

Developing Students' Ability to Decode Sounds and Improving Their Reading and Oral  
Production through the *Jolly Phonics* Method at Cartagena International School

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*Between the ages of four and nine, your child will have to master some 100 phonics rules, learn to recognize 3,000 words with just a glance, and develop a comfortable reading speed approaching 100 words a minute. He must learn to combine words on the page with a half-dozen squiggles called punctuation into something – a voice or image in his mind that gives back meaning. (Paul Kropp, 1996)*

**Abstract**

This study aimed to determine the impact that The *Jolly Phonics* method had on 11 kindergarten graders' reading and oral production aged 6-7 at a private school in Cartagena de Indias. During the diagnostic stage, a teacher's journal, a diagnostic test and interviews were applied to students. The action stage included six workshops introducing students to the fifth step of the *Jolly Phonics* method, which comprised blending phonemes. Students were taught how to blend 42 English phonemes, which included digraphs. Stories were used to strengthen and carry out the implementation of this method. To evaluate the process, a journal, an external observation rubric, parents' interviews, and a teacher's assessment form were utilized. The study showed participants were highly engaged with the *Jolly Phonics* method. The students were able to blend phonemes, which improved their oral production in English. Thus, motivation, confidence to read and speak, and vocabulary range were enhanced.

**Keyword:** The *Jolly Phonics* Method, Decoding Phonemes, Reading Process, and Oral Production.

## Introduction

Learning how to read can be a hard process, but learning how to read in a foreign language can be even more challenging for a kid whose parents do not speak that language. The goal of emerging kids in a new world of sounds seems to be hard for the teacher to accomplish. However, it is a challenge that many teachers face nowadays in most bilingual schools in Colombia. Therefore, giving students a bunch of cards with vocabulary, videos and tracing activities emerge as an option to promote “early reading” in the target language.

This study intended to foster early reading and oral production through a child-centered approach called *Jolly Phonics* through some steps, which would make this process easy and enjoyable for students. The *Jolly Phonics* approach teaches children how to read and write, by using synthetic phonics. Also, it has been studied in numerous research projects and the results of this led phonics to become the central UK curriculum now used in over 100 countries worldwide. Phonics programs are used to help emergent readers learn letters and letter sounds in a meaningful context. (Yellin, et al., 2018). The *Jolly Phonics* approach inspired me as an opportunity to help my students in the process of developing the reading skill in an EFL in which the teaching is multi-sensory and active, with fun actions, stories and songs. This research project involved 11 kindergarten students at a private school in Cartagena, Colombia. This study followed a qualitative research approach in the form of an action research, which involved a data collection process, reading through the data and generating codes and themes. Some of the instruments, which were administered during the diagnostic and action stage were classroom observations, journals, questionnaires, tests, informal talks to evaluate the process. As it was stated earlier, the context, setting, and rationale were previously and fully explained.

## **Rationale**

Reading is a complex skill for both native and foreign students, in general. When reading out loud, many students face problems with pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and some other features, which are involved in the reading process. In a Spanish-speaking context, both teachers and students find it difficult to approach it properly. Teachers need to learn how to engage students with reading a foreign language. Children's interest must be boosted and stimulated. Therefore, the teacher needs to be very creative, by exposing students to suitable and interesting methodologies to keep their motivation high. The type of teaching and learning resources, such as books, pictures, videos, stories for the explanation of certain phonemes should be appropriate and engaging enough for students to identify them and to pronounce them accordingly.

This study is relevant in the sense that it involves an approach, which increases literacy at an earlier age and children have the opportunity to learn 42 of the phonemes presented in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), by using synthetic phonics in an engaging way for children to grasp them effortlessly. Its methodology is multi-sensory and active. The way in which each phoneme is presented has been successful in the UK and in some other countries. The project allows students to learn in a dynamic way since it involves audiovisual resources, such as songs and gestures. It, then, facilitates the learning of the foreign language. This approach highlights the use of music and stories, which makes learning fun and amusing for children to explore it. Additionally, this research study impacts the teaching of decoding phonemes in such a way that students learn how to decode phonemes in English as a foreign language, by using an English native speaker's method. It can also have an effect on the students' reading learning process of their mother tongue.



## **Description of the context**

In the past, schools in South American countries had very limited access to language learning. However, in recent years, many governments have been involved in the foreign language teaching process, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, by providing many private language schools with technological innovations and improvements in the school curricula.

On the other hand, Colombia promotes the teaching and learning of EFL, which is the reason why they created the Colombian Bilingual Program, which has led the Ministry of National Education (MEN) to yield positive results since 2014. MEN (2018) appreciated the bilingual program's outcomes with the creation of the first Educational Service Centers (ESCs) for all K-12 grades. To this purpose, more than 1,770 English native trainers, who supported the teaching process, were hired. MEN also carried out special training program for 8,835 teachers of English. In addition, 3,900 students received printed English textbooks. MEN wants to improve the students' linguistic competence and linguistic performance in English based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This research aims to foster the kindergarten students' reading and oral production skills, by implementing tasks using activities focused on decoding and blending sounds with the teaching of phonemes sounds through the *Jolly Phonics* method.

Cartagena International School (CIS), founded in 1983 by Elvia Martinez Marrugo, started with one preschool branch in the neighborhood of Manga in Cartagena. Today, it has two branches. Together with her husband, she created a larger branch in Pontezuela (a small town near Cartagena), positioned as the best bilingual private school in Cartagena offering education to preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school.

As CIS is located in the countryside of Cartagena, it has large classrooms distributed into areas. The largest branch houses from pre-kindergarten to eleventh grade, and the smallest one, located in Manga, provides classes from pre-kindergarten to first grade.

Both facilities are located in affluent neighborhoods and their students come from middle-high socioeconomic status. In Pontezuela, where this study was carried out, there are twenty-six classrooms, a psychology's office, bathrooms inside every classroom, a teacher's lounge, a coordinator's office, a computer room, two cafeterias, two soccer fields, a pool, a restaurant, green zones, and a big library, which means that this is indeed a very large school. At CIS, my class is made up of 11 students whose ages range between four and five years. The classroom is large enough and well-illuminated, with sufficient wooden tables and chairs for each student, a laptop and a TV set with internet connection. It has a small bookshelf and posters. Preschool teachers develop their own materials and utilize their own resources. The school also has a printer for teachers to print materials, etc. Preschool students take 10 hours of English a week, as well as other subjects in English since the school applies the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach.

## **Problem Statement**

According to the guidelines for English Language Teaching (ELT) established by MEN, kindergarten or transition students do not have any reading standards to achieve. Some of the main aspects they suggest are: understanding greetings and farewells, singing and saying songs, participating in circle times, and answering simple questions about themselves. On the contrary, reading standards are established in the ELT guidelines from first grade to eleventh grade. However, students from first grade are not taught the English phonetic sounds. The standards for primary or high school grades do not aim to teach this. This led me to think about this situation, why are children or transition students not taught the English sounds just as they are taught their native language sounds? if the country's aim is to contribute to reach the goal of becoming the most educated country in Latin America with the best English level in South America in 2025 (MEN, 2014). Moreover, if students were taught the English language sounds, they would not face many problems with pronunciation in higher grades and it is clear that the Spanish language sounds are different from those in English. In that order of ideas, it would contribute to their learning process of the language skills if they learned it at the same time they learn how to read in their native language.

By analyzing this information and thinking about the greater interest of the school where the study was conducted, I wanted to explore the possibility of decoding students' sounds, as well as their oral production in the kindergarten since students learn how to read in their native language. The purpose of this piece of research is to examine the impact that the decoding and blending phonemes would have on Colombian students' reading process, pronunciation and fluency in English since they are in the Critical Learning Period. It is



believed that children as L2 learners are ‘superior’ to adults (Scovel 2000). That is, the younger the learner, the quicker the learning process and the better the outcomes are.

To explore this possibility, a method used to teach American children to read, that would use a different methodology was implemented, which the students enjoyed. Due to this, The Jolly Phonics Method was chosen. It is a suggested plan to teach students the American phonemes, and progressively, learn how to blend the phonemes and be able to read. Six workshops were implemented to evaluate students’ ability to blend phonemes and improve their reading and oral production.

### **Research Question**

Will the implementation of the *Jolly Phonics* Method be effective to develop CIS kindergarten students’ the ability to decode phonemes and improve their reading and oral production?

### **General Research Objective**

To analyze the effectiveness of the *Jolly Phonics* Method to develop CIS kindergarten students’ the ability to decode phonemes and improve their reading and oral production.

### **Specific Objectives**

To measure to the ability to decode initial phonemes of a word.

To measure to the ability to decode middle phonemes of a word.

To measure to the ability to decode final phonemes of word.

To assess the ability of identifying letter phonemes.

To assess the ability to pronounce one phoneme correctly.

To evaluate the ability to blend the two given phonemes correctly.

**General Pedagogical Objective**

To promote kindergarten students' reading and oral skills through the implementation of the *Jolly Phonics* Method.

**Specific Objectives**

To motivate students to learn blending phonemes, by using the *Jolly Phonics* Method.

To introduce the teaching of blending 42 phonemes of the IPA through the *Jolly Phonics* Method.

To help students to identify phonemes.

To foster students' oral production through reading story tasks.

To increase learners' vocabulary range through reading tasks.

## Literature Review

This literature review establishes the relationship among the previous studies conducted by researchers in the teaching of phonics and phonetic skills in kindergarten students.

A supplemental phonics curriculum is a valuable tool to improve the rate of literacy. Brackemyer et al. (2001) conducted an action research project, which was aimed to incorporate various methods of teaching to develop an integrated curriculum to address the lack of phonetic skills among second grade and kindergarten students. They used supplemental phonics instruction, which showed the relevant application of skills presented in an active learning environment might have led to meaningful discovery and students' success. Upon the examination of the literature and the possible solutions to the dilemma of lack of phonetic skills, it was evident that a supplemental phonics curriculum had a positive effect on students' academic achievement. Possible solutions, which were explored in this project included whole language instruction, basal series lessons, and individualized instruction.

*Phonics dance* is a method that many teachers use to help students to identify and learn letters and their corresponding phonemes.

Phipps & Brittany, (2011) investigated the use of the *phonics dance* as an effective tool to help students who have a low achievement in decoding words. This study used a quantitative approach to determine the effectiveness of phonics dance, by using a pretest/post-test with a control group and a treatment group. Students' and teacher's perceptions of the *phonics dance* were also taken into account to find out if this method was something that students enjoyed and preferred. During four weeks, thirty- nine students received phonics instruction and they were assessed in their ability to read the phonemes

and digraphs taught to determine if the *Phonics dance* was more effective than the whole language approach in aiding students in their ability to decode words. The results were analyzed, by using repeated measures while students showed significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test. There was no significant difference found between the control group and the treatment group.

On the other hand, Dayhuff (2013) conducted qualitative research to find out if the *Jolly Phonics* Method was effective for young children with developmental delays when learning letters and their phonemes. The participants were 3- 5-year-old preschool students. The research question for this study referred to the synthetic phonics approach in *Jolly Phonics* and its effectiveness in helping the students to learn and remember the letters and their phonemes. The research was conducted by giving the students quarterly assessments based on a grade level goal for learning letters and their phonemes. Researchers compared and found out how students received special education services for developmental delays in relation to their nondisabled peers. The results of this study showed that young children with developmental delays when attending an early childhood program where the *Jolly Phonics* Method was used, could achieve their grade level phonics goals. As a result of this study, it was demonstrated that implementing the Jolly Phonics Method was a useful tool for early childhood students to achieve grade level phonics goals.

### **Theoretical Framework**

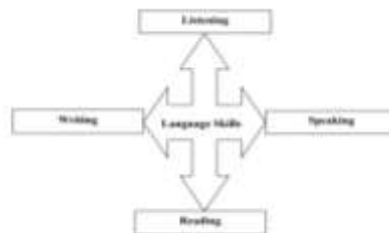
For the purposes of this study, in this chapter, some conceptualizations and some key authors related to the main variables of this research project were taken into account. Concepts were defined and some authors, who were related to the main objectives of this study were cited.

### **Phonological awareness and vocabulary**

Phonological awareness is considered as the foundation for learning how to read. It is an emergent literacy skill, which needs to be developed in order for children to be able to decode and read phonemes. According to Adams (1990), phonological awareness requires remembering rhyming words and distinguishing phonemes in words, as well as joining and isolating phonemes in order to make up words. This phonological awareness is distinguished by its ability to recognize individual phonemes so that they can be related to graphemes and read them; a process, which is known as decoding. “Children develop this ability through cognitive connections and frequent and familiar words and these connections tend to be the consequence of how the mind processes language.” (Goswami, 2001).

