over their bodies were mainly evident. It is worth mentioning that in the application of the diagnostic questionnaire, students were asked on a scale from 1 to 5 if they were told about rights at school. As shown in figure 16, 21 students answered the questionnaire from where 16 of them demonstrated that they have had a high approach to rights at school, as well as the 2 kids that agreed with the statement. There were 2 students who partially agreed and one of them had not been told about rights at school.

**Figure 16. Perception about rights at school**



Also, when interviewing the homeroom teacher, he stated:

It can be said that we always try to recognize them in all aspects: the right to education, to health, to food, to a family. What has to do with the educational context, in a certain way we try to offer tools or guarantee the rights that can be guaranteed from the classroom. (Own translation)<sup>14</sup> (Interview, 2023)

The teacher advises that from his role, he encourages the school to be a space for rights to be guaranteed and respected. Another thing that he mentioned was related to the school's and the district's role on guaranteeing specific rights, for example:

Right to education, completely free, they are given the right to food, which has to do with lunch, now a snack, classrooms, a school, water. Well, different things offered by the same school, the same secretary of education, the same country. (Own translation).<sup>15</sup> (Interview, 2023)

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<sup>14</sup> "se puede decir que uno siempre trata de reconocerlos en todos los aspectos: derecho a la educación, a la salud, a la comida, a una familia. Lo que tiene que ver con el contexto educativo, trata uno de de una u otra forma ofrecer herramientas o garantizar los derechos que se pueden garantizar desde el aula"

<sup>15</sup> " derecho a la educación, gratuidad total, se les da un derecho a la alimentación, lo que tiene que ver con almuerzo, ahora un refrigerio, unas aulas, un colegio, agua. Bueno diferentes cosas que ofrece el mismo colegio, la misma secretaria de educación, el mismo país"

Even though children have been told about rights and they listed the school as a safe place, during the reflections they pointed out situations where they felt uncomfortable at school, and this also helped reinforce the need for speaking about rights openly and expressing when something feels out of place, as noted in the field note:

We talked about how sometimes it is difficult to know when our rights are being transgressed, but we reflected that if a situation makes us feel uncomfortable, we should discuss it with someone we trust to try to find out what made us uncomfortable (Field note 5,2023)

In the session *My safe place*, when reflecting about how the little tree was in an unsafe place, students were asked the question, do you think your school is a safe place? Why? they responded “it was, and it wasn't safe. Most of them told me that gunfire was sometimes heard, and, on several occasions, they had not been able to leave the school for safety reasons” (Field note 7, 2023) allowing to open a space for the girls to express and recognize the spaces in their context where they did and did not feel safe. Also, in the same session, students had to write what their safe places were (see figure 6.), checking the data 16 students out of 22 considered their school as a safe place.

Also, in the session *My voice matters*, the children reflected on the importance of raising their voice and listening to others by making sentences about what they considered the importance of having a voice. When reflecting, they brought to the discussion an experience related to their group director and how that made them feel uncomfortable,

The girls told me about their discomfort going to their math class because the teacher was giving them sessions to check their heads for lice and that made them feel very uncomfortable (...) I told them to talk to the math teacher and express their discomfort, that perhaps they would find other strategies such as having their parents check on them at home or someone more trusted (...) we found peaceful solutions for those situations such as

dialogue, expressing oneself with respect and looking for healthy ways to resolve conflicts specially if some of them are experienced at school” (Field note 6, 2023)

Since this was a public health situation, the researcher advised the kids of the need of this type of check for the wellbeing of the school; however, it is important to note that this scenario, on the one hand, students were applying what they learned during the sessions and were able to express their discomfort while, on the other hand, they also learned how to tell an uncomfortable situation apart from a rights violation.

This kind of situation highlights the relevance of the *Educación para la paz* at school, since one of its main topics is related to peaceful conflict resolution. Moreover, it stresses the fact that speaking about rights, respect, and possible transgressions can be achieved and effectively communicated to students from any curricular area, as the teacher mentioned during the interview stating that all the teachers implement *Educación para la paz* day by day, guiding the girls to learn how to resolve conflicts from the dialogue and from the recognition of the difference instead of physical attacks or disrespect.

#### **5.2.1.2.3. Women’s rights spotting.**

Lastly, it was noticed that mainly during the reflection sessions, the girls brought up topics related to rights from a gender perspective. Even though it was not the focus of this study, the repeated appearances of situations that affect women specifically cannot be overlooked in this analysis for two reasons: the first one related to the population, as all the participants were women and the school was an all-girls school, students reaffirmed their identity as women and linked all the topics with their gender; the second one, to point out the high importance that a gender perspective should have in similar projects in the future.

In the first place, from a language perspective, this phenomenon could be noticed in the session *My safe place*, as the kids mainly regarded feminine relatives as their safest places (see table 5.) out of a total of 23 responses, and leaving aside the generic response *my family* with a 30.43% participation, the feminine relatives responses (*my aunt* 8.70%, *my mom* 13.04%, *my grandmother* 13.04%, *my sister* 13.04%, *my stepsister* 4.35%) added to 52.17% of participation being the biggest category and showing the huge role that women have in student's families.

**Table 5. Safe places related to family members**

<i>Family members</i>	COUNT	Percentage
my aunt	2	8.70%
my dad	2	8.70%
my family	7	30.43%
my grandmother	3	13.04%
my mom	3	13.04%
my sister	3	13.04%
my stepsister	1	4.35%
my uncles	2	8.70%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Following the session *My voice matters*, students were asked to share a situation where they did not feel heard, one of the students shared a situation that is specific to women:

A girl talked about her first menstruation and how she had an uncomfortable situation and felt alone because she did not have guidance nor some support who could understand this situation. When she wanted to speak, they did not listen to her, and she shared her situation

in class. She talked about the importance of recognizing oneself as a woman (Field note 6, 2023)

This girl's participation triggered a conversation about listening to others and the importance of being heard, which is related to the right *to have a voice* as shown in Figure 16, where a student highlighted the importance of being heard in her safe places. This opened the opportunity to talk about other situations that affect women; for example, in lesson *My leaves are mine*,

I asked [the students] if what happened to the little trees in the base material could happen to the children of our planet. (...) A girl reflected on femicide, she explained that women have to go through many cases of abuse and mistreatment, that going out on the street is a danger for us. Other girls began to comment on situations in their context where in Transmilenio some women were harassed and abused. (...) We reflected on the dangers that kids and especially girls run. They commented that no one should touch or disrespect them. (Field note 4, 2023)

In this session, rights and feminism came out, “the girls themselves bring to the class the rights of women and the situations where they have been silenced and transgressed” (Field note 6, 2023). Students showed to be aware of the dangerous situations that women face day by day in the Colombian context, as well as the recognition of their *right to be protected from abuse*, which is aligned to what they mentioned in the last session when the child recruitment topic was addressed. They reflected on “how vulnerable children were in our country and immediately included how vulnerable women are in our country.” (Field note 9, 2023)

To conclude, even though gender was not part of the main concepts of the study, children are proactively bringing it up, showing how this approach is a must on any project



related to rights recognition. Firstly, from the *Educación para la paz* framework as the feminine experience during the conflict was radically different from the male experience, these differences documented in different reports from state institutions such as *Centro de Memoria Histórica* and *Comisión de la Verdad*, among others. Also, because this a topic that should become general knowledge for children as “they mentioned the violations and abuses experienced by girls who are affected by the conflict and in general (...) and how important it was for women to protect each other to avoid bad situations” (Field note 9, 2023)

#### **5.2.1.3. Subcategory 3: Solidarity.**

The last subcategory refers to the recognition of the individual’s role within the social environment by their peers. This sphere is based on the respect and the solidarity within the group and nurtures the individual’s self-esteem; same as with the other spheres, this one has attached some forms of disrespect, expressed in the form of bullying, being ignored, excluded or receiving constant negative feedback. The investigator noted that the first approaches to the category were mostly related to duties, both moral and daily tasks (to respect, do the dishes, to help their families), and toward the end of the implementation, the children had developed a deeper sense of which rights are meant to be respected but also of the importance of being respectful to other people’s rights. Additionally, they expressed that knowledge about their rights would help them defend their rights and other people’s rights as well. Lastly, students advised also that knowing about rights will aid them in educating their closest circle on the topic.

