

**CARTOON-BASED R2L CYCLE: A MULTIMODAL APPROACH  
TO BIOGRAPHICAL RECOUNTS**



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## ABSTRACT

Learning to read and write different types of texts is essential for English foreign language (EFL) students and required in all educational contexts. That is why this study was applied in a bilingual school, where fifth grade students faced great difficulties to understand texts when reading and organize their ideas when writing. Students were unable to make sense of texts, organize and connect ideas, and write independent texts. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study, rooted in an action research design, was to promote students' reading and writing skills in their second language by incorporating Cartoons as multimodal texts and following the sequence of the reading to learn (R2L) pedagogy. R2L is an approach that enables students to develop their reading and writing skills. Through R2L, students can make meaning of texts and construct independent texts based on the analysis and co-construction of a model text. Data was gathered through a diagnostic task, participant observation, two reading tasks, students' writing samples, audio-recordings, a teacher's journal, and a focus group. Results showed significant changes in students' ability to understand and write biographies and revealed that the use of cartoons as multimodal texts were essential in student's understanding and written production.

**Keywords:** Reading to learn (R2L), Reading and Writing abilities, Biographical Recounts, Multimodality and Cartoon texts.

## RESUMEN

Aprender a leer y escribir diferentes tipos de textos es esencial para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) y se requiere en todos los contextos educativos. Es por ello que este estudio se aplicó en un colegio bilingüe, donde los estudiantes de quinto grado se enfrentaban a grandes dificultades para comprender textos al leer y organizar sus ideas al escribir. Los estudiantes no pudieron dar sentido a los textos, organizar y conectar ideas y

escribir textos independientes. Por lo tanto, el propósito de este estudio cualitativo, arraigado en un diseño de investigación acción, fue promover las habilidades de lectura y escritura de los estudiantes en su segundo idioma mediante la incorporación de textos icónicos como textos multimodales y siguiendo la secuencia de la pedagogía de lectura para aprender (R2L). R2L es un enfoque que permite a los estudiantes desarrollar sus habilidades de lectura y escritura. A través de R2L, los estudiantes pueden dar sentido a los textos y construir textos independientes basados en el análisis y la co-construcción de un texto modelo. Los datos se recopilaron a través de una tarea de diagnóstico, observación participante, dos tareas de lectura, muestras de escritura de los estudiantes, grabaciones de audio, un diario del maestro y un grupo focal. Los resultados mostraron cambios significativos en la capacidad de los estudiantes para comprender y escribir biografías y revelaron que el uso de dibujos animados como textos multimodales fue esencial en la comprensión y producción escrita de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** *Leer para aprender (R2L), Habilidades de Lectura y Escritura, Relatos Biográficos, Multimodalidad, Textos de caricaturas.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Teaching English as a second language has been an experience full of learning. The most important thing I have learned is that we constantly need to innovate our teaching methodology. This I noticed when I started teaching English to students from fifth grade at a bilingual school in Colombia. Students had been in my class when they were first-graders, and I remembered the good learners they were that year. However, after some months of teaching and after implementing several reading and writing tasks, I realized that students were not making the progress I expected. Students' level was low and they could not comprehend the meaning of texts. Additionally, during writing assignments, students were unable to organize their ideas, and they did not produce enough content to write in their second language (L2). Thus, I decided to address this issue through and improve their reading and writing difficulties.*

In all academic levels and according to the curriculum of each school, students are required to read and write different types of texts. However, learning to read and write in L2 has always been a challenging process for learners. The difficulty of the process is evidenced in students' reading fluency and comprehension of certain texts as well as in the structure and organization of students' writings. Additionally, factors affecting these processes can be identified in the classes. According to Grabe (2009), students' misunderstanding is that they are not aware of the reading goals they need to achieve. But to do so, students also need to have clear purposes in the reading tasks assigned in class, especially when these are long and complex texts.

Regarding writing, Hyland (2003) highlights that students' learning backgrounds and personalities influence how quickly and how well they learn to write in a second language. That is to say, students' attitudes, writing experiences, and previous knowledge affect their writing process. Reading and writing in L2 can be affected by the complexity of written language used in the tasks assigned to the students and the lack of instruction on those tasks. These types of tasks require specific instruction and clear goals because these two skills are challenging but really important in the students' learning process of all areas of the curriculum.