### **Skill**

Baker (2011) states that “Language skills tend to refer to highly specific, observable, measurable, clearly definable components such as handwriting” (p.21). On the other hand, it is relevant to clarify that students can develop many language skills in their FL learning process, such as speaking and listening or reading and writing. A skill may be called the ability to do something well. Swimming, playing, etc. are skills, which people perform after acquiring them. Knowing about these things is an intellectual exercise (cognition) and using them is a skill (action). Language is a complex phenomenon involving four skills:



(Noushad, 2015)

### **Reading literacy**

For the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2016), reading literacy is defined as follows: “reading literacy as the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment.” (p.12)

Department of Education and Skills (DES, 2011) defines literacy as “the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.” (p. 8). This definition refers to the ability to read, but it does not take into account the previous process of reading to have proper literacy, which are also known as pre-reading skills.

### **Phonics**

Phonics is a way of teaching reading and spelling those stresses symbol-sound relationships (Harris & Hodges, 1995). It involves the teaching of which phoneme is associated with a particular letter or combination of letters. In order to assign meaning to words, sentences, and texts, individual words must be decoded. Children need to understand relationships, and be given opportunities to practice new understandings in order to read and write. Phonics instruction allows children to explore, internalize, and apply new knowledge. Then, they can gradually achieve greater facility and independence with reading and writing. The primary objective of all reading instruction is for students to become independent, enthusiastic readers and writers, empowered to think critically about text. Toward this end, it is essential that students recognize frequently-encountered words accurately and instantly. Phonics is found to benefit reading comprehension not only in beginning readers, but for older students with reading disabilities. “Regarding the teaching

of reading, the message is clear: if you want to improve word-identification ability, teach phonics” (Johnson & Baumann, 1984, p. 595). These results confirm that the contribution of phonics instruction to text reading is ideal to develop children’ ability to identify sounds and start reading.

### **Analytic and Synthetic Approaches**

Both the Analytic and Synthetic Approaches require the learner to develop the ability to hear and discriminate uttered phonemes. *Jolly Phonics* comes under the synthetic approach. It is structured to words for the whole class or individual use. The teaching of *Jolly Phonics* is divided into the following five skills: learning letter phonemes, learning letter formation, blending for reading, identifying the sounds in words for writing and tricky words/irregular words. All five skills are taught at the same time (Loyd 2000). The use of the *Jolly Phonics* Method agrees with the beliefs of Schickedanz and Collins (2013), who believe teachers need to teach all skills necessary for learning how to read simultaneously. Loyd’s (2000) *Jolly Phonics* handbook was developed to give step-by-step guidance for teachers and reproducible worksheets for students. Letter phonemes introduced as quickly as a phoneme a day. Corresponding actions, sounds and activities are taught with the sounds. Steps 1-5 are all taught at the same time through a multisensory approach. It is suggested for younger children or children with special needs the rate of teaching the letter phonemes should be slower (Loyd 2000).

*Systematic Synthetic Phonics*: a method of teaching people to read, by training them to pronounce *phonemes* associated with particular letters in isolation and then blend them together.

### **The *Jolly Phonics* Method**

The *Jolly Phonics* Method appeared for the first time in 1975 in the Primary School of Woods Loke, Lowestoft, Suffolk, England due to the fact that a group of children had some reading problems. With this method, these pupils could learn phonemes connected to actions. At the end of the implementation, the students' reading problems were reduced (Lloyd & Wernham, 1998, 2013).

The *Jolly Phonics* Method was founded in 1987 and it started to sell the *Jolly Phonics* products 5 years after that. This method's focus was on teaching children to read and write. *Jolly Phonics* is a systematic synthetic phonics program where children learn the 42-letter phonemes of the English language, rather than the alphabet. Loyd (2000) developed this program to help struggling students who were not learning how to read and write, by using the whole language approach of the 1970s (Loyd, 2000).

*Jolly Phonics* is a child centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the 42-letter phonemes, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children. Using a synthetic phonics approach, *Jolly Phonics* teaches children the five key skills for reading and writing. When students are encouraged to learn, by being active in a hands-on approach they will retain more. When using *Jolly Phonics*, students are learning letters and letter sounds through sound, movement, and music. When incorporating a multisensory approach learning should, in theory, increase students' achievements.

### **Tricky Words**

*Tricky words* can be defined as irregular words, which are difficult to spell, but frequently happen in many texts. The study found that the teacher introduced 2-3 new tricky words per week for the children through a variety of techniques, such as flashcard activity where the teacher introduced tricky words through flashcards, and they needed to create sentences with the tricky word stated (Padmadewi & Suarnajaya, 2018, p. 5)



Some examples of tricky words are pronouns, such as “he” or “she” where the /e/ sound was the tricky part for having an irregular spelling. There are other ways in which the tricky words can be introduced, such as games or flashcards on the floor or wall and children need to snap and say the word. Furthermore, the teacher also can make an outdoor activity and be creative with the implementation of each.

### **Reading Skills**

The *reading skill* is a cognitive ability, which a person is able to use in order to interact with a written text. It might be complex, but it is also a flexible activity, which takes time and dynamic resources to help students to develop the skill. According to Davies, (1968) “Reading skills involve: identifying word meaning, drawing inferences, identifying writer’s technique, recognizing mood of passage, finding answers to questions.” (pp. 499-545) In addition to this, reading skills also lead people to interact and gain meaning from written language. There are several components one must master, which lead to independently comprehending the intended message being relayed in the written content. The first skill is phonemic awareness, which is defined by the National Reading Panel as “recognizing and manipulating spoken words in language” (Whalon et al. 2009). *Phonics* defined by the same group as “Understanding letter-sound correspondences in reading and spelling.” Oral reading fluency is defined as “Reading text with speed, accuracy, and expression.” The fourth component is vocabulary, which is defined as “Understanding words read by linking the word to oral vocabulary” and lastly is comprehension defined as “Directly teaching students to be aware of the cognitive processes involved in reading.”

## **Decoding**

*Decoding* is an essential part of reading, as it allows children to understand words that they have heard before, but that they have never seen before. Decoding is also defined as the ability to transform printed letter strings into a phonetic code (Perfetti 1985). It is a process in which students have to identify letters and combinations of them by their phonemes. In first grade, students learn how to parse the printed word into graphemes and subsequently, assign the phonemes to the different graphemes. After that the students have to blend these phonemes into words. In the next grades, students learn how to recognize words or groups of words as fast as possible (Perfetti 1985). On the other hand, the process of decoding can also be measured by students' ability to pronounce words correctly, by including difficult words.

It is also believed that this skill is known as indispensable for learning how to read. Decoding requires recognition memory and it involves using letter-phoneme relationships to pronounce written words, this might be because in order to decode children have to process a visual symbol in order to remember how to decode it. It is important to highlight that many kids learn how to decode through structured literacy instruction.

## **Oral production**

Speaking is something students do when they drill particular language patterns, but the oral skill is much more than this. It involves speaking and listening as a two-way process where responding is expected. (Pena & Onatra, 2009). Some theories state that in order for students to speak they need to develop listening skills as well. Oral tasks involve the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding. It means that learners have to be taught to speak, as well as to listen. Both listening and speaking are

such common activities in the daily routine that we seem to confuse ourselves as being experts when we are only users. (Byrne, 1991, as cited in Pena & Onatra, 2009).

On the other hand, Madrid and McLaren (2006) argue that oral production is the most difficult skill for students to develop due to the fear of mispronouncing, or they do not have the knowledge to express their ideas.

Teachers believe that oral tests and exercises in a class are the most challenging to create, administer, and score. Additionally, Brown (1994) noted the set of features that characterize oral discourse which students have to develop are:

- Contractions, vowel reductions, and elision;
- The use of slang and idioms
- Stress, rhythm, and intonation
- The need to interact with at least one other speaker.

Take into account those perceptions, oral production is considered as the most important of the four skills because students have to achieve satisfactory English language proficiency standards but at the same time, teachers have to develop a lot of activities to make learners practice oral production in order students will be able to have an effective communication. (Chuang, 2009 as cited in Sanabria & Silva 2017).

## **Methodology**

In order to explore and comprehend children's ability to acquire a 12 reading skill occurring in English lessons and to know the experiences, perceptions and viewpoints of teachers and parents' viewpoints about the learners learning process, this paper follows the qualitative research approach. "The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively, by

building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (Cresswell, 2014, p.32).

This project was experimental research in which I evaluated the implementation of an L1 reading method that my group of students (Spanish speakers) experienced, and then determined whether the method had a positive impact and results on the students’ ability to decode sounds and boost oral production.

This study aims to give kindergarten students a successful reading learning experience through the use of phonics. Phonics programs are used to help emergent readers learn letters and letter sounds in a meaningful context. (Yellin, et al., 2008). One of the methods available to teachers of emergent readers is the Jolly Phonics approach which is a multisensory systematic approach to learning. Jolly Phonics is a fun- systematic program that was designed for young and beginner learners to develop their reading and literacy skills. According to Lloyd (2010), *Jolly Phonics* teaches the 5 main skills, where the children are firstly taught the 42 sounds in English, and then continued into blending and reading skill, at the same time they are taught to write by identifying the sounds in words. This method was created for English native speakers, students learn actively and successfully since it takes into account the eight intelligences theory proposed by Howard Gardner’s frames of mind. When using *Jolly Phonics* students are learning letters and letter sounds through sound, movement and music. When incorporating a multisensory approach learning should, in theory, increase student achievement and engagement.

This method consists of 5 stages, (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

The first one is:

1. ***Learning the letters sounds*** Children are taught the 42-letter phonemes, which is a mix of alphabet sounds (1 sound – 1 letter) and digraphs (1 sound – 2 letters), such

as /oi/, /ai/ and /ue/. By using a multi-sensory approach, each letter sound is introduced with fun actions, stories, and songs. It teaches the letter sounds in seven groups of six letters at a pace of 4-5 sounds a week. Children can start reading after the first group of letters has been taught and should have been introduced to all the 42-letter phonemes after 9 weeks at school.

2. **Learning letter formation:** This is taught alongside the introduction of each letter sound. Typically, children will learn how to form and write the letters down during the course of the lesson.
3. **Blending:** Once the first few letter sounds are learnt, children begin blending the sounds together to help them read and write new words.
4. **Segmenting:** when children start reading words, they also need to start identifying the phonic components that make the word sound the way it does. By teaching blending and segmenting at the same time children become familiar with assembling and breaking down the sounds within words.
5. **Tricky words:** These are words with irregular parts, such as ‘who’ and ‘I’. Children learn these as exceptions to the rules of phonics. Introducing the common tricky words early in the year increases reading fluency (as they frequently occur in those first simple sentences you might expect them to read).

By using this method, classes follow a pace through a set of steps to introduce each letter sound. The teacher needs to have the lesson objective. Then, he needs to introduce the sound, by telling a story of the new letter where the sound should be included. This method gives the student a story, a song and an action for each letter. Then, the teacher should show the letter, by using a flashcard and subsequently introduce the song of that letter and then the final step, teach how to write the form

of the letter. Afterward, the students are given a worksheet where they color a picture related to the letter, trace the word, and do it by their own. After that, they go into these steps of *learning the letter sounds* and *letter formation*, students go into the third step of the Jolly Phonics method that is *blending* and *learning the tricky words* that are words with irregular spelling. For the purpose and implementation of this research, I focused on the third and fourth step since the first steps were previously taught, besides I did not focus on the writing skill for the implementation of this. This project measures the students' ability to decode sounds correctly and students' oral production through the implementation of reading tasks.

In the data collection stage, I implemented some instruments that I considered necessary to prove that my students were ready and eager to learn and go through this reading experience. First of all, I conducted a survey. I also administered an observation from another teacher that was observing. I also interviewed a teacher about the way the students learn, the teacher gave her opinion on their learning process and finally students took an English test. These data collection instruments will be shown in my portfolio so you can observe and verify this information.

### **Diagnostic stage**

In order to collect data, which supports my research proposal about the teaching of literacy at Cartagena International School, I implemented some instruments, which were helpful for me and guided me to identify the students' attitude toward learning English and come out with this proposal, which hopefully will help my kids to have an enriching reading experience.

The first instrument I applied was a survey in which I assessed how my students felt about learning a new language at school and also the different ways they like to learn, by singing or watching pictures or moving etc. The second one was a class observation instrument in which my co-teacher observed some English classes and gave some comments about how she perceived the class and identified whether students were active and engaged with the class or not.

I also interviewed a teacher. I asked her about the students' preference in learning and how the class was in general according to her. Also, students took an English test where neither reading nor writing were assessed because they did not know how to read and write yet. I assessed students' vocabulary and listening comprehension. Students had to match some pictures with the vocabulary and circle some numbers that the teacher was telling them and they had to say the word of the picture in English. This helped me to identify my students' strengths in the language.