These findings contributed to understanding the dialectic approach of Honneth's theory, as participants learned to expect respect while also making themselves accountable to show respect towards others; at the same time, children learned about a problem situation specific to their context, in this case child recruitment, allowing children to be also a constructive voice on the current cry for reparation and the never-ending hope for non-repetition of the violent past of a country that keeps craving for peace in the midst of the war.

For the analysis, the data was collected from the students' diagnostic and final questionnaires, audio recordings of the classes, and an interview with the homeroom teacher. The first advances toward the solidarity sphere were through the categorization of the responses to the question *do you know some of your rights? Name the ones you know* on the diagnostic questionnaire. As seen in Figure 12, there were students whose answers were categorized neither as rights, nor as intuitions; responses like, *I have the right to respect, to help my family, to wash the dishes, just as there are rights, there are duties*, were aligned to what the homeroom teacher mentioned during the interview held. He considers that, as important as the rights, children should also be made aware of the duties that they have to the space that they inhabit and the people who surround them. This preoccupation with their duties and the impact on others was transformed during the implementation to something more alike to a moral standard than a simple task or responsibility: the desire to respect and be respected.

This transition was noted in the final questionnaire's responses to the question *what is the use of knowing about your rights?* which included statements such as *to respect*

*people*<sup>16</sup>, *it is useful to make myself respected*<sup>17</sup>, *to know that I am being respected*<sup>18</sup> and *it is useful to respect people and myself*<sup>19</sup>, among others. Following this same line of thought, there was another questionnaire response that focused on the gender approach, advising that *Women must be respected*<sup>20</sup>, showing self-recognition as women and gender solidarity. This helped develop a sense of accountability and empowerment, as it is shown in the field note #9 :” I asked them about how they would apply this knowledge in the future, and I heard ideas like: (...) , to respect and give myself respect, to have a good life, to learn more English to talk about my rights in English, among others”. On the same field note, it can be observed that child recruitment” for many of them [the students] was not an unknown subject. (...) They made an immediate connection to the issue of rights saying that this was the reason why we had to understand our rights. They associated [child recruitment] with respect for themselves and for others.” (Field note 9, 2023). It is worth noting that the focus of this study was not to work on the students’ sense of respect, however, this appeared as a collateral result of the process of rights recognition that was the center of the investigation.

Moreover, students’ reflections and responses showed another contribution to the solidarity sphere, the defense of rights. On the final questionnaire, as mentioned before, the girls were asked *what is the use of knowing about your rights?* some of their responses were *to know and to be able to defend myself from people who want to discriminate against*

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<sup>16</sup> Para respetar a las personas

<sup>17</sup> me sirve para hacerme respetar yo mismo

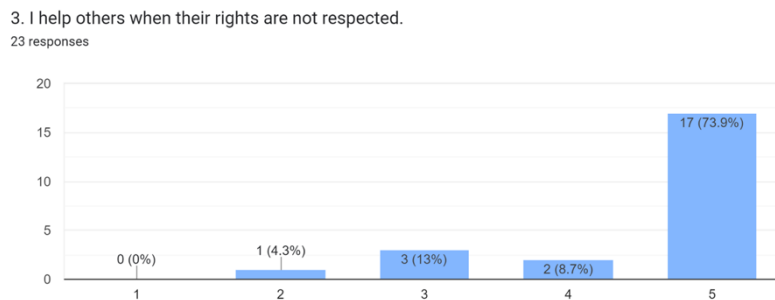
<sup>18</sup> Saber que estoy siendo respetada

<sup>19</sup> me sirve para saver a respetar a la jente y a mi

<sup>20</sup> ” A las mujeres hay que respetarlas” (Final questionnaire response)

me<sup>21</sup>, *I know how to defend my rights and help others defend their own rights*<sup>22</sup>, which revealed an inclination toward helping others, sparked by the newly acquired knowledge about rights. This was also reflected in the data gathered through the final questionnaire in the question *I help others when their rights are not respected* which had a total of 87.6% children that agreed or totally agreed with the statement (See Figure 17).

**Figure 17. Helping others**



Following the defense of rights by helping others, some of the chapters from the base material brought up important contributions to the children's understanding of the topics treated. For example, the chapter *My Leaves Are Mine* of the book really had a great impact on the girls and during the socialization with other classes and with parents, they emphasized that part of the story, as shown in the following audio transcription “the hunter machines took off the trees’ leaves, so we put their leaves back on with these sentences”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> “Para poder y saber defenderme a las personas que me quieren discriminar” (Final questionnaire response)

<sup>22</sup> “ya se como defender mis derechos y ayudar a los demas a defender los derechos de ellos” (Final questionnaire response)

<sup>23</sup> “las hunter machines les quitaron sus hojitas, entonces nosotras les pusimos sus hojitas con esas oraciones” (Audio transcription)

(Audio Transcription 1, 2023), the fact that the character of the story had been affected by the hunter machines allowed children to also take action and help her repair that damage by restoring her leaves with positive sentences.

Lastly, as part of the last reflection of the implementation, students demonstrated not only that they had appropriated the content, but also that they realized the significance of sharing that knowledge and helping others and understanding the importance of their rights, as shown in the field note #9: “I asked them about how they would apply this knowledge in the future, and I heard ideas like: to teach my sister that she has rights” (Field note 9, 2023). It was also present on one of the final questionnaire’s responses to the question *what is the use of knowing about your rights?* and one of the students answered, *it is useful for my future or to be able to teach my family members that rights are power*<sup>24</sup>. This educational impulse is a great advance in the *Educación para la Paz*, as it denotes that the population participating in the investigation can also become an agent of change in their communities and it is also in their community's recognition where the solidarity sphere is reached.

To conclude, this category gathers in the complete development process of the subject, starting from the inner most part of their relationships, to the way they interact with their surroundings, having the legal construction of rights as the intermediary. The investigation, however, took this structure and built on it from the use of contextual details

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<sup>24</sup> ”Me sirve para un futuro o poder enseñar a mis familiares que el derecho es un poder” (Final questionnaire response)

of the Colombian story and current social landscape to encourage the participants' identification, not only as subjects, but also as subjects of rights.

### ***5.2.2. Category 2. Writing as a Literacy skill***

This category is linked to the second specific objective, related to the development of the students' writing process through scaffolded activities. This was achieved by addressing the flaws identified during the diagnostic test through two different approaches: the process-based approach, centered on the expression of ideas and the product-based approach, focused on accuracy; the activities derived from these approaches were all related to the rights recognition subject matter, and each addressed a different right. The presence of these writing approaches was identified through the review of the implementation of field notes, student's artifacts, and the diagnostic and final questionnaires where the data was collected throughout the application.

The researcher identified how the children expressed their understanding of the topics learned in guided activities where they were required to either organize or unscramble words to form sentences or to create sentences of their own, so she could then examine how the children evolved on the formal part of the language (spelling, grammar, etc.) by reviewing how, throughout the activities, their writing adopted more accurate forms and conventions for the English language.

#### **5.2.2.1. Subcategory 1. Expressing ideas through scaffolding.**

This first subcategory was focused on the process-based approach whose primary goal, according to Shin (2013), is for children to express their ideas and to construct

meaning by using different steps where the expression would be central, only to work on the grammatical specifics towards the end. Throughout the project, students' writing activities were centered on how they used the language to speak their minds about their rights. Students' evolution was analyzed through the observation of the responses they provided when working on the controlled and guided activities, and by comparing the results on each one of the activities based on the tools used (sentence frames or unscrambling exercises). Additional pointers related to the subcategory were also consigned on the investigator's field notes.

During the collection of the results, it was noted how by allowing students to express themselves within the conditions of each activity, either based on sentence frames or reorganizing words provided, some of the children eventually created new sentences autonomously. The creation of new sentences evidenced how the subject matter was interiorized by students, who generated a reflective attitude toward each of the rights worked in class, as expected in an educational process linked with the *Educación para la Paz* framework.

Since the main concern of this part of the project was related to meaning construction, the researcher did not focus on spelling or grammar matters at first, allowing the children to slowly assimilate these topics class after class. Initially, the sessions were centered on allowing students to use their knowledge, paired with the new information provided to complete a series of exercises. For starters, in the diagnostic activity, the students had their first approach to sentence frames by introducing themselves following the sentence frame, *my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my favorite food is \_\_\_\_\_*, which was written on the board. During the second part, they were shown a short film about forced

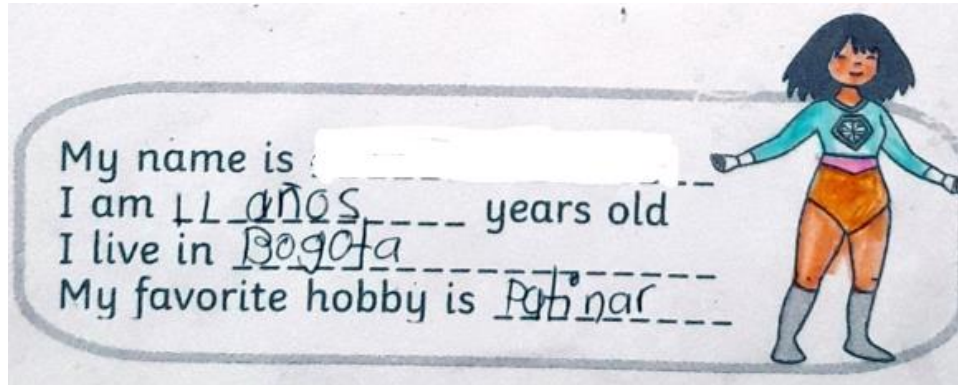
displacement and were asked to express their opinion and feelings about the video using the sentence frame *I feel* \_\_\_\_\_. These two activities were presented orally and introduced the children to basic vocabulary about food and feelings. Since this was the first time the students faced this type of activity, they struggled with its completion; specially identifying the words on the sentence frame. This situation was presented consistently during the first three sessions and so the teacher researcher supported students individually by walking around the classroom and checking on their progress as explained in following Field Note:

I noticed that several of them did not know the words on the sheet with the sentence frames that I gave them to complete so once I explained the activity, I went through the room spot by spot explaining to them and clarifying their doubts [...] Several girls felt insecure about the words they saw on the sheets, and it was difficult for them to carry out the activity. The clarifications worked [...] everyone carried out their activity. (Field Note 3, 2023)

In the next session, students were introduced to the first written activity of the cycle, where they were given a small template to introduce themselves and mark their illustrated books. In this case, even though the children were advised to use the communicative template *How do you say* \_\_\_\_ *in English?* only a few of them asked how to say the words needed to complete the sentence frames, giving as a result, examples like the one shown in figure 5 and, in other cases kids filled the information in Spanish (see Figure 18). Nevertheless, they understood and fulfilled the main task of the class which was to communicate their hobbies and give basic information about themselves.

**Figure 18. First activity sample**



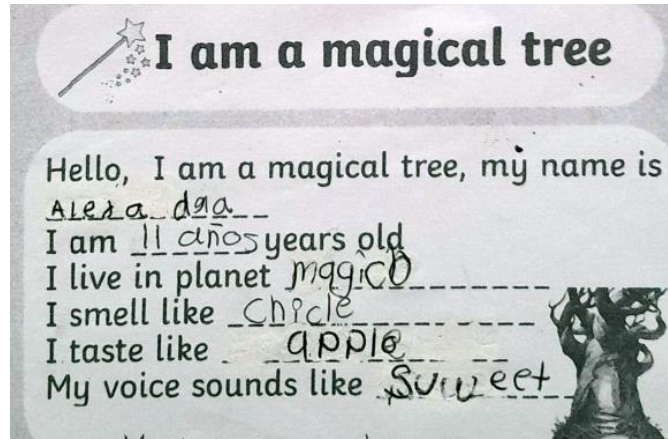


As the activities with the sentence frames continued, children gained confidence to ask the researcher if they did not know the needed vocabulary and started bringing dictionaries, which encouraged them to use new words to complete the different sentence frames proposed. Additionally, in the upcoming exercises, the teacher decided to implement visual aids to facilitate their learning process. Using flashcards to relay new vocabulary, students went from writing their ideas only in Spanish, to creating new sentences with full meanings using only Spanish partially or entirely in the foreign language, as it was noted on the field note #6, “the use of flashcards has been a great mechanism for the girls to remember the meaning and associate it with the images without having to use Spanish or translation” (Field note 6, 2023)

After implementing the use of flashcards to support the usage of sentence frames for the construction of meaning, in activity *I am a Magical Tree*, where they were asked to describe their tree giving it a name, age, a home, smell, taste, and sound; English was used more often to express their ideas about the tree’s background, although some students still used Spanish as well (See Figure 19). The goal of describing the tree was meant to work on the right to have an identity and throughout this writing exercise, students were able to

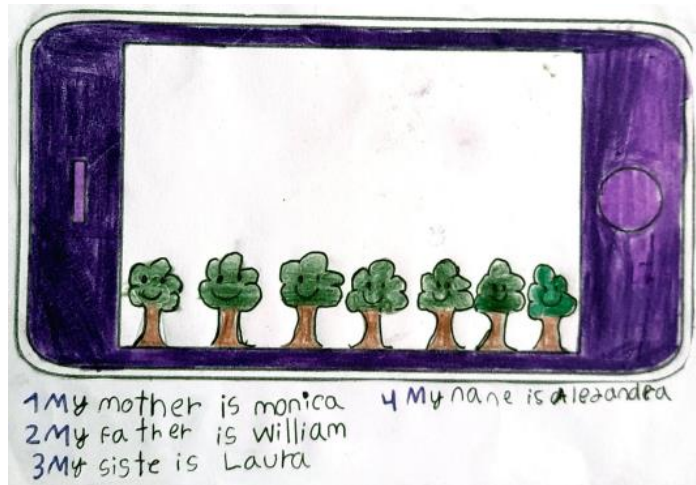
connect with their tree's identity and to build a personal association with the story of the base material.

**Figure 19. *I am a Magical Tree* sample**



Once the children were better acquainted with the sentence frames and had an established habit of learning vocabulary through Flashcards, more significant improvements were noticed in activities *My magical family* and *My safe place*. For the first activity, *my magical family*, students were asked to use the sentence frame, *I have a \_\_\_\_\_*, followed by a family member, i.e. *I have a mom*. In this opportunity, most of the children used the provided sentence frame and no Spanish was observed, as an important highlight of this activity, *one* of the children discarded the sentence frame and created her own description of her family using their names. (See Figure 20). For the second activity, *My safe place*, where students were asked to list what their safe places were and what they could do when they were in them, the participants did not use Spanish at all. Additionally, each child listed different safe places and different types of activities indicating how they understood the right to have a safe place through what they could do there as shown in Figure 15.