Below, is a table that shows what were the data collection techniques and instruments that I used to gather data information that helped me to conduct this project.

| <b>No</b> | <b>Data collection technique</b> | <b>Data collection instrument</b> | <b>Rationale</b>  |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>  | Teacher observations             | Classroom observations, journals. | To gather specific features and details about what actually happens inside the classroom and check their language understanding and engagement with the activities applied. |

|   |                         |                                  |   |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 2 | Surveys/diagnostic test | Questionnaires, tests.           | To explore students' perception of English and their learning preference. the test to have a view of the students' comprehension of the language and vocabulary |
| 3 | Interviews              | Informal talking, open questions | To collect data about the teachers' opinions and views about the learning process inside the classroom.   |

After analyzing the data collected through these instruments and categorizing them, I went through the triangulation of the information.

In order to do this, I followed Creswell's principles (2009) in which I had to raw data followed by analyzing the information and coding it. After doing this I came out with some categories according to the codes found. In the following triangulation chart, there are the categories and the description of these codes, then the data collection instruments that I administered (observations, surveys, interviews) and finally I summed up the total of all the categories through the three sources as shown in the following chart.

Table 2. *Data analysis triangulation table*

| <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b>                       |                               |                              |                          |                            |              |          |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/category</b>                                     | <b>Operalization</b>          | <b>Interview to teachers</b> | <b>Teacher's Journal</b> | <b>Surveys to students</b> | <b>total</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>High students' motivation toward learning English</b> | Code describes learners' high | 2                            | 3                        | 23                         | 28           | 24.1%    |



|  |   |          |           |           |            |             |
|--|---|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
|  | motivation in learning English at school.                                       |          |           |           |            |             |
| <b>Great understanding of the language.</b>                                | Code describes learners' good understanding of the language during the classes. | 2        | 5         | 23        | 30         | 26%         |
| <b>Preference in learning through visual aids and videos.</b>              | Code shows students preference through visual aids, such as videos, flashcards. | 1        | 3         | 22        | 26         | 22.4%       |
| <b>Preference in learning using the body. Through movement and actions</b> | Code describes students' preference in learning using their bodies.             | 2        | 3         | 22        | 27         | 23.2%       |
| <b>Active participation in class</b>                                       | code describes students' high and active participation in the classroom         | 2        | 3         | 0         | 5          | 4.3%        |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>9</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>90</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>100%</b> |

In this triangulation chart, the category that had the highest number of repetitions with a 26% compared to the other codes was “Great understanding of the language”.

According to the teachers, observations and the interviews implemented this is a positive

code that was highlighted, students were able to understand key vocabulary and instructions the teacher said. According to the data collection instruments, students were able to follow commands given by the teacher and they understood explanations. In addition, their participation was very positive, they showed a good attitude and replied to the teacher anytime she asked questions in English and students also understood when the teacher was explaining and giving them new information (input). The surveys showed that the students followed the directions given and that they were willing to learn. Participation was also very active; students would raise their hands to participate. Along with this, the English test demonstrated that students were able to understand the tasks given in the test and give an answer, students already knew about specific vocabulary that they may have learned at home or in pre-kinder grade. Students were familiar with vocabulary about feelings, family and numbers.

After analyzing this, the second code that had the highest percentage was “High students’ motivation toward learning English” with a percentage of 24.1% that illustrated that students were very motivated and excited about learning a new language. In the survey administered to the students the total of students (24) expressed using a happy face that they liked the language, as well as in the observations students were engaged with the classes and they were active learners. This code was very important to carry out this project since students needed to have the willingness to explore something that was new for them, that was the learning of an L2.

The third category had to do with the students’ preferences in learning using visual aids, such as flashcards and videos with a percentage of 24.4%. In this category students showed in the surveys and during class observations that they were very visual 23 out of 24 marked a happy face showing that they like when the teacher shows them videos, color

pictures and flashcards to learn, most of the students were very enthusiastic when choosing the happy face. It was proved that this group of study liked to learn visually, students have to see the information to be stimulated and have a meaningful learning experience.

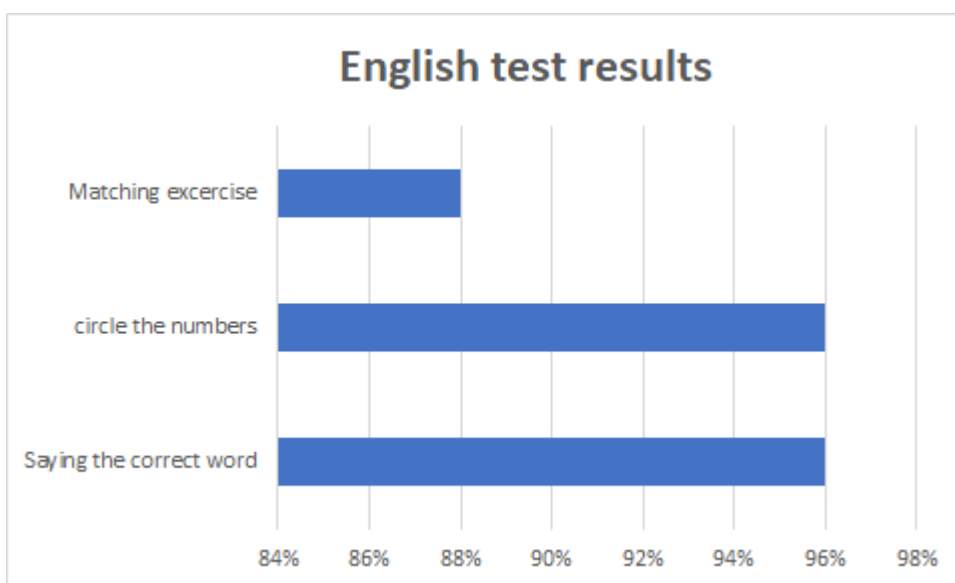
The next category illustrates students' preference in learning English using their bodies, (Kinesthetic learning) through movements and actions with a percentage of 23.2% shown in the surveys administered to the kids. 22 out of 24 students expressed that they liked when they had to use their bodies to learn, such as dancing, doing actions, or following commands. This code reflects the necessity students have to learn by doing activities that they like to do.

Finally, the last category was "Active participation in class" with a percentage of 5%. I consider this category one of the most important ones in the process of learning due to the fact that students need to have some kind of interest in what the teacher wants to teach them. These students were very excited about learning a new language. It was proved during class observation students' willingness to learn, also in the interviews that were administered to the teachers, they expressed students' active participation during the class. They were involved in a new learning environment and even though students could not understand everything they followed the rhythm of the class.

This data analysis helped in being aware of some issues dealing with language learning, the attitude of kindergarten graders and their ability to understand basic concepts of the language helped me to have this as a starting point to emerge them in a new learning world of letters. It is important to highlight that the students do not have any background information about learning how to read in a L2, nor they possess any grammatical information of the language. It was proved that they could recognize specific vocabulary that they were previously taught in kinder grade and also were able to follow commands

and instructions in English. On the other hand, students were willing to learn new things of the L2 and they liked it. Thus, this research will explore students' ability to decode sounds in a L2 the same year they are learning how to read in their L1, as well as promote students' oral production through the implementation of the Jolly Phonics method.

The positive aspects shown in the diagnostic stage are also ratified in the English test that students took. Results were very positive, students were assessed in vocabulary listening comprehension, and oral production in three tasks. In the following chart, it is appreciated the results of the English test the students took.



*Figure 3. English test diagnostic stage results.*

This figure displays positive aspects when the students had to match the words with the pictures. They were given a word and they had to look for the picture that represented the word. 96% of the students did this point correctly. Then they had to circle a set of numbers given orally by the teacher in English in which 88% of the students did it right, some others struggled with specific ones like number 7 and 9. In the last exercise they had to say the name of a word in English that was shown in a picture 96% of the students had

positive results. The analysis of the test confirmed that students had good understanding of the language, they were able to give a response to the exercises, and name things correctly additionally students had a good attitude when taking the test and did not show any nervousness, therefore, it was confirmed that they were ready to go through a new stage of learning.

### **Action stage**

In the diagnostic stage, my kindergarten grade students showed high motivation toward learning a new language. According to the pedagogical objectives of this study, I designed six workshops whose aim was to make students develop reading and oral production skills simultaneously using the Jolly Phonics method. Each workshop was systematically designed to follow the learning sequence of sounds recommended by the *Jolly Phonics* in order for students to reach the objectives. It is important to clarify that all the letter sounds known as phonemes taught in the *Jolly Phonics* Method were previously introduced before the implementation of the workshops. They were taught for a duration of nine weeks, one letter sound was daily introduced, and the process of blending those sounds previously learned was introduced and strengthened when implementing the workshops, that was the third step according to the *Jolly Phonics* Method (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

In each of the six workshops, the seven groups of letter sounds were introduced and students were assessed on each of them by their ability to blend the sounds and produce initial, middle and final sounds correctly. Also, reading short and long sentences was emphasized. Each workshop was divided into 6 moments, in each one different letter sounds were emphasized: “Zip and Fox story” where students reviewed the first and second

group of letter sounds (phonemes). “Bed-time reading” the rehearsal of the third and fourth group of letter sounds going deeper through the analysis of students' oral production. “Crazy letters” decoding sounds that include digraphs, blending these sounds using stories. “Reading with mom and dad is more fun” guided reading with the seventh group of letter sounds. “The Park” reading with the eight group of letter sounds making emphasis on reading comprehension and oral production. “The very Hungry Caterpillar ” checks students' understanding of events in a story in order to evaluate their reading comprehension.

Readings taken from the *Jolly Phonics* webpage were used to work on reading the target sounds (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021) and books taken from the classroom library were also used to work on decoding sounds and oral production. Finally, to evaluate each workshop the external observer used a rubric to check each student's progress. Also, a Jolly Phonics sound assessment rubric was implemented in order to keep track of each student's ability to communicate and identify sounds, and a teacher’s journal to check the progress of each workshop.

The following table reflects the topics selection, skills emphasized in each of them and name of the workshops carried out during the action stage:

Table 4. *Topic selection and development*

| <b>Workshop</b>   | <b>Focused- skill and phonemes</b>           |
|-------------------|--|
| 1: Reading is fun | <i>Oral production and decoding phonemes</i> |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
|                                 | / s / a / t / i / p / n /                        |
| 2: Bed-time reading             | <i>Oral production and decoding phonemes</i>     |
|                                 | / f / l / g / o / u / b /                        |
| 3: Crazy letters!               | <i>Oral production and decoding phonemes</i>     |
|                                 | / z / w / ng / v / oo /                          |
|                                 | / y / x / ch / sh / th /                         |
| 4: Flexible reading             | <i>Oral production and decoding phonemes</i>     |
|                                 | /ch / sh / th / th / qu / ou /                   |
| 5: The Park                     | <i>Reading comprehension and oral production</i> |
|                                 | /oi / ue / er / ar /                             |
| 6: The Very Hungry Caterpillar. | <i>Reading comprehension and Oral production</i> |

To validate the information collected in the six workshops, three instruments were used to analyze the data gathered: teacher's journal, an external observer's view rubric which was filled out by my co-teacher, and a students' questionnaire. **Three instruments were applied to complete the triangulation** of data in the analysis stage (Freeman, 1998).

Below are the emerging categories derived from the triangulation:

### **Operationalization of categories**

1. *Confidence toward speaking in the target language*

It describes the observers' views about learners' confidence to speak in the target language (English) in and outside the classroom.

2. *Reading process*

It describes the observers' views about learners' reading process and ability to read short and long sentences in a story, as well as their ability to identify initial-middle-final sounds.

This code shows positive (P) opinions

3. *Confidence in reading*

It shows the observers and students' perceptions, feelings and opinions toward learners' confidence to read short sentences and long sentences in stories alone and with partners.

4. *Vocabulary*

It describes students' increase of vocabulary when blending sounds and reading stories.

This code shows positive (P) opinions.

5. *Lack of reading comprehension*

It describes students' lack of comprehension of some terms found in readings and key words.

This code shows negative (N) opinions.

The following section will present the information corresponding to each workshop's analysis. It is important to highlight that some students' comments found in the action stage were translated to English for universality of the language.

**Workshop 1: Reading is fun!**

The topic of the first workshop referred to decoding sounds with an activity in the classroom. Previously, students were taught all the letter phonemes, as well as some digraphs, such as /ee/, /oo/, /ai/, etc. Now at this point they started to decode family sounds and blending phonemes, which is the fifth step according to the *Jolly Phonics* Method order



(Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021). This workshop consisted on providing students a book story called “Zip and Fox.” Its emphasis was blending with the “Th” sound, as well as with /f/, /m/, /b/, and /t/ sounds. Students had to read word by word to the teacher for her to check the sentences and sounds that students read correctly and circle the words the students could not say. For the purpose of this activity, the teacher used a rubric to check students’ oral production of the target sounds.