**Figure 20. My magical family sample**



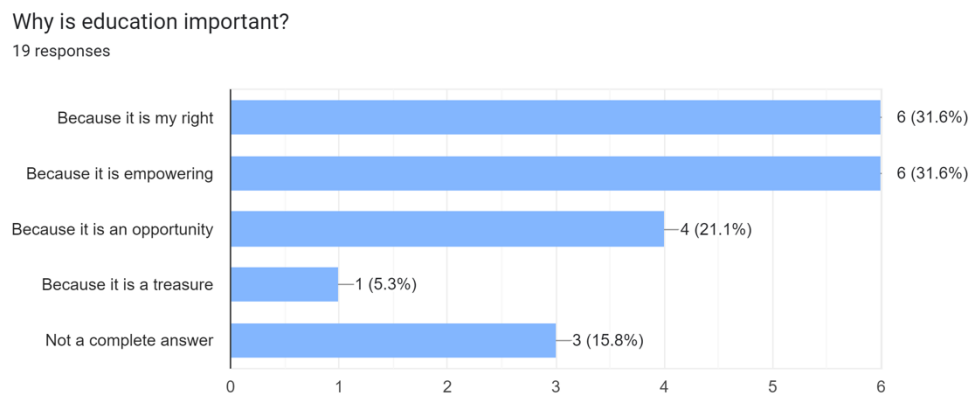
Lastly, in session *I deserve education*, students were given more complex vocabulary related to education: *empowering, my right, an opportunity, a treasure*, and they had to use the words to answer the question, *why is education important?* Furthermore, they were introduced to the conjunction *because* in the form of a sentence frame to write the answer and they were able to use the vocabulary correctly as shown in figure 21.

**Figure 21. I deserve education sample**



Here, it is important to note that each student was asked to answer using the words that they liked the best and so, each child could express a different perspective about why education was important to them. The preferred answers were *because it is my right* and *because it is empowering* with 31.6% each, although all words were used as shown in figure 22.

**Figure 22. Why is education important?**



As seen before, sentence frames worked as a way to give the children a successful initial approximation to writing and expressing their ideas. However, along with the use of sentence frames, the teacher started using unscrambling activities and matching activities where children needed to organize a series of words to build a series of sentences proposed by the teacher. This opened the doorway to the children's creativity and allowed them additional opportunities to explore meaning construction. The first activity that applied this method was *My leaves are mine* where students were given a set of words that they needed to organize and create sentences. The words were presented as shown in Figure 23.

**Figure 23. Unscrambling Activity *My leaves are mine***

Activity

Put the words in order.

1. extraordinary leaves are My

2. are unique My colors

3. My is strong body

4. dance My body can

5. kindness deserves My body

6. protection deserve I

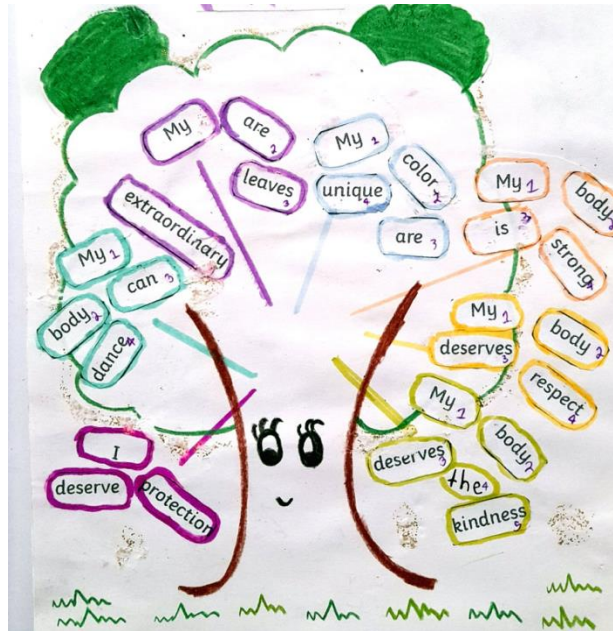
7. deserves respect body My

For this session, even though the sentences were numbered to provide a certain structure for students to work on, this exercise allowed them to also explore other forms of expression. While some of them used Spanish as a supporting mechanism to interiorize the sentences, a few went beyond the mere organization of the words. Going from simple modifications such as adding an article (*My body deserves the kindness*) to greater modifications that sought a deeper meaning like (*My body deserves protection kindness*) as shown in Figure 15. It is also important to point out that students completed this activity with a high success rate, organizing the sentences correctly in most cases as consigned in field note #5:

The girls organized the sentences making sense of the real meaning of each sentence. They intuitively recognized the first word and the action. Some girls found it difficult at first, but I think that the fact of associating it with the protection of their bodies helped greatly in making them feel comfortable with the topic and motivated to order the sentences. (Field Note 5, 2023)

It is also interesting to mention that kids developed their own way to make sense of the words on the activity, either by generating a color code (see Figure 24) or by numbering the words.

**Figure 24. Student artifact session *My leaves are mine***



The second activity that worked with a matching activity was *My Voice Matters*. In this case, students were given more autonomy when it came to creating the sentences as they were provided a noun, an action, and a description, as shown in Figure 25.

**Figure 25. Matching activity *My Voice Matters***

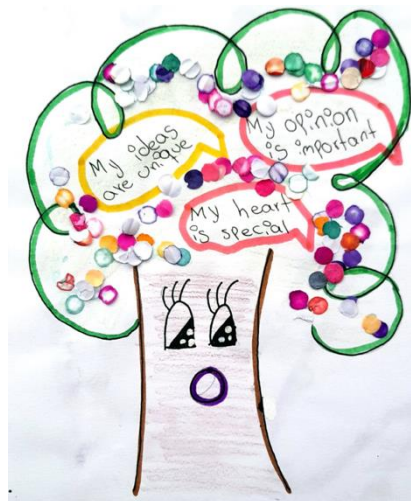
WHAT	ACTION	DESCRIPTION
My voice	is/are	unique
My ideas		special
My heart		wonderful
My feelings		important
My opinion		valuable

This was the activity where children could explore their own creativity the most, as noted in the researcher's field note number 6:

Here the girls already began to create their own sentences taking into account the plural and the singular and of course the communicative intention. Here the importance of having a voice and being able to express themselves was evident. They, themselves created their sentences according to what they thought. (Field note 6, 2023)

This can easily be seen in any of the students' artifacts collected, and an example can be seen in Figure 26.

**Figure 26. Student artifact *My voice matters***



In short, this subcategory allowed the investigator to explore and discover, hand in hand with children, how proposals of sentence creation can go beyond the simple

preoccupation for grammar and spelling and transcend into an entire experience of giving the children their voice back. As intended from the beginning, kids were not only practicing a foreign language, but they were also acquiring knowledge about some of the key rights to which they are entitled. Opening the class to discuss their thoughts on each one of the rights kept the children engaged with the project, as well as the use of scaffolded activities and an increasing autonomy on their sentence creation process played an important part on maintaining the kids motivated throughout the implementation.

#### **5.2.2.2. Subcategory 2. Accuracy through scaffolding.**

This second subcategory was focused on the product-based approach which, according to Shin, “focuses on the final writing product, seeking to create as accurate a text as possible [...] Like phonics, a product-based approach for writing consists of a bottom-up approach, where accuracy with the various pieces of language (letters, words, sentences, paragraphs) is the focus.” (2013). This study facilitated guided and controlled activities that familiarized students with the formal aspects of the language and exercised their capacity to construct sentences with complete meaning. The writing activities were created following the school’s curricular planning and reinforced the children’s vocabulary learning and grammar foundations. Although the primary focus was not to achieve perfect dominion over the formal structures, but rather to approximate students to these guidelines.