The information collected through a data analysis triangulation produced the following results:

Table 5

*Workshop 1 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table*

| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION TABLE WORKSHOP #1</b>     |                                    |                                 |                                |              |          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/Category</b>                                     | <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b> |                                 |                                | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b> |
|  | <b>JOURNAL</b>                     | <b>EXTERNAL<br/>OBSERVATION</b> | <b>PARENTS’<br/>INTERVIEWS</b> |              |          |
| <b>Confidence toward speaking in the target language</b> | 3                                  | 3                               | 8                              | 14           | 21,5     |
| <b>Reading process</b>                                   | 6                                  | 5                               | 7                              | 18           | 27,7     |
| <b>Confidence to reading</b>                             | 5                                  | 4                               | 6                              | 15           | 23,1     |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>  | 5                                  | 3                               | 4                              | 12           | 18,5     |
| <b>Lack of reading comprehension</b>                     | 3                                  | 1                               | 2                              | 6            | 9,2      |

|        |    |    |    |    |     |
|--------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| TOTALS | 22 | 16 | 27 | 65 | 100 |
|--------|----|----|----|----|-----|

As shown in Table (???), the category “Reading process” was the highest rated at 27.7% in the data triangulation. Given the results of this category, it can be understood that students presented positive results when decoding sounds with the phonemes s / a / t/ i/ p / /n/ and they were also able to identify initial-middle-final sounds when blending these sounds.

Evidence of these comments were presented by the external observer when saying “*Students correctly read the list of words the teacher showed them*” and “*Students recognized the sounds the teacher was emphasizing on the board.*” She mentioned that students were excited anytime they were asked to read a word or sentence on the board. In the journal entry # 1, there was an observation “*Students were eager to learn, they seemed to be waiting to learn something else and that they were enjoying this process of blending sounds*”. This observation is important because it confirms those students were receiving new input about how sounds are blended and they were positively receiving that information.

It is important to clarify that at this moment they were starting to blend the sounds that had been previously taught in isolation which is the first, second and third step of the Jolly Phonics approach, by the time the first workshop was applied they went into the third step of this approach which is *blending*.

Some positive codes emerged from the parents' interviews “*My child looks excited; he says he can read now*” “*He is starting to read words in English*”.

The second category was “**Confidence to reading.**” which represented 23,1% of the time. In this case, it is shown the students self-confidence when reading sentences in a

story, evidence shows motivation and good attitude in and outside the classroom.

According to Hattie (2016), reading confidence is essential to achieve students' overall success to develop the reading skill.

In the journal #2 it states, "Students do not look ashamed of reading in front of everyone, on the contrary, they look very willing to do it", "Most students feel very confident when they are asked to read" from parents we could hear commentaries, such as "My kid wants to read words that he sees around so that everyone can hear him". The external observer's views showed participants were greatly engaged through the development of the activities "The activity looks very interesting, students loved reading together" "they feel secure when participating" "when the teacher explained the activity, they wanted to go first for reading the story. "On the other hand, the parents' interviews displayed a good perception toward how the participants assimilated the workshop. Some of their comments were "When she got home, she immediately told me about the activity" "My kid told me he was asked to read and he loved it" "My child wanted to read to me the story he read in the classroom, he got home happy for that"

These observations that we gathered from the instruments applied in this second category are very useful since it leads us to understand a third category that also has to do with confidence. It highlights that anytime a student feels confident toward reading, the process of speaking in the target language will be easier for them which will be explained in the next category

The third category, "**Confidence toward speaking in the target language**", with 21,5%, showed students confidence when speaking in the classroom, as well as fearlessness. They showed a positive attitude when participating and most of them liked to speak not just to the teacher but in front of everyone. Some comments emerged from the

journals, such as “Students enjoyed when they had to speak whenever the teacher asked them questions”

“When students participate most of them did it in English and they looked secure when speaking”

Some of the external observer’s views showed that “Students started to speak in English saying expressions or replying to things they had learned in the class”.

From parents we could also hear comments, such as “My kid is starting to say some things in English at home” “He teaches us words in English at home when we do not understand him”.

The information gathered from this third category is really significant for the nature of this research. According to Mulya (2019), speaking is one of the four basic language skills in learning English that is very important. It cannot be neglected in the learning process (p. 349). The process of reading that is being held in this research project has been positively affecting students’ confidence toward speaking.

There was a fourth category emerging from the analysis “**Vocabulary**” is 18.5% confirming that students' vocabulary increased when they started to blend the sounds. From the journals we could find statements, such as “Students seemed more aware of some words that they now know how to pronounce in English” “When asking for something in the classroom they could say some of the words in English”

From the external’s views it was highlighted that “Students Identify some of the things they have around in English, even when they read, they replied a word saying its meaning in Spanish” and parents also confirmed that “My kid tells me some of the things he now knows how to say in English”.

Finally, a fifth category which is “Lack of reading comprehension” with 9.2% describes some students' lack of understanding when reading. A few of them did not really understand the main purpose of the story and specific questions the teacher asked about it. In the journal entry # we could find comments, such as “A few students could not answer the teacher’s questions” “Some of them looked confused” which led us to the conclusion that they needed to work more on specific vocabulary so that they could understand the overall meaning of what they were reading. The primary consideration for pre-teaching vocabulary should be which words need to be clarified for students so that those words don’t get in the way of comprehension (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2008).

### **Workshop 2: Bed-time reading!**

The topic of the second workshop, *bedtime reading*, referred to the main activity students focused on, which was a parent-child activity in which the evaluators were parents, as well as the teacher. It was intended to give students previous teaching in classroom about blending sounds with the third and fourth group of phonemes in the Jolly Phonics order: g/ o/ u/ l/ f/ b- ai /j/ oa /ie/ ee /or (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021). Afterward, they brought home a short story taken from the classroom library in order to practice those sounds. Parents were given a rubric of the sounds their children needed to focus on, as well as recording their kids’ reading the story as evidence of the activity.

The information collected through a data analysis triangulation produced the following results:

Table 6

Workshop 2 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table

|  |
|--|
| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION WORKSHOP #2</b> |
|--|

| Code/Category  | DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS |                         |                        | Total     | Percentage     |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
|  | JOURNAL                     | EXTERNAL<br>OBSERVATION | PARENTS'<br>INTERVIEWS |           |                |
| <b>Confidence toward speaking in the target language</b> | 5                           | 2                       | 5                      | 12        | 17,60%         |
| <b>Reading process</b>                                   | 9                           | 4                       | 6                      | 19        | 27,90%         |
| <b>Confidence to Reading</b>                             | 8                           | 5                       | 8                      | 21        | 30,90%         |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>  | 6                           | 3                       | 3                      | 12        | 17,60%         |
| <b>Lack of reading comprehension</b>                     | 0                           | 1                       | 3                      | 4         | 5,90%          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>28</b>                   | <b>15</b>               | <b>25</b>              | <b>68</b> | <b>100,00%</b> |

Table 6 shows that “**Confidence to reading**” had a total percentage of 31% which demonstrates it was the category with most frequencies in the analysis. In general, students had a positive reaction in how the workshop helped them build confidence which is an essential part in developing the reading skill. Motivation and self- confidence are also important for all learners (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). For instance, comments like “*Students felt comfortable reading to their parents*” or “*Most students seemed excited to be reading to their parents*” were found in the journal, as well as “*students felt very confident and secure of what they were reading*”

For the previous activity held in the classroom, the external observer’s views showed participants were greatly engaged through the development of the activities “*The activity*

*was very interesting, students loved the guessing activity” “they felt secure when participating” “when the teacher explained the activity, they had to do at home some of them felt it was the most enjoyable part because they had read to their parents and that sounded like a great idea”*

In addition, the parents' interviews also displayed a good perception toward how participants assimilated the workshop. Some of their comments were *“When she got home, she immediately told me about the activity” “My child was anxiously waiting for bed-time so he could read to us” “she read twice, she was enjoying reading to us”*

The analysis of the results for this category demonstrates that students were building self-confidence when reading alone and with different people around them which supports the purpose of this research mentioned in the objectives.

Furthermore, table 6 showed **“Reading process”** was in second position at 28%. This code describes students’ ability to identify initial-middle-final sounds which update us in each student learning process of the phonemes of the target language.

Some of the positive comments emerging from the journal were: *“Some of them felt so confident reading to their parents, no matter whether they were doing it well or not”*

and *“This time, students showed more confidence while reading to their parents than reading in the classroom” “Some of the students that get nervous in the classroom could actually felt more confident with their parents and could successfully read to them”*

The external observer’s view showed *“I noticed a big number of students very confident so reading and recognizing the phonemes was easier for them”*. Consequently, parents' interviews showed some positive comments like *“My son could recognize without struggling, the sounds the teacher asked us to check.” “My child did a great job, he read all the sounds they were learning in the classroom” “He felt confident reading the story”*.

This percentage showed that students were more familiar with the process of reading and became more confident while working with their parents.

The third category was “**Confidence toward speaking in the target language**” with 18%. The workshop generated good impressions to teachers and parents since students' speaking skills were starting to emerge in terms of oral production and interaction in the target language. Evidence showed some students started to say sentences in English, and they were able to speak and say some expressions in English they were learning throughout the lessons and now they felt more confident and ready to speak them out in the classroom and at home as well. Bygates (1991) points out that oral production is the ability to produce sentences in different types of situations.

In the journal, it was made evident that “*students felt comfortable when speaking during the classroom activity*” “*Students said some expressions in English during the lessons*”. We could also get some comments from the external observer “*As they were starting to learn sounds in English they became familiar with new words which they would repeat and say during the day*”. The evidence collected from this category showed that, as students were learning how to read, blend sounds and new vocabulary, they became more aware of some words in English and their meanings so they unconsciously would say expressions in English, such as “*It is raining, teacher*” or “*I need a pencil*” etc. It is important to highlight that these results are positive for the purpose of this research.

The fourth category, “Vocabulary” 18% indicates that there was a slight rise of students' vocabulary. According to Stanovich (1986-2000), “A child's initial reading level would be positively related to his or her rate of growth in a reading skill”. Comments found in the instruments were positive, some students expressed their good feelings while doing the workshops, in the journals, we could find comments, such as “*The children now*



*recognize objects they see around in the classroom.” “They relate the sounds learned in the workshops with words in English they have heard before, so it is like they start to understand the relationship between the words and meaning. “These findings are valuable because the idea of learning how to blend sounds in order for students to read correctly is that they can at the same time understand the meaning of what they read and start to understand the relationship between words and their meaning in sentences.*

The final category of Workshop 2 is **“Lack of reading comprehension”** with 6% showed that a few students were not able to participate in the class activity held at the beginning of the workshop which was a guessing activity. They looked a little timid and distracted. From the journals, we found comments, such as *“There was a kid that seemed not to understand what the teacher was asking so he could not participate...”* or *“Another kid looked a little distracted, he was not engaged with the class”* These findings from this category led us to pay special attention to those kids for the next workshops implemented in the classroom. They were specifically called whenever students had to participate or when the teacher was explaining how to blend new sounds in order for them to understand new sentences and vocabulary in the readings, which is a very important step if we want students to learn meaningfully. Understanding how a story is structured helps readers of all ages to make real sense of the story and therefore, to personalize it (Rand, 1984).

### **Workshop 3: Crazy letters!**

This workshop was about blending with the fifth and sixth group of letter sounds according to the Jolly Phonics order, z/ w / ng/ v/ oo -y/ x/ ch / sh / th (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021). By the time the workshop was over, the students were able to read short and

long sentences blending most phonemes from IPA, most digraphs sounds were also taught by the end of this workshop.

At the beginning of the lesson, the students read together to motivate them by reading along with their partners, and the teacher projected on the board some words from the Jolly Phonics letter sound box (Appendix 4). The Target sounds were emphasized. Then the teacher taught students to blend the new group of letter sounds with previous sounds learned. She used the board as a tool to do it and wrote some examples, by emphasizing initial-middle and final sounds. She also focused on the letter actions that were previously learned how to help them connect sounds. After this they were assessed individually, by reading a story called “Mom” (Harcourt, 2007). The teacher used an assessment rubric to check students’ progress (Appendix 1). The students were recorded for the purpose of this workshop.

The information collected through a data analysis triangulation produced the following results:

Table 7

Workshop 3 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table

| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION WORKSHOP #3</b> |                                    |                                 |                                |              |          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/Category</b>                           | <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b> |                                 |                                | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b> |
|  | <b>JOURNAL</b>                     | <b>EXTERNAL<br/>OBSERVATION</b> | <b>PARENTS’<br/>INTERVIEWS</b> |              |          |

|  |           |           |           |           |            |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Confidence toward speaking in the target language</b> | 4         | 4         | 5         | 13        | 24,10      |
| <b>Reading process</b>                                   | 7         | 4         | 5         | 16        | 29,60      |
| <b>Confidence to reading</b>                             | 8         | 3         | 4         | 15        | 27,80      |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>  | 3         | 1         | 3         | 7         | 13,00      |
| <b>Lack of reading comprehension</b>                     | 2         | 1         | 0         | 3         | 5,60       |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>24</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b> |

As observed in Table 3, the “**Reading Process**” was the category with most frequencies in the data triangulation at 29.6%. This category had a strong number of positive appearances in the first three workshops, which once again confirms that students were developing the ability to decode initial-middle-final sounds as expected. Some of the comments found in the journals were “*Students did a great job decoding the sounds when reading*” “*Most of them have improved their reading, they are more fluent and they have good pronunciation*”. Also, with the teacher’s assessment rubric, it was found that most of them could correctly pronounce the target sounds, they identify the sounds and blend regular words with those sounds: /z/ w / ng/ v/ oo) (y/ x/ ch / sh / th/.

The external observer provided some positive insights of the students’ reading process: “*When reading together all of them were reading the words completely as the*

*teacher was emphasizing initial-middle and final sounds.* It was concluded that in this workshop those students who were not engaged in the class in the previous workshops when reading together, this time participated in the activity and were active, this showed a progress in their attitude and willingness to read. According to Fountas & Pinnell (1996), shared reading provides struggling readers with necessary support; shared reading of predictable text can build sight word knowledge and reading fluency.

The category “**Confidence to reading**” was placed in second position with 27.8%. Developing confidence is one of the most important aspects when reading. It can affect students’ behavior and attitude to learn. The effects of falling behind in reading and feeling like a failure can take a large toll on kids. Children can lose all desire to learn how to read or go to school (Reading Rockets, 2021). From the evidence collected in the instruments some comments were found in the journals, such as “*The students showed confidence reading to the teacher*” “*students felt comfortable when they were doing the shared reading activity guided by the teacher.*” “*Students are developing self-confidence when they are asked to read.*” Also from the external observer, it was highlighted that students did not look nervous or anxious when the teacher assessed them one by one.

When interviewing parents, they also confirmed that students’ attitude to reading has changed in a positive way, and their children were more willing to do reading tasks at home. Some of them even have shown initiative to read the stories they have read in the classroom at home. This demonstrated that students were not just learning, but enjoying their own learning process.

In the third position was “**Confidence toward speaking in the target language**” with 24.1%. Some of the positive comments I found in the teachers’ journal were that “*I felt good during the class as students were all engaged and did not feel ashamed to*

*speak.*” “*Students were speaking confidently and some of them were more fluent when implementing this workshop.*” These results are significant for reaching the objectives of this project in the way that students will be able to communicate more easily as long as they understand what they are reading and can talk about that. We can conclude that reading helps language development. Anytime the students were asked a question about a story that they were reading or working on, they were starting to speak in the target language. It was easier for them to respond since they already have knowledge about it. Having a conversation about a book will develop your child's vocabulary and knowledge about the topic of that book. Whether you are reading a fairy tale, a picture book, an informational book, or any other text, anyone can engage in a discussion as you enjoy reading together. (Soldner, 2018).

In the fourth category “**Vocabulary**” was 13%. As a pre-reading activity, the teacher introduced some vocabulary found in the story students had to read. During this time, most students were already familiar with the vocabulary, and it was found out that it is easier now for them to recognize the meaning of words in English. It was found in the journals “*Some students recognized the words when the teacher presented them.*” Also the teacher stated, “*I was impressed since whenever I asked something about the story they were reading they could actually say a response using words in English which is a great advance*”. These conclusions are very important since students showed that they could actually give an answer using pronouns like “she” or “he” or “mom” so little by little, they started giving complete answers.

Finally, a fifth category “**Lack of reading comprehension**” with 5.6% did not have many occurrences. However, special attention was given in the next workshops for those who presented this code. It was confirmed that they are the same 5% of students who

presented this code from the previous workshops and even though they showed an improvement in specific moments of the development of the workshop, when reading to the teacher they got confused with the sounds so they could not understand what they were reading.

#### **Workshop 4: Flexible reading**

The fourth workshop made reference to blending new sounds. It intended to teach students with the seventh group of letter sounds according to the Jolly Phonics approach (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021). This workshop consisted of teaching students how to blend the new sounds with the previous ones and then assess them with a reading activity to check students' accuracy in blending the sounds. The teacher used a rubric in order to check the activity taken from the Jolly Phonics assessment sheets. (Appendix 5).

The information collected through a data analysis triangulation produced the following results:

Table 8

Workshop 4 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table

| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION WORKSHOP 4</b>                    |                                    |                                 |                                |              |          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/Category</b>   | <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b> |                                 |                                | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b> |
|  | <b>JOURNAL</b>                     | <b>EXTERNAL<br/>OBSERVATION</b> | <b>PARENTS'<br/>INTERVIEWS</b> |              |          |
| <b>Confidence toward<br/>speaking in the target<br/>language</b> | 5                                  | 2                               | 3                              | 10           | 20       |

|                                      |           |           |           |           |            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Reading process</b>               | 6         | 4         | 4         | 14        | 28         |
| <b>Confidence to Reading</b>         | 7         | 3         | 4         | 14        | 28         |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>                    | 6         | 3         | 3         | 12        | 24         |
| <b>Lack of reading comprehension</b> | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                        | <b>24</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100</b> |

As in the last three workshops, the triangulation of instruments indicates “Reading process and confidence to reading” having a progressive influence with a high percentage. This time both of them with 28% took part in the application of this workshop. These codes recognized the importance of reading and developing confidence in the process of it. Hasbrouk (2020) explains the importance of expressing total confidence in the ability of the child to learn by underscoring the positives in the face of challenges without overpromising a certain outcome. She stresses, “The time struggling readers spend reading independently, without the opportunity to have errors corrected or to receive encouraging support and feedback, can often serve to deepen their mis-learnings and reinforce common, frequent errors.”

However, in the analysis of the results of the reading assessment, I found out that 4 of them got 16 out of 20 words correctly spelled. It showed that these students struggled with the words /quill/ /died/ /hue/ and /float/ these students needed to reinforce more on blending these sounds so the teacher gave them individual feedback to help them with this.

The third category “Vocabulary” with 24% showed an improvement on students’ vocabulary. It was found out that as students were learning how to blend the sounds their

vocabulary increased. From the journals, we found comments, such as *“It was a good activity, some students could identify the meaning of words after they read it to the teacher”* *“After reading all of the assessment words the teacher projected them to do a final reading feedback and some of the students raised their hands to say what the word meant in Spanish.”* In this activity, some students recognized the words /brain/ and /throat/ from the body parts, as well as /vet/ as a place to take animals when they are sick. These findings are very enriching since it is important for students to establish mental connections between words and their sounds to produce meaningful learning.

The fourth category *“Confidence toward speaking in the target language”* with 20% demonstrate a connection between the reading process and the confidence toward speaking that a student can develop when learning how to read. Some reasons to support these numbers were found in the journal and external observer’s rubric. *“Students felt confident while applying to this workshop, they would speak confidently to the teacher”* according to the analysis of the instruments, the students showed a good attitude when participating and did not seem ashamed of speaking.

According to Better Speech (2021), *“books are possibly the most effective tools to kickstart your child’s academic proficiency and promote social interaction and communication.”* Therefore, it can be highlighted that social interaction is a step-by-step process, which is constructed when students develop their reading skills.

### **Workshop 5: The Park.**

The fifth workshop was based on a story called *“The Park”* during the implementation of this, students were taught how to blend with the last group of Jolly Phonics sounds which was the eighth / oi / ue / er / ar / (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021). This workshop consisted of two parts: one at school and the other part at home. The teacher used



a rubric to check the student's ability to blend the new sounds with the previous ones (Appendix 1). The external observer also had a rubric to use in the part of the lesson held in the classroom. 50% of the parents recorded as evidence of the activity.

Table 9

Workshop 5 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table

| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION WORKSHOP 5</b>                    |                                    |                                 |                                |              |          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/Category</b>   | <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b> |                                 |                                | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b> |
|  | <b>JOURNAL</b>                     | <b>EXTERNAL<br/>OBSERVATION</b> | <b>PARENTS'<br/>INTERVIEWS</b> |              |          |
| <b>Confidence toward<br/>speaking in the target<br/>language</b> | 5                                  | 3                               | 4                              | 12           | 26,70    |
| <b>Reading process</b>   | 6                                  | 5                               | 4                              | 15           | 33,30    |
| <b>Confidence to<br/>Reading</b>                                 | 6                                  | 4                               | 2                              | 12           | 26,70    |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>  | 3                                  | 2                               | 1                              | 6            | 13,30    |
| <b>Lack of reading<br/>comprehension</b>                         | 0                                  | 0                               | 0                              | 0            | 0        |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | 20                                 | 14                              | 11                             | 45           | 100      |

“Reading process” was the first category in the table with a percentage of 33.3% this code has occupied the first place over the other three categories during the last four

workshops. The positive occurrences were reflected mostly in the teacher’s journal with comments, such as *“When the teacher made the circle and taught them how to blend by breaking the words into syllables with the new sounds most of them did it correctly and showed no effort when doing it”* and *“Some students could infer the new letter sounds before introducing it”*. This showed that students were assimilating how to blend sounds and the process was getting easier for them.

On the other hand, the analysis of the observer’s rubric (See appendix 3) it indicated that 73% of the students participated and were engaged in the class, as shown in the following table:

*Table 10. Analysis of the external observer rubric.*

| <b>CATEGORY</b>              | <b>A</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b> |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| <b>FOCUS ON THE TASK</b>     | 8        | 73       | 2        | 18       | 1        | 9        | 0        | 11                        |
| <b>ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR</b> | 8        | 73       | 2        | 18       | 1        | 9        | 0        | 11                        |

Finally, in the teacher’s assessment rubric it was highlighted that even though most students recognized the sound /qu / some of them presented trouble when blending with this sound so at the end of the lesson there was a re-teaching session about this specific phone.

Secondly, there was **“Confidence to reading and confidence toward speaking”** with 26.7% of occurrences. These codes show a positive progress in students’ self-confidence to read and speak. Thus, the teacher, co-teacher, and parents recognize that they

have had an improvement not only in decoding and blending the sounds they were learning, but also in their attitude when it comes to read and speak in the target language, they do not show any nervousness or fear, on the contrary most of them looked pretty excited when they were called to read. From parents, I found comments, such as *“At home she looked pretty relaxed when she read to us”* and *“Once he got home, he told us about the activity, he was very excited about the activity and he read the story twice.”* Some other parents also talked about how confident their kids were when reading the activity, this represents a big step to meet the objectives of the research.

Furthermore, the fourth category was **“Vocabulary”** with 13.3% of total occurrences. Evidence proved that students have reinforced and increased their vocabulary range. Book reading is assumed to be effective for teaching labels because it is highly repetitive and narrows down possible meanings of words by showing specific illustrations (Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Snow & Goldfield, 1983).

Parents’ interviews also displayed positive comments, such as *“My child sometimes identifies words when I ask him about the story”* *“when she asks me questions about some words, she starts to make sense of the story which is very significant.”* During book-reading episodes, parents can introduce new words, test, and reinforce children’s recall of the new information. (Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Snow & Goldfield, 1983).

### **Workshop 6: The Very Hungry Caterpillar.**

Workshop six regarded reading comprehension and oral production. Here, students shared their knowledge about a story called *“The Very Hungry Caterpillar”* (Carle, 1994) They were assessed by their ability to understand features about a story and word recognition. (See appendix 6 and 7). At the beginning of the lesson, students were

introduced to the story by the teacher, previously they were taught some vocabulary they were going to see in the story, students could see the characters through their TV so they could understand the story as the teacher was reading it to them. The teacher read the story three times, after the first part of this lesson they were finally assessed.

The information collected through a data analysis triangulation produced the following results:

Table 11

Workshop 6 - Data Analysis Triangulation Table

| <b>DATA ANALYSIS TRIANGULATION WORKSHOP 6</b>                    |                                    |                                 |                                |              |          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Code/Category</b>   | <b>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS</b> |                                 |                                | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b> |
|  | <b>JOURNAL</b>                     | <b>EXTERNAL<br/>OBSERVATION</b> | <b>PARENTS'<br/>INTERVIEWS</b> |              |          |
| <b>Confidence toward<br/>speaking in the target<br/>language</b> | 6                                  | 4                               | 1                              | 11           | 22,40    |
| <b>Reading process</b>   | 4                                  | 3                               | 2                              | 9            | 18,40    |
| <b>Confidence to<br/>reading</b>                                 | 5                                  | 3                               | 3                              | 11           | 22,40    |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>  | 6                                  | 5                               | 3                              | 14           | 28,60    |
| <b>Lack of reading<br/>comprehension</b>                         | 2                                  | 2                               | 0                              | 4            | 8,20     |

|               |    |    |   |    |     |
|---------------|----|----|---|----|-----|
| <b>TOTALS</b> | 23 | 17 | 9 | 49 | 100 |
|---------------|----|----|---|----|-----|

The following table shows, for the first time, “Vocabulary” in the first category with 28.6% of occurrences. This category had some observations from the teacher and external observer that assured students evidenced an improvement in their vocabulary ranged. After they were introduced to the story, they could quickly remember the vocabulary of it so when they were being assessed most of them knew what the correct answer was when the teacher gave them the response options. In the external observer rubric, there were comments, such as *“Students showed good retention mostly when the teacher was assessing them”* and *“Most of them did not show trouble with the correct answer”* this evidence shows that they knew what they were being asked. This is a very important step in this research because the process of reading will be better as long as the students can make mental connections and understand what they are reading, in this way learning will be meaningful for them.