Initially, the data showed that students were familiar with basic aspects of literacy such as the alphabet and a few basic words. In the diagnostic sessions, students were asked to spell some words and they showed their understanding of the letters in English as shown in the Field note #2, “the girls made 6 groups to do the spelling battle. We worked on three



sentences: I love my safe place; my life matters and my body is mine. With the first sentence, I noticed that students find easy to spell the words in English” (Field note 6, 2023).

In the questionnaire, students were asked to write down 10 words they knew in English, most of their answers were vocabulary words related to food, animals, family members, and colors. Although the words were not related to the project’s subject matter, students demonstrated an appropriate spelling of basic words like “dog”, “house”, etc.as shown in Figure 27; for this reason, the classes turned around teaching new vocabulary, which would also allow them to improve their sentence construction skills while enabling them to express their ideas in relation to their rights.

**Figure 27. Diagnostic questionnaire.**

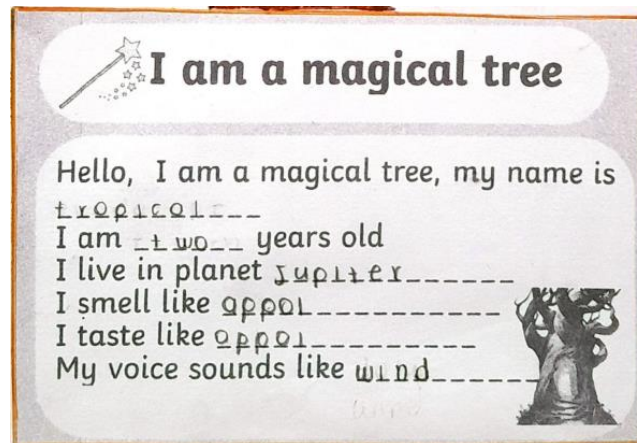
9. Escribe 10 palabras que conozcas en inglés.

Yellow	please	coffe	tea	and
House	cat	milk	water	watermelo

To review their progress, it was found that in session, *On a magical planet*, students had to write what their favorite hobby was and as many of them did not know the words in English, they either used Spanish to finish the sentences or wrote words in English with spelling mistakes such as *shool* (*school*), *go to t park* (*go to the park*), *esque* (*skiing*). Some of them wrote actions in English like *play*, *sing*, *skate*; others wrote nouns like *volleyball* and *ball*, showing an approximation to accuracy, since most of their spelling was correct, but missed a grammatical structure to become a full sentence. Additionally, in lesson, *I am a magical tree*, students’ description words had spelling errors like *appol* (*apple*), *strawbeiry* (*strawberry*), *chocolay* or *chocolait* (*chocolate*), *perfion* (*perfume*), *miusic*

(*music*); showing that students were writing from a phonetic standpoint, relating the words with the spelling in Spanish or how they thought they were pronounced. (See Figure 28.)

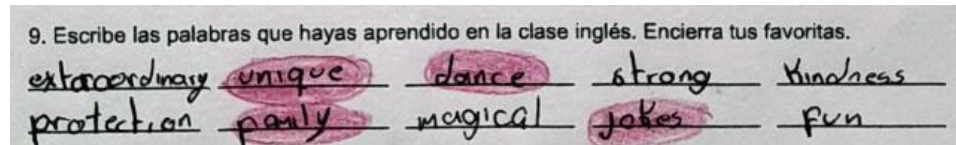
**Figure 28.** *I am a magical tree* student's artifact



This initial assessment on spelling provided a necessary insight to understand the student's relationship with the language, specifically related to their writing skills. With the results obtained, the researcher could focus on supporting their learning process regarding the subject matter vocabulary and made it possible for them to easily understand the base text and to interiorize the information provided regarding rights education, opening the door to work on the accuracy of their sentences. In the next sessions, the use of vocabulary flashcards helped students identify the correct spelling of the words, as they demonstrated a better understanding of the way words were written. This could be identified in the final questionnaire where students were asked to write down the words they learned during the classes. Students' responses were all related to the content of the picture book they created as shown in Figure 29, aligning their understanding of rights with the appropriation of the

vocabulary in terms of spelling and meaning compared with the two activities reviewed above.

**Figure 29. Final questionnaire:**



Regarding grammar, and starting the work dedicated to sentence construction, each class students had the chance to practice a different grammar topic based on the school curriculum, aiming to familiarize them with the rights while accomplishing the school goals for the EFL classroom. During these sessions, children had the opportunity to approach the challenges of accuracy in a sentence level by means of different exercises. For instance, in the session, *My leaves are mine*, students reviewed the use of *the verb to be*, *the simple present*, and *the modal verb can*; as part of the design, the researcher had as the writing aim, to have students understand the structures and organize the words to make perfect sense. To achieve this, they had to unscramble a few sentences related to empowerment over their bodies, as shown in Figure 22, and described on Field note 5:

I gave them colored sheets with words for them to organize a sentence. Most of the girls organized them very well and it worked for them to compare the words with Spanish to give order to each sentence. I noticed that some students created new sentences with the words when they cut and pasted them returning their trees' leaves. (Field note 5, 2023)

During this session, most students were able to order the sentences correctly, avoiding grammatical errors, this gave way also to the creation of new sentences as shown in figure 15 with the sentence "I deserve kindness protection," where the student used the tools at hand to generate a sentence that had meaning, emphasizing two key concepts of the

session: kindness and protection. The understanding of the grammatical content was also displayed on the student's capacity of maintaining the correct correspondence between the singular noun and the correct form of the verb, though she missed the conjunction “and” since that had not been studied during the class. Another example related to the same activity was a student who rearranged the words provided to create the sentence “My body deserves leaves” which was grammatically correct, as the student properly identified the syntactic relationship between the nouns and the verbs; and it displayed the student’s creativity by giving the words a new meaning and thinking outside of the provided examples (See Figure 30).

**Figure 30. Student’s artifact: *My leaves are mine***



Other examples related to sentence construction were seen on the session, *My voice matters*. This session was designed to cover the *verb to be* and *adjectives*, based on the

word chart shown in Figure 24 and it had many examples on which the children created accurately spelled words and built sentences such as “My ideas are wonderful,” “My opinion is important” and “My ideas are unique.” Nevertheless, a few students struggled a bit more with the verb-noun correspondence, using the incorrect form of the verb to be or completely leaving it out creating sentences like “*My ideas is important*” and “My ideas special,” which in any case maintained a clear sense of what the child wanted to express. There were other examples where the spelling of some words had opportunities, though the content was syntactically correct, for example sentences “Mi heart is special,” “My opinion is wonderful,” and “My voice is importat.” This phenomenon was consigned in filed note 6:

Here, the girls already began to create their own sentences taking into account the plural and the singular and of course the communicative intention. Here the importance of having a voice and being able to express themselves was evident. They created their sentences according to what they thought. (Field note 6, 2023).

These activities allowed them to start recognizing instinctively some grammatical categories like nouns, adjectives, and verbs and to identify also how syntax in the foreign language worked, recognizing singular and plural forms, among others.

The findings showed that having successful experiences on writing with sentence frames and unscrambling activities were helpful tools to familiarize students with the formal guidelines of the language and create rudiments to eventually create accurate texts. Working accuracy from the basic understanding of letters, words, and finally, sentences, based on their personal context and according to each assigned exercise, while keeping up with the needs of the educative institution, aligned with the government's standards.