Secondly, *“Confidence to reading and confidence toward speaking in the target language”* had the same percentage as the second category with 22.4%. Confidence has played an important role in this research; it can make a great difference in a child’s overall confidence in school. I discovered that most students that feel confident and secure about reading and what they can say in English are always happy when they do it, they motivate themselves to learn new things and learn from mistakes.

Evidence shows that through the development of the workshop students showed a good attitude, they had an active participation and they liked the story. From the journals, there were comments, such as *“Students would raise their hands and participate, they were*

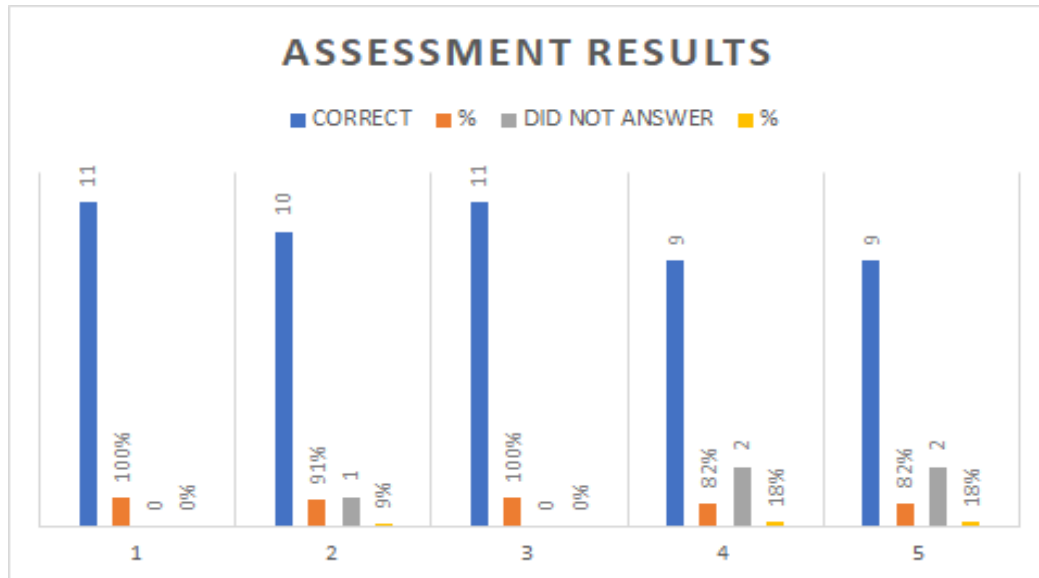
*having a good time with the story” and “they referred to the main character of the story as the caterpillar a word that they had just learned”* this showed that they got quickly familized with the characters of the story so they could participate when they teacher asked questions.

Successively, the fourth category “**Reading process**” appeared with 18.4% of occurrences. When students were asked to read the story by the teacher, they showed an improvement in blending the sounds, even though some still presented trouble by blending some phones, such as the /th/ in “three” and the /pl/ in “apple” they still could read it and they did not get discouraged by it. On the other hand, most seemed to be not only reading, but understanding the story so this was a workshop they truly enjoyed. Evidence showed in the journal that *“Students where highly engaged with the story” “some students presented difficulties when blending some sounds, they could reread and cope with this at the end though”* from the external observer rubric there were comments, such as *“Students were actively reading when the teacher gave them the printed story for them to read”*.

Finally, a fifth category “*lack of reading comprehension*” with 8,2% referred to some students’ lack of understanding of the story. It was shown that there were a few students that when they were called by the teacher to be assessed were not able to understand the questions. Therefore, the teacher had to use Spanish to help them understand and give an answer. After being assessed, these students were gathered together and target vocabulary was retaught to work this out.

In the following table, it can be seen the results from the reading comprehension assessment:

*Table 12. Reading comprehension assessment results.*



As shown in Appendix 7, the assessment consisted of five questions in which all the students got number one and six correct. However, it reflected a few that struggled in questions two, four and five.

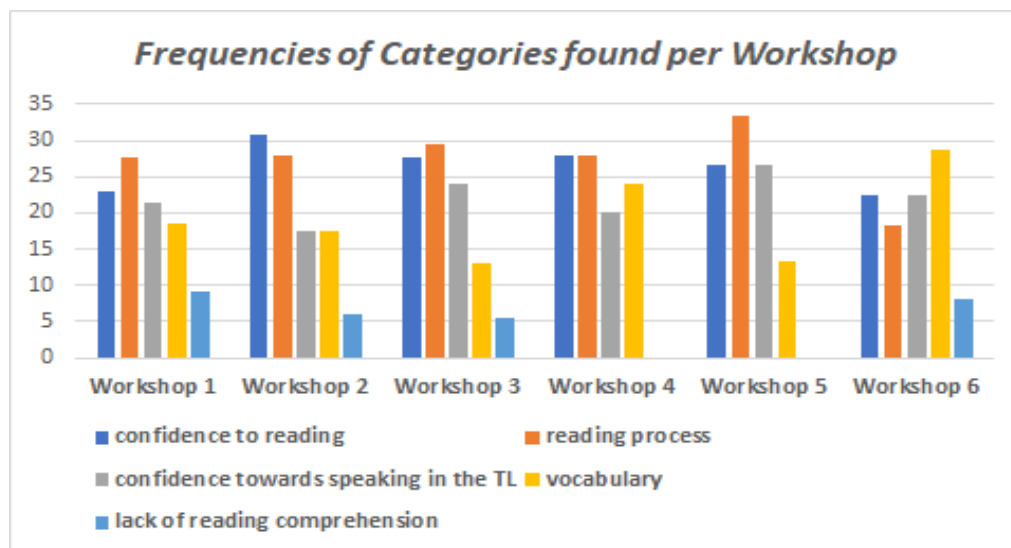
From the journal, there were comments, such as *“There were three students that did not understand me, it was not in every question but in specific ones like four and five”* This workshop showed that reading comprehension is a process that takes time and students will develop at different times so it is ok if a student gets confused when being asked about something in English, with accompaniment and dedication we will be able to help him/her out.

### **Evaluation stage**

After gathering and analyzing the data from the diagnostic stage, the result was that students were ready to enter a new learning environment and willing to learn new sounds; they had not previously been taught in English sounds and how to read in their native language: Spanish. From the moment they started to be taught how to read in their mother tongue (Spanish), they started to learn phonemes in English so this was a process of

learning both their native and the L2 reading skill. Then, I carried out the action stage with six workshops, so as to accompany this process with a natural reading method: Jolly Phonics. The analysis of this action stage was fulfilled through implementing some instruments: teacher's journal, external observer's rubric, parents' interviews and a teacher's assessment rubric form which determined whether the intervention had been successful or not. This section displays an interpretation of the categories found from the process. Finally, this evaluation stage determines the extent the research question and objectives were attained. The most prominent categories of the action research are shown in the following table:

*Table 13. Frequencies of categories per workshop*



As observed in Table 13, there are similar results from workshop to workshop. The analysis of this data reflects the average percentage of each category ranges from 33.3% to 9.2% as it is displayed. The category *Reading process* was on the top of the table with 33% of occurrences and it was the category with the highest percentage in half of the workshops. It means, students' considerably showed improvement in terms of assimilating and learning the letter sounds and the process of blending them. The highest peak of positive



occurrences found, 33.3%, was during the analysis of the 5<sup>th</sup> workshop. At this point, students were clearly familiar with all the letter sounds. This was the last workshop in which they blended the last group of letter sounds. It is worth mentioning that in this category most of the positive occurrences came from the teacher's journal and the parent's interviews. It meant a lot in the whole process since the idea of teaching something new to students is that parents can also acknowledge that their kids are really learning.

The second category, *confidence to reading*, had an average of 30,8% of occurrences. It implied students progressively raised their confidence toward reading through the intervention. While reviewing some of the videos shown in the evidence of the workshops reading in classroom and at home, it is evident that strategies and techniques like reading to people you love like mother, father or grandmother supported them in the course of gaining knowledge and confidence to read stories.

The third category, *Confidence toward speaking in the target language*, displayed a mean of 26% of occurrences. It showed that students were acquiring self-confidence through the implementation of each workshop. It is illustrated that in workshop 5, it reached the highest score with 26.7%. This is a positive percentage since it is demonstrated that by the end of the implementation of the last group of sounds and how to blend with them, students gain confidence to communicate and express themselves in the target language.

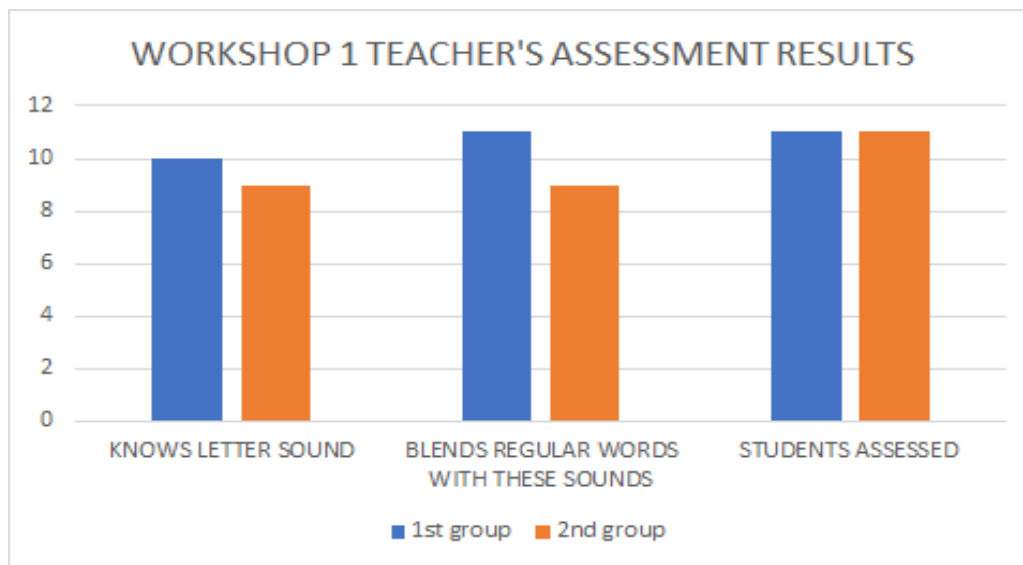
The fourth category, *vocabulary*, had an average percentage of 18.5 with a high number of positive occurrences over the whole intervention. It is important to mention that in the last workshop it had the highest number of occurrences with 28.6%. This is interpreted as a progression on the vocabulary learning, as well as vocabulary acquisition during the action stage. There was noticeably advance in the assimilation of tricky words

mentioned in the Jolly Phonics approach as the words that cannot be sounded out easily, they also have irregular spelling patterns, such as /he/ or /she/ or /my/. Also, it was evident that in workshop 6 students easily assimilated some information questions such as “What, where, why, and when” this allowed them to understand the questions and give a response.

The fifth category *Lack of reading comprehension* with 5% of occurrences showed a minority of students who had trouble understanding the stories throughout the implementation of the workshops. They looked confused when they were asked questions or to give specific information about the activities, to attend this problem they were paid special attention, target vocabulary was emphasized as well as the pronunciation of phones and the use of flash cards was implemented to work on meaning so students could recognize the relationship between the words in a phrase or sentence. For instance, the action stage was mostly productive for learners in terms of engagement to read and speak in the target language.