So, by using scaffolding in the form of guided and controlled activities, it was possible to engage the children with the Foreign Language at two levels, the first related to the capacity of communicating complete ideas related to the subject matter of the class: children rights recognition. The second level, related to the capacity of using the correct structures of the language to create sentences as a means toward the meaning construction level and was conceived as a substantiation phase for future projects focused on writing; which looked forward to contributing to the implementation of Educación para la Paz topics in the EFL classroom, as in any other curricular area; strengthening the role of the school in the national goal for the construction of true and long-lasting peace.

### ***5.2.3. Category 3. Picture Books as a Learning Appropriation Tool***

This category aimed to meet the last specific objective related to picture book creation and its impacts on the children's process related to rights recognition and writing. For this reason, two sub-categories were identified: The first one, ownership, displays the way children expressed their understanding of the subject matter about rights and how this was included on their speech and interventions during the sessions and socialization activities. The second, representation, detailed the way students found themselves or their families represented on the base material's story or characters, as well as in their own illustrated books. For this analysis, the main sources of information used were the investigator's field notes, audio/video transcriptions, and students' artifacts (picture books).

#### **5.2.3.1. Subcategory 1. Ownership.**

For this sub-category the researcher refers to Ownership as the student's usage of the concepts introduced during the project's implementation, as a result of their involvement in the different activities proposed, with the goal of creating an illustrated

book where the knowledge of the subject matter was ultimately consigned. This ownership could be observed throughout the different stages of the project, and in each step children developed closeness to the topics treated, as well as affinity with the foreign language.

Students started to get involved with the language from day one, during the diagnostic session where they watched a short film on forced displacement and learned how to express basic emotions like scared, happy, sad, etc. Their involvement with the base material started on day three. Kids received the information provided openly and interacted actively with the researcher, as shown on Field note 3, for session, *On a magical planet* where students:

[...] were very committed to the activity because it was about talking about themselves in another language. They wanted to know how to say various words while talking about their likes, etc. Communication is taking place in English and in Spanish because they don't know words. but once they learn a word, they start using it and mix their speech with Spanish for example, they said, "el nombre de mi tree es Sofia". (Field Note 3, 2023)

The process above describes how, from the first sessions, each student connected with the story, but also with the use of the language as a means of expression.

The book studied allowed the teacher to set the foundation of the social content related to recognition of rights, while the activities aided students in their understanding of the grammatical dimension of the language. The following excerpts from Field Note 6, for session, *My Magical Family*, serve as a testimonial of the mechanisms the girls used to incorporate the new knowledge. For example, "they used Spanish and English to express themselves. They talked about the main and repetitive vocabulary that we have covered in previous sessions such as leaves, hunter machines, trees, etc." and it showed that their approach to picture books helped them to internalize the use of new vocabulary related to

the subject matter. Additionally, since the teacher was working with a base text, children were asked to read aloud to get familiar with the sounds of the words used. Although this had been a challenge in the first classes, by session 6, “the girls were much more open to reading and participating in the reading. They continue with insecurity, but they seem a little more encouraged to participate in what is new for them.” (Field note 6, 2023)

Regarding the work related to rights recognition, different sessions showed how the participants incremented little by little their capacity to identify problematic situations through understanding the types of transgressions present in the base material. They also developed not only their consciousness of the different rights that they were entitled to, but also how they are impacted by different kinds of violence, including the one derived from the armed conflict. This was noted on field note 9: “I noticed that several of them talked about the rights we work for and associated it with the sentences they themselves had created. For example, they talked about the right to identity and showed the name of their little tree, their age, the name of their planet and their characteristics.”

Another way this knowledge was interiorized can be seen in the audio transcription of one of the activities where kids needed to socialize their books with other groups and parents when asked what kind of rights they had: “we have the right to a home, to a roof, to a meal. Yes, to a meal, to a family, to study. Right to everything.”<sup>25</sup> . Also, when asked

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<sup>25</sup> “tenemos derecho a una casa, a un techo, a una comida, Sí, a una comida, a una familia, a un estudio y ya, derecho a todo”



about the base material: “it is told in the story that they couldn’t do that because we have, just like everyone else, rights in life. <sup>26</sup>” (Audio Transcription from socialization).

Lastly, there were instances in which the topic overlapped the foreign language learning and children had to rely on their native language to communicate certain ideas. Toward the final socialization activity, students

[...] used Spanish and English to explain what the book we had read was about. So, they used tree, hunter machines, planet, safe place, voice, family and combined it with Spanish to explain their project. [...] the girls appropriated enough of the classroom vocabulary to talk about their rights and mention the story they read. (Field note 9, 2023)

The previous were examples of the way students not only dedicated time to the academic task of the class, but also imprinted their own style and their own voice to the matter treated, contributing to the school’s PEI and educational goals, as well as to the objectives and expectations set from the Educación para la Paz framework, finding ways to consign that on their illustrated books and in their minds and hearts, in their identity as children, but also as women.

### **5.2.3.2. Subcategory 2. Representation.**

During the data analysis, it was identified that students represented themselves throughout the creation of their picture book, showing appropriation of the subject matter while approaching sentence writing skills. This subcategory emerged from this realization and it was through student’s artifacts (illustrated books), audio transcriptions, and questionnaires, that the researchers found that the children personified themselves, their

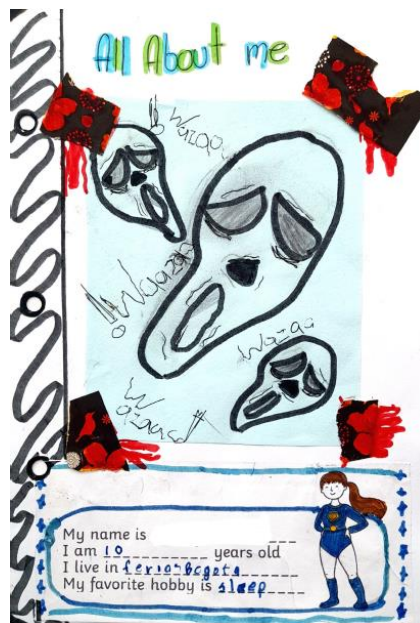
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<sup>26</sup> Se dice en la historia que no podrían hacer eso porque teníamos al igual que ellas y nosotras como todos tenemos derechos en la vida.

likes, their ideas, and their contexts (family members or close people) with the recognition of rights, part of Honneth's sphere of love explained in the first category and the first steps to meet the *Educación para la paz*.

In this section, the researcher determined how students achieved this self-representation by using the base material's story and characters, the children's picture books, acting as the tool that enabled student's learning. The representation started to be seen since the very beginning of the picture book creation when students had the chance to brand their books. In session, *On a magical planet*, students had to write the title *All about me*, filling the gaps with information about them and making a drawing of themselves or of something that characterized them as shown in figure 31.

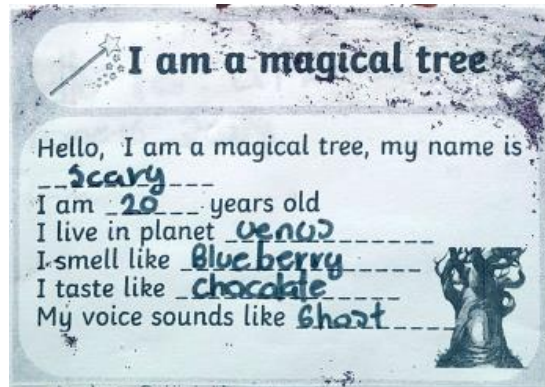
**Figure 31. Student's artifact *All about me***



Here, the student, besides providing information about what her favorite hobby was, made a drawing of ghosts which, by looking at other pages of her picture book, was the

way she chose to represent herself, her likes, and her ideas. Another milestone of their creation process was shown in session, *I am magical tree*, where students were asked to describe their trees as shown in Figure 32.

**Figure 32. Student's artifact *I am a magical tree***



The same student created her character personalizing it with her own likes, stating that her tree's voice sounded like a *ghost*. The same was seen during the final questionnaire, where students were asked to write down the words they learned during the sessions and circle their favorite one; the same kid wrote the word *ghost* and circled it. This phenomenon was repetitive on most of the students' artifacts, especially in the drawings they made in the first page of the book, they drew objects like hearts, animals, figures, using their favorite colors and representing themselves. For instance, one of the students wrote a message on her picture book's cover related to planet earth, as shown in Figure 33.

**Figure 33. Student's artifact *All about me***



Showing a connection between her ideas, her likes, and the story of the base material where the main character's planet was introduced in the first part of the story. Other examples displayed icons, like in the case of a group of girls who used their initials in a heart, also displaying the close relationship they had with each other. There were other instances of representation, mainly worth mentioning those where the child referred to their characters through possessive adjectives. For example:

My little tree is called Sofia, this is her age, and this is a beautiful phrase, and this is my tree with some messages about rights. This is my mommy; these are the places where I want to... not visit but where I like to be.<sup>27</sup> (Transcription from the socialization)

Children had access not only to the learning tools for a new language, but also to a new conceptual universe, where their ideas and perceptions played a central role inside their own educational process; added to that, they also received important input regarding their context and the relation it kept with other people in the country, putting themselves in their shoes and embracing its potential.

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<sup>27</sup> Mi arbolita se llama Sofia, estos son los años de arbolita y esta es una frase muy linda y esta es mi arbolita con unos mensajes de derechos. Esta es mi mami, estos son los lugares en donde más, no quiero visitar sino los lugares en donde me gusta estar.

To conclude, it is important to point out that each activity aiming to create a picture book was a step toward one of the most important achievements of the project, which was to generate a link between the content and the goals proposed by the school and the student's context. This interest forged a new relationship with their environment and opened the way for many of the girls to realize the potential that knowing about their rights can mean to themselves and their families in different circumstances, getting to their own opinions and conclusions about the subject matter and its uses.

## **Chapter VI. Conclusions and Implications**

This chapter aims to show the conclusions obtained from the research project, as well as the implications for the teachers who are interested in applying a similar approach in their classroom, there will also be a review of the limitations of the project and a few suggestions for further research in the field.

### **6.1 Conclusions**

The present project aimed to analyze the impact of implementing a picture book creation, framed on PBL and the *Educación para la Paz*, in the development of 5th graders' writing skills and their self-recognition as subjects of rights in an EFL classroom, having as a frame of reference the research question: How might implementing a picture book creation, framed on PBL and the *Educación para la Paz*, have an impact on the development of the writing skills of an EFL classroom of 5th graders at Magdalena Ortega de Nariño public school while fostering their self-recognition as subjects of rights?

Regarding the first objective, related to generating a space of reflection about Children Rights through guided reading sessions and the use of driving questions in each class, it was noted that opening the class space for children to be active participants in the learning process helped engage students with the subject matter and enabled the possibility for them to maintain contact with the foreign language. Additionally, providing each session not only with a reading space to familiarize them with the base material while encouraging their confidence and working on the understanding of rights as a legal resource (rights sphere), but also reinforcing their role within the social group they belong to (solidarity sphere), opened the children's perspective on their own experiences.

Moreover, building the lessons keeping in mind the *Educación para la Paz* framework reinforced the existing love sphere identified in the diagnostic questionnaire while also achieving the purpose of introducing rights as both a concept and a practical piece of knowledge. In addition to this, having PBL as the pedagogical approach allowed students to be immersed in the language at a level they were not used to before, the use of driving questions and supporting materials, eased them into participating in the class, also exercising their right to have a voice to be heard. This also aligned with the school's PEI and its mission to work toward the improvement of their self-esteem, personal character, and autonomy.

For the second objective, the researcher looked forward to developing students' initial accuracy and expressing ideas skills in writing, by using scaffolded activities. On the one hand, the product-based approach exercises such as the use of sentence frames, and sentence unscrambling, allowed students to have a swift approximation to written accuracy,

as the project worked from a sentence level, without neglecting the need for also providing assistance at a word level beforehand, providing the vocabulary relevant to each session.

On the other hand, the investigator used a process-based approach to encourage expressing ideas making use of the children's creativity and the use of the subject matter. In this approach, scaffolding allowed the children to comply with increasingly more complex writing exercises, as they advanced through the story and through the creation of their own picture books. This approach also enabled the girls to create their own sentences, expanding the initial writing goals of completing activities correctly, to allowing the creation of new sentences on which the children could speak their minds up.

Lastly, regarding the third objective, which was to create an illustrated book that evidences the appropriation of Children rights and the writing improvement process in the students' class work, it was possible to evidence how the use of picture books brought students closer to the subject matter, displaying at the same time a gradual adaptation to the forms of the English language. Although the results were not perfect in the formal aspect, it is possible to confirm the effectiveness of the artifact on the participants' writing and concept appropriation processes. They were able to display different levels of interiorization of the topics treated, especially during their class participation, when they socialized their creations with other children.

Aside from the ownership displayed, children also projected themselves as part of the story through a process of characterization, that also brought them closer to the rights that were studied and the specific transgressions experimented by the characters. This construct, which looked forward to creating empathy on the kids' end, evolved into a reflection process that was poured onto the final socialization with their peers and parents.

So, the results examined above demonstrated that the pedagogical approach used for the activities (Project Based Learning), the conceptual proposal brought from the *Educación para la Paz* framework, and the artifacts created during the implementation worked in unison to achieve the goal of creating rights recognition; also confirming that the EFL classroom is also a place of opportunity to go beyond the mere teaching of a set of rules, that above all, language is a means for expression and thus, it should be taught in its full potential to create and promote critical thought among its speakers.

## **6.2 Implications**

From this research project different implications were identified, once the implementation was completed and the data analyzed. These implications concerned basically three aspects: EFL teaching, School Community, and Rights Recognition. In this section, the researcher will dive into each one of the topics and discuss the findings.

In the first place, the most notorious implication is linked to EFL teaching and the future of EFL classrooms. The proposal demonstrated how EFL improvement can be achieved while also focusing on the student's context, as well as on the social context. From this point of view, language becomes a tool to address topics relevant to the needs of society. Additionally, it could be seen that students were also more motivated to learn English, as they were exploring a topic that impacted them as a demographic, as well as their families, while receiving constant input and using this new knowledge in a creative exercise that implied reflection and fostered empowerment.

On a separate note, the project also presents implications regarding the school community. The implementation not only contributed to reinforcing topics included in the



public policies regarding peace construction, but also supported key ideas consigned on the school's PEI, such as the construction of self-esteem and autonomy. Moreover, being an all-girls school, the activities awakened the girls' curiosity, awareness, and empowerment related to their role as women within society, allowing an important reflection opportunity for the entire educative community and making way for future studies with a focus on gender perspective. Lastly, it also demonstrated that short projects with an emphasis on socially relevant topics are a real possibility that can also be displayed to parents and other students impacting students' and attendees' perception, while also exercising the use of a foreign language.