On the other hand, table 14 displays the results of the analysis of the rubrics from the teacher’s assessment forms:

*Table 14. Workshop 1 Assessment Results*



The following table describes the results of the first workshop assessment, 11 students were assessed. As observed in the assessment rubric, (See Appendix 1) students were assessed by their ability to know the sounds. This is to recognize the sound, as well as their ability to blend with these sounds, during this first workshop they were assessed with the first /s/ /a/ /t/ /i/ /p/ /n/ and second group of letters sounds /c/ /k/ /e/ /h/ /r/ /m/ /d/ in the Jolly Phonics order (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

It was observed that 10 out of 11 the students recognized the first group of letter sounds. There was a student who struggled with the sound /n/. However, when they were asked to read, they could blend with all the first group of letter sounds. Consequently, with the second group of letter sounds there were nine out of 11 students that could recognize and blend with these sounds. There were two students who struggled with the sound /h/, it was difficult for them to produce this sound so the teacher worked with these two students and paid attention to this specific sound to reinforce it. She gave them examples and helped them connect first-middle and final sounds using this phoneme.

figure 15 displays the results of the analyses of the rubrics from the teacher's assessment results in workshop 2:

*Table 15. Workshop 2 Assessment Results:*

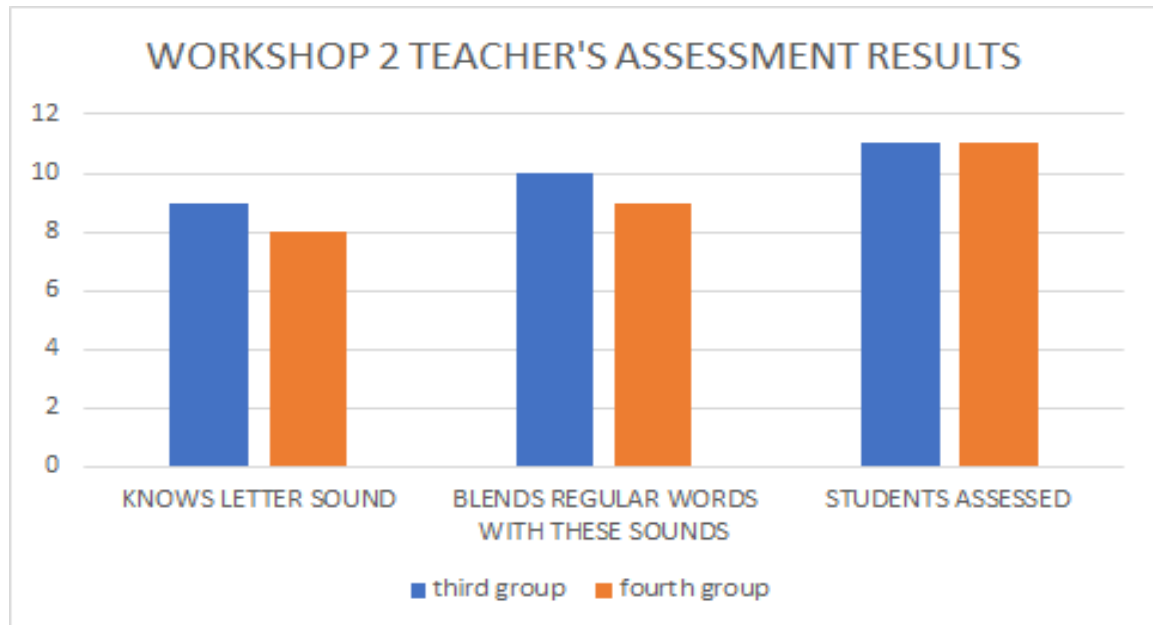
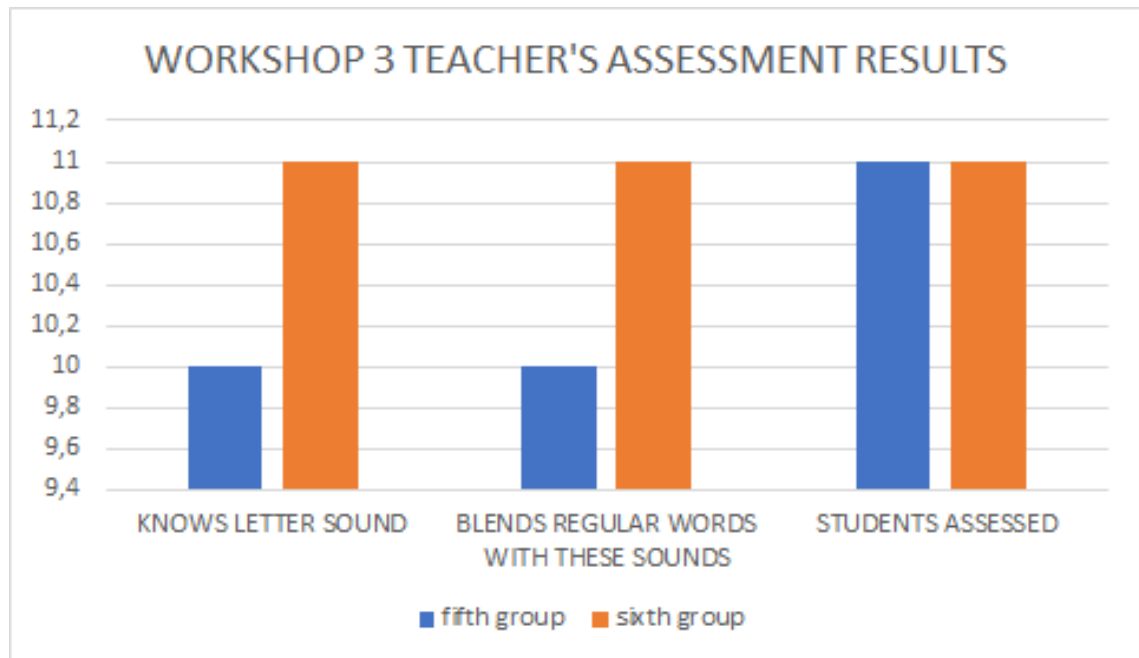


Table (???) describes the results of the second workshop assessment, 11 students were assessed. As observed in the assessment results above, students were assessed by their ability to know the sounds. This is to recognize the sound, as well as their ability to blend with these sounds, in this second workshop they were assessed with the third /g/ /o/ /u/ /l/ /f/ /b/ and fourth group of letters sounds /ai/ /j/ /oa/ /ie/ /ee/ /or/ in the Jolly Phonics order (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

It was observed that 9 out of 11 students recognized the third group of letter sounds. There were two students, who struggled with the phoneme /g/. However, one of them could blend with it and the other one could not. Furthermore, with the 4th group of letter sounds eight students out of eleven struggled with the sounds /oa/ /ie/ and nine could blend with them. As a result of this, these three phonemes were reinforced with the use of videos and examples given by the teacher.

Table 16 displays the results of the analyses of the rubric from the teacher's assessment results in workshop 3:

*Table 16. Workshop 3 Assessment Results:*



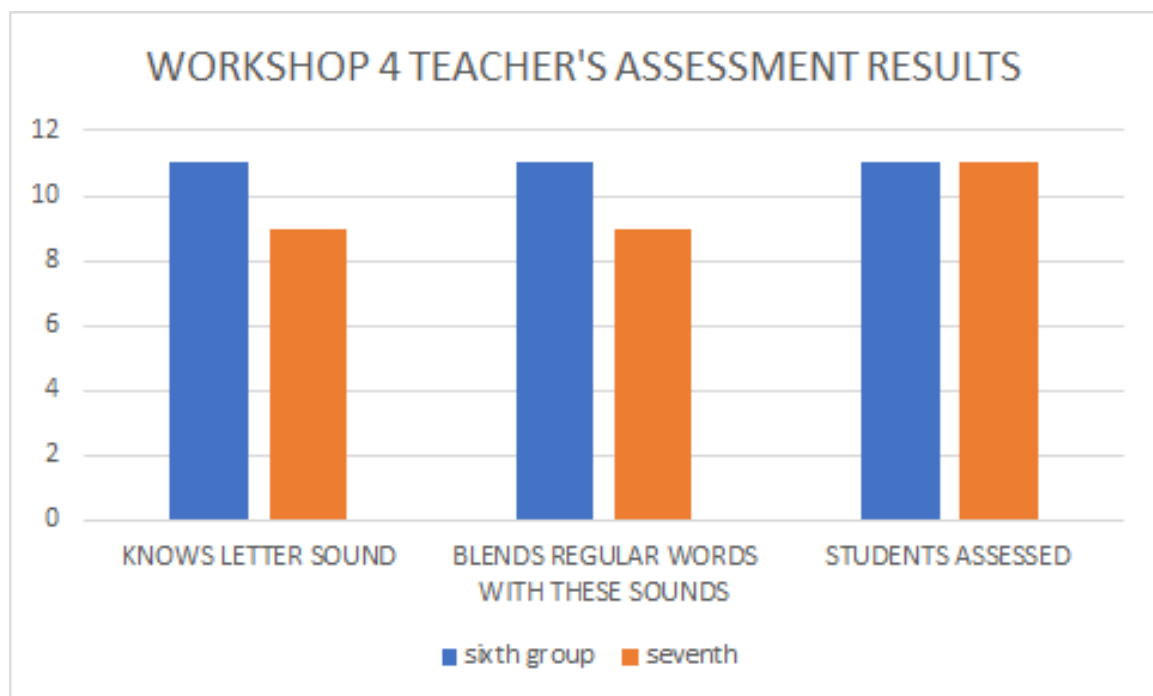
The following table describes the results of the third workshop assessment, 11 students were assessed during the implementation of the workshop. As observed in the assessment results in Table 16, the students were assessed by their ability to know the sounds, and blend with these target sounds, in this workshop they were assessed with the fifth /z/ /w/ /ng/ /v/ /oo/ and sixth group of letters sounds /y/ /x/ /ch/ /sh/ /th/ /th/ in the Jolly Phonics order (Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

As shown in the analysis of the assessment, there were 10 out of 11 students who recognized the fifth group of letter sounds, which is a good number. It was found out that students assimilated these phonemes more easily than the fourth group of letter sounds. There was just one student who was not able to blend with the phoneme /ng/ on the

contrary, 11 out of 11 students could successfully recognize and blend words with these sounds. These analyses gave positive results on the implementation of the Jolly Phonics Approach to enhance kindergarten reading and speaking skills.

Figure 17 displays the results of the analyses of the rubric from the teacher's assessment results in workshop 4:

*Table 17. Workshop 4 Assessment Results:*



The following table describes the results of the fourth workshop assessment, 11 students were assessed during the implementation of the workshop. As observed in the assessment results in Table 17, students were assessed again in some letters from the sixth group of letter sounds. This was to reinforce the sounds /sh/ /ch/ and /th/ /th/ especially in the th sound in order to make more emphasis in the two sounds given to this phoneme [θ] y [ð]. It was shown that students blended these sounds correctly. However, from the seventh group of letter sounds three students had difficulties in blending with the phoneme /qu/

therefore more emphasis was placed on this phoneme, the teacher wrote a list of words on the board using this phoneme taken from the Jolly Phonics resource bank and she highlighted initial and middle sounds with it.

/QUACKING/

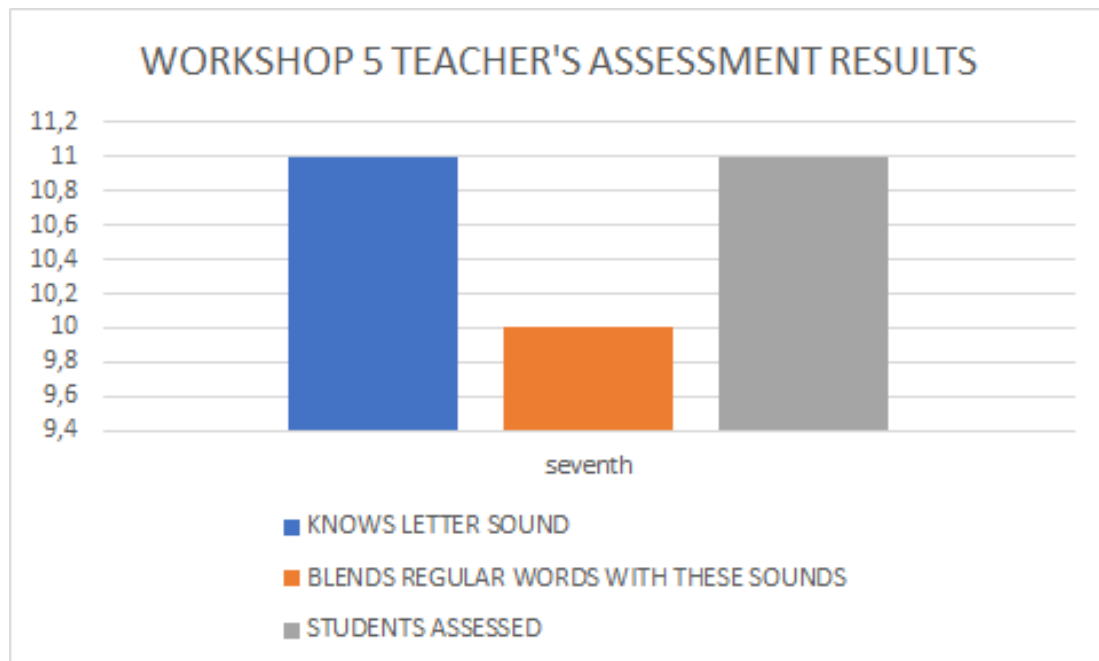
/SQUEAK/

/SQUIRRELS/

At the end of this support session students were able to pronounce the words but not with a lot of ease where the phoneme was included (beginning-middle-final) therefore they were asked to keep practicing them at home.