Finally, there are implications in regard to rights recognition, as this type of project had not been addressed in the EFL classroom previously; for this reason, this project sets a strong precedent on the possibility of addressing the subject from a foreign language perspective. The way literacy skills were used as support to convey the main message of each session, as well as the crafting of an artifact, in this case the picture books, as a tool to engage students, opens the door for other proposals to explore equally important topics where achieving understanding and literacy are pieces that mutually build upon each other, encouraging critical thinking and giving students control over their creativity and voice as individuals.

### **6.3 Limitations**

During the implementation of the research project, there were a few limitations causing last-minute changes to the project's planning, activities, schedule, and the need to have a plan B for some aspects of the sessions.

On the one hand, the scheduled time for the class was only 1 hour and 40 minutes per week; however, there were occasions where the school had other activities that clashed with the class time, be it homeroom, cultural activities or classes cancellation, due to different reasons; including certain occasions in which the class was interrupted without warning, due to school related activities. In these cases, the researcher had to adjust the lesson plans, changing or eliminating activities to cover the topics planned in less time than expected, which reduced the way vocabulary or reflection times were managed, causing the children to have less time to interiorize certain concepts and not all driving questions prepared could be studied, making the researcher prioritize the content that was to be covered.

On the other hand, although the project set out easy-to-get materials for the crafting spaces of the classes, the researcher had to provide all the materials for students to complete the project's product, as neither students' families, nor the school, supplied paper sheets, cardboard, or color pencils. This made it difficult to use other types of supplies to be shared by the researcher and this also limited in some ways the crafting possibilities of students. Lastly, the number of students increased toward the end of the implementation process, due to school logistics. This made it a challenge to close the activity, as there were nearly 50 students, out of which only 23 had participated in the whole process. For this reason, the final reflection had to be divided into completing the final questionnaire and asking a few questions to the participants, while the other students were completing other activities which also had to be done in another space facilitated by the home room teacher. This dynamic also made optimal data gathering difficult for the final reflection, which could not be recorded fully.

Regardless of the aforementioned situations, the proposal reached its completion successfully, fulfilling the expected objectives and leaving a positive mindset for the students who were part of the implementation. It is worth mentioning that although this project was designed specifically for elementary students, it can definitely be adapted to other grades and English proficiency levels, due to the adaptability of the PBL approach, the wide spectrum of topics studied in the *Educación para la Paz* framework, and the many applications of Honnet's theory of recognition.

#### **6.4 Further Research**

Lastly, a few additional applications were identified for other projects that might explore the same scope of implementation. In the first place, there is an opportunity to include a gender perspective, as the present project focused only on right recognition. It is important to note that women play a very important role in the Colombian post conflict and they have been one of the most impacted populations during the history of violence of this country. For this reason, it is cardinal to attend the specifics of their experience with rights, recognition, and the different kinds of transgression they have been subject to, in and outside the classroom.

Secondly, considering the way this project was implemented, it was noted that students participated by answering driving questions which looked forward to increasing their awareness on the topic at hand. This realization allowed the researcher to conclude that the investigation could also have a special focus on the development of critical thinking, focusing not only on one topic, such as rights in this case, but rather dedicating the sessions to making sure students could develop a critical view of the realities analyzed in the EFL classroom.

Also, for future applications, it would be worth exploring how the use of other artifacts, for example, fanzines, comics, newspapers, short stories, or dramatic and visual art pieces may be of use when teaching certain topics and, of course, implementing project-based learning projects in the classroom. Since the picture books looked forward to developing the students' initial literacy focused on word and sentence level, other artifacts may be equally or more effective according to how the leading teacher decides to guide each session and which of the literacy components they decide to work on.

To conclude, it is important to keep in mind that the *Educación para la paz* framework is a key component that has a wide extension of topics that could be included in any EFL classroom in the future. Topics such as historical memory, conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, citizen participation, among others, would make a necessary subject of study to work in favor of fulfilling the mission of the educative institution on the one hand, and on the other, to work toward the construction of lasting peace, steering clear from the horrors of the past.

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## Annexes

### **Annex A: Base source material *I have a dream***



### **Annex B: Informed consent**

	<b>FORMATO</b>		
	<b>AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES Y DE MENORES DE EDAD</b>		
FOR009GSI	Fecha de Aprobación: 18-06-2018	Versión: 01	Página 2 de 2

**AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES DE MENORES DE EDAD**

Ciudad y fecha: \_\_\_\_\_ identificado con C.C.  C.E.  No. \_\_\_\_\_ expedida en \_\_\_\_\_ representante legal del menor \_\_\_\_\_ identificado con T.I. \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 NACIONAL (en adelante la UPN), identificada con NIT. 899.999.124-4, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá y sede principal en la calle 72 No. 11 – 86 de Bogotá, que, de conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 y el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad*, disponible en la página web [www.pedagogica.edu.co](http://www.pedagogica.edu.co), actuará como Responsable del tratamiento de mis datos personales<sup>1</sup>, necesarios para el cumplimiento de la misión de la UPN, obtenidos a través de canales y dependencias institucionales y que podrá recolectar, almacenar, usar, actualizar, transmitir, transferir y poner en circulación o suprimirlos, mediante el uso de las medidas necesarias para otorgar seguridad a los registros, evitando su adulteración, pérdida, consulta, uso o acceso no autorizado o fraudulento incluso por terceros.

Que tratándose de datos sensibles<sup>2</sup> y de menores de edad no está obligado a autorizar su tratamiento, salvo las excepciones consagradas en la ley o que medie su consentimiento expreso. Que es de carácter facultativo responder a las preguntas que tratan de datos sensibles o menores de edad.

Como representante legal del menor, debo velar por los derechos consagrados en la Constitución y la Ley sobre sus datos, especialmente el derecho a conocer, actualizar, rectificar y suprimir información personal, así como el derecho a revocar el consentimiento otorgado para el tratamiento de datos personales del menor, en los casos en que sea procedente. Las inquietudes o solicitudes relacionadas con el tratamiento dichos datos, pueden ser tramitadas a través del e-mail: [quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co](mailto:quejasyreclamos@pedagogica.edu.co)

La Universidad garantiza la confidencialidad, libertad, seguridad, veracidad, transparencia, acceso y circulación restringida de los datos y se reserva el derecho de modificar su Política de Tratamiento de datos personales en cualquier momento. Cualquier cambio será informado y publicado oportunamente en la página web.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada e inequívoca a la UPN para tratar los datos personales del menor que represento, de acuerdo con el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* y para los fines relacionados con su Misión.

Leído lo anterior, manifiesto que la información para el Tratamiento de los datos personales del menor de edad que represento, ha sido suministrada de forma voluntaria y es veraz, completa, exacta, actualizada, comprobable y comprensible.

**FIRMA** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Nombre:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Identificación:** \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> La UPN garantiza la confidencialidad, libertad, seguridad, veracidad, transparencia, acceso y circulación restringida de mis datos y se reserva el derecho de modificar su Política de Tratamiento de datos personales en cualquier momento. Cualquier cambio será informado y publicado oportunamente en la página web.

<sup>2</sup> Son datos sensibles aquellos que afectan la intimidad del Titular o cuyo uso indebido puede generar su discriminación, tales como aquellos que revelan el origen racial o étnico, la orientación política, las convicciones religiosas o filosóficas, la pertenencia a sindicatos, organizaciones sociales, de derechos humanos o que promuevan intereses de cualquier partido político o que garanticen los derechos y garantías de partidos políticos de oposición, así como los datos relativos a la salud, a la vida sexual, y los datos biométricos (Art. 9º Ley 1581 de 2012, art. 3º Decreto 1377 de 2013).

## Annex C: Data collected and categorized in Notion

<https://acortar.link/ZlSeDg>

## Annex D: Data in OneDrive

[Implementation - I have a dream \(2023-1\)](#)