Table 18 displays the results of the analyses of the rubric from the teacher's assessment results in workshop 5:

*Table 18. Workshop 5 Assessment Results:*



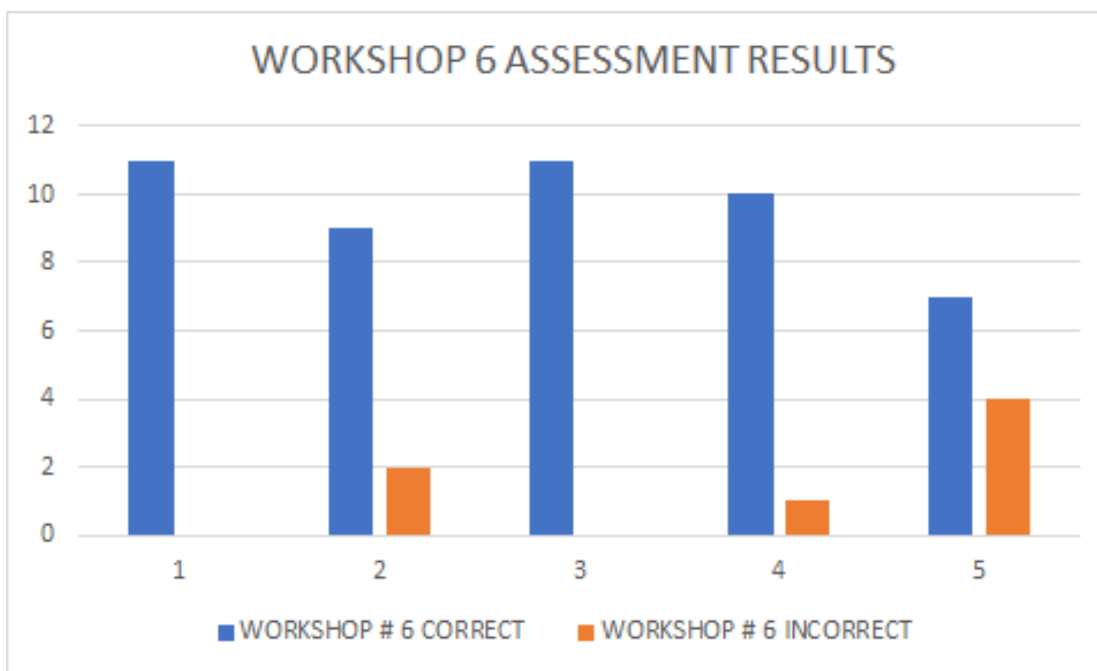
The following table describes the results of the fifth workshop assessment, 11 students were assessed during the implementation of the workshop. As observed in the

assessment results in Table 18, students were assessed in the seventh group of letter sounds. Most of them showed positive results when recognizing the sounds. 100% knew the letter sound and 99% could blend with these sounds. There was a student who struggled with the phoneme /oi/

The analysis of this workshop proved that there was a progressive improvement in the students' ability to blend, this process got easier over time since they were assimilating the strategies of breaking words into syllables, internalizing the letter sounds and knowing how to blend with the new sounds they learned in each workshop.

Table 19 displays the results of the analyses of the rubric from the teacher's assessment results in workshop 6:

*Table 19. Workshop 6 Assessment Results:*



As it was explained in workshop 6, it consisted of five comprehension questions about the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. (Carle,1994). By the time this workshop was implemented, students had already been introduced to the blending process with all the



groups of letter sounds. This workshop was taught to check students' comprehension of features in a story, the results above showed that students were able to give a response once they understood a story and when they were introduced to specific vocabulary. However, it is important to highlight that there were some things that they could understand without previous introduction for example the *wh-questions*. They showed that they were familiar with "what" "where" "when" etc. The results showed that all the students could identify the correct answers from questions number one and three. However, in question number two, two students were not able to give an answer, the question was, "What did the caterpillar do? they had to choose between "*Go to store or eat lots of food*" it was shown that most students who got it right said "*eat food*" missing the word "*lots.*" This was because they were more familiar with the words *eat food* and *lots* seemed to be a new word for them but students could understand the general meaning of the options they had and gave the correct answer.

Consequently, in question number four students showed positive results, nine out of eleven students said the correct answer, they were familiar with the words "*vacation*" and "*hungry*" therefore, for them it was easy to choose between the two options. Nevertheless, there was a student, who did not understand the options so the teacher had to use two pictures in order for the student to give an answer. Finally, question number five showed the highest score of difficulty, 64% of students could not choose between the two response options. It was shown that they were not familiar with the words "before" and "after." These terms were difficult for them to understand. The teacher used their native language to get a response from the students. In this way, the last workshop activity was completed.

## Findings

As indicated in the action stage section, several learning activities, by using the *Jolly Phonics* Method were applied to improve students' reading and oral production to reach the objectives of the study. It displayed the following results which were stated based on the data triangulation carried out during the action stage.

### **The implementation of The Jolly Phonics method helps students decode Initial middle and final sounds.**

The cumulative results of each workshop are that Jolly Phonics had a favorable effect on students: 90% of them could recognize the letter sounds from the first workshop and simultaneously blend with them. These results are very positive because the objectives of the research have been met. It helped students to learn sounds in an engaging way. The results showed that students enjoyed the process, and they liked the songs and actions related to each letter sound and by the time they got to the fifth step of the method which was *blending*. The process was easier for them as the majority of students could already recognize the letter sounds. Consequently, the students were able to decode all the 42-letter phonemes explained in the *Jolly Phonics* Method, even though some struggled with some phonemes as explained before in the workshops. They went through it with practice in classes and at home. It was shown that some phonemes were more difficult for them to pronounce, such as the “*th*” sounds and the “*qu*” sound or some digraphs like “*ai*” therefore a lot of emphasis was paid to these ones. Also, the students demonstrated that they were able to decode initial-middle and final sounds, as well as recognize them.

### **Jolly Phonics enhanced oral production and vocabulary learning**

As stated in the objectives, oral production was promoted, students showed that they were able to give information about stories and features of it. This was proved mostly in the last workshop (6) when students were asked about *the Very Hungry Caterpillar* story, they could provide information about colors in the story, places, feelings as shown in the evidence for workshop 6 (table 19). On the other hand, Jolly Phonics played an important role in the acquisition of new vocabulary in a way that students did not notice it and were not aware of it. There was an increase in the learners' vocabulary range, as shown in the explanation of results of each workshop there was a percentage of 18% of occurrences that remained in all the workshops for this category, by highlighting that in workshop six "vocabulary," they reached the peak with 28% of occurrences, that proved the positive impact the workshop had on students' vocabulary learning. Since workshop one, students had to give information about stories they were reading, such as "What color is." or "Is Tim happy? etc. which unconsciously forced participants to find lexical resources to communicate. This instinctive process helped students to use the vocabulary given in previous workshops and reinforce it, which became a cyclical procedure that fostered vocabulary acquisition through the implementation of each.

### **Reading and speaking confidence**

The study strongly showed the fact that the workshops increased confidence to read and speak in the target language. Especially when they were asked to read with people around them, students demonstrated that they liked to be heard and praised. They were excited with the activities where they had to read at home to their parents. They showed that they developed strong confidence and that they were fearless. It was proved that when

students were confident to participate in a workshop, their willingness to do the activities in the classroom like reading to their partners or the teacher increased. On other hand, students also showed that they were not ashamed when they made mistakes or when they were corrected by the teacher which was a positive point in their process since it helped them to correct themselves and continue reading, their participation in each workshop was active and dynamic.

## Conclusions

Students feel confident about themselves when the *Jolly Phonics* Method is implemented in the classroom. The method a teacher uses is key to involve students in a new learning path and make them enjoy the process of learning. The *Jolly Phonics* method does not just catch students' interest in reading, but also in scaffolding the reading process to decode a syllable, then a word, and then long sentences. Consequently, once students start attaining positive results and realizing they can read a word and understand it, their intrinsic motivation increases exponentially, as well. This method is a dynamic process for students to develop their reading skill. The results show that students can learn the five reading and writing skills fast that the *Jolly Phonics* proposes. However, in this project, the reading skills for learning the letter phonemes, blending and tricky words that have irregular spelling, which children learn separately were addressed.

In the implementation of this research project, it is also proven that students can actually learn easily and fast to decode the L2 letter phonemes along with the phonemes and blending of their L1. The students show that the process of learning of the L2 phonemes facilitated the blending of phonemes in their native language. Once a phoneme is introduced by the Spanish teacher, the students know how to utter and blend it with other phonemes. In that way, they assimilate phonemes much more easily in both the L2 and their L1.

It would be ideal and convenient if the MEN took into consideration a reading program based on a phonics method for kindergarten students. This could learn how to read in their L1 at an early age. It is recommended that students learn how to decode phonemes in English at an early age. Since there are some phonemic differences between the L1 and L2, there might some interference between both linguistic systems. This situation can make

pronunciation, blending, and decoding difficult because of these differences. Students in higher grades face problems with pronunciation and oral production in English. It becomes more difficult for students and that is the reason why in Colombia numerous studies have been implemented to improve pronunciation in English. The point of this interrogant is, I could prove with my students that a 6- or 7-year-old child could easily face this from the very beginning if they learned the American letter sounds just as they are taught their native language sounds in transition grade. They would easily assimilate both languages' letter sounds, by taking into account that they still have that flexibility in their brain known as the critical period that some theories state that at the ages of 3-7, there is no decline in language ability. To conclude, it can be stated that the *Jolly Phonics* Method does develop the ability to decode letter sounds and foster oral production in kindergarten graders at Cartagena International School.

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## List of Appendices

### Appendix 1

| <b>Jolly Phonics Pupil/Student Checklist</b>  |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|---|--|--------------------|--|-----------|--|----------|--|-----------|--|----------|--|
| Name: _____   | Date: _____  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| s a t i p n<br>c k e h r m d<br>g o u l f b   | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">knows these sounds</th> <th style="width: 50%;">blends regular words with these sounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table> | knows these sounds | blends regular words with these sounds |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| knows these sounds  | blends regular words with these sounds   |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| ai j oa ie ee or<br>z w ng v oo<br>y x ch sh th th<br>qu ou oi ue er ar                 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>   |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
|   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| <b>Able to spell tricky words</b><br><br>I-the- she -he-me- we- be- was-to -do-are- all | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr><td>First WS</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>Second WS</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>Third WS</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>Fourth WS</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>Fifth WS</td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>  | First WS           |  | Second WS |  | Third WS |  | Fourth WS |  | Fifth WS |  |
| First WS  |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| Second WS   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| Third WS  |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| Fourth WS   |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |
| Fifth WS  |  |                    |  |           |  |          |  |           |  |          |  |

(Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021)

**Appendix 2**

---

ink      ten      ant      sun

king      cat      nut      pen

man      red      hat      egg

up      on      goat      dog

aim      bed      fun      lamp

---

(Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

### Appendix 3

#### Behavior and Attitude with Substitute Teacher

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

| CATEGORY                     | A   | B   | C   | D  |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Focus on the task</b>     | Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done. Very self-directed. | Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person. | Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on-task. | Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.               |
| <b>Attitude and Behavior</b> | Never had to be reminded to be well-behaved and helpful to the substitute teacher.    | Had to be reminded once to be well-behaved and helpful to the substitute teacher.                             | Had to be reminded twice to be well-behaved and helpful to the substitute teacher.  | Had to be reminded more than twice to be well-behaved and helpful to the substitute teacher. |

Student Comments and Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Comments and Grade \_\_\_\_\_

(Felazzo's, 2007)

**Appendix 4**sleeppie pboat bjet jsingwetzoo zfort ffoxyesbook  
or  
moon mvanqueenthis  
or  
thinshipchop

(Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).

### Appendix 5

| Reading |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
|         | Blends words accurately |
| brain   |                         |
| just    |                         |
| died    |                         |
| weed    |                         |
| port    |                         |
| zoom    |                         |
| long    |                         |
| vet     |                         |
| torn    |                         |
| float   |                         |
| yelp    |                         |
| parch   |                         |
| boxing  |                         |
| fresh   |                         |
| quill   |                         |
| shelf   |                         |
| crouch  |                         |
| spoilt  |                         |
| hue     |                         |
| throat  |                         |

\_\_\_/20

(Jolly Phonics, 2018-2021).





**Appendix 6****"The Very Hungry Caterpillar"*****Assessment***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sight word Recognition:**

1. To            some            all            get
2. Look        let            up            what
3. What        was            sit            at
4. All            to            and            again
5. Up            after            look            it

(Edelman, 2006)

## Appendix 7

### Comprehension Questions:

Directions: Circle the correct answer to the question.

1. Who was very hungry?

*Caterpillar or Butterfly*

2. What did the caterpillar do?

*Go to the store or eat lots of food*

3. Where was the caterpillar eating the leaf?

*On the tree or in the house*

4. Why did the caterpillar eat so much food?

*He was on vacation or he was hungry*

5. When did the caterpillar turn into a butterfly?

*Before he ate the food or after he ate the food*

(Edelman, 2006)