In Colombia, students are instructed to develop their reading and writing skills in L2, especially in private schools certified by the secretary of Education as bilingual schools. However, learning to read and write in English is challenging for these students

who study in these bilingual schools. Therefore, students need to carry out activities that enable them to think, understand, elaborate on ideas, and express clear thoughts in their writing. Additionally, teachers must provide students with explicit instruction and support on reading and writing tasks to comprehend better the texts so that they can also be creative when writing. Rojas (2011) states that teachers usually correct students' mistakes when writing and they do not focus on students' organization of ideas or creation of structured texts. That is to say, teachers should focus on instructing students in the writing of well-organized and structured sentences and paragraphs that connect coherent ideas in their texts with the purpose to strengthen students' reading and writing skills.

At a private school in Monteria, when implementing different reading and writing tasks to 18 students from fifth grade, I noticed difficulties in reading and writing skills. Although this is a Cambridge Senior School, certified by the Secretary of Education as a bilingual school, fifth grade students seemed to face several difficulties when completing reading and writing tasks. With regards to reading skill, I realized that students had difficulties identifying the main idea of a text and interpreting the texts which were expected in the reading goals of the course syllabus. For example, when answering questions about a text, they were unable to find main events or identify vocabulary in context. Furthermore, students looked for literal information in the text, and if they did not find it, they could not infer or critically construct the answers by themselves. Furthermore, I also noticed that my students had difficulties expressing and organizing their ideas in writing. For example, students' texts were too short and their ideas were stated without an order, which made it difficult to get their meaning across. Additionally, Students usually started talking about a specific participant but they did not keep track of that participant as the text unfolded.

Likewise, students' results in the Cambridge Tests were usually satisfactory in all

English skills. However, fifth-grade students obtained low reading comprehension scores and demonstrated poor written production. Indeed, students' performance in the tests reflected the difficulties I had observed during reading and writing instructions.

Therefore, to address this problem, I drew on the principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics, which provides tools that benefit the students' reading and writing of academic texts. Specifically, I focused on R2L, which is a methodology that allows learners to understand certain text types and to write independent texts prioritizing the information they want to communicate when writing.

The selection of R2L was done in order to support students' reading and writing in the English class as they are the basis of academic skills that can bring learners to be successful and autonomous. The purpose of this study was to promote English foreign language (EFL) students' reading and writing skills by incorporating cartoons as multimodal texts and following the sequence of the reading to learn (R2L) pedagogy. Therefore, this qualitative study rooted in an action research design describes what happens in students' ability to read and write biographical recounts if a R2L instructional unit using cartoon texts is implemented and how these multimodal texts support and develop these skills. That is why, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What changes in students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts may result from the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle?
2. How does the use of cartoons as multimodal texts boost students' understanding and writing of biographical recounts?

Reading to Learn (R2L) is the latest version of Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) which has been developed over the previous three decades. R2L is a program used to integrate reading and writing skills. This methodology is presented as a cycle in which learners receive explicit instruction to achieve their reading and writing goals. This cycle is divided into six stages - *Preparing before reading, Detailed reading, Sentence making, Joint-re-writing,*

*Individual re-writing, and Independent writing* (Martín & Rose, 2012). R2L has been implemented in different educational contexts around the world to support students' reading and writing. According to Rose & Acevedo (2017), R2L consists of a systematic, visible, and intensive accompaniment of the teacher with his students and is applied to jointly integrate and develop reading and writing skills.

Previous research on R2L has given positive results. For example, Shum, Tai & Shi (2018) implemented R2L to 13 non-Chinese students at a secondary school in Hong Kong with the purpose to examine the effectiveness of the R2L program in teaching Chinese writing of the discussion genre. Results revealed that students significantly improved their writing with regard to the construction of the schematic structure and the linguistic repertoire of transitivity, modality, and cohesion. Similarly, Wildsmith & Steinke (2014) implemented R2L to help 46 students at a South African University improve their reading and writing performance of academic writing. The purpose of the study was to carefully monitor the R2L implementation process in order to gauge the effects of the approach on the learners' reading skills and their subsequent ability to write and structure texts within an academic context. Findings revealed that students' reading comprehension greatly improved after the intervention and students improved their writing at the micro and macro level of the text. Following this line of inquiry, similarly, R2L has been implemented to support students' reading and writing in different genres (Damayanti, 2017; Doria & Salgado, 2019; Ramirez, 2020).

Because research on reading and writing processes is such a large area and because there are many types of genres within each family, in this study, the focus is on using multimodality through cartoon texts in the R2L cycle to help students understand biographical recounts and to support them in the writing of this genre until they are able to create biographical recounts by themselves. Biographical recounts were selected as the genre of interest in this study to fulfill the school's requirement to teach this genre to

fifth grade students. Moreover, cartoons as multimodal texts were selected to facilitate representation and meaning-making while optimizing the information presented in the text. So far, no study has focused on multimodality to support and develop understanding and written production of academic texts in the R2L cycle. Thus, there was a real need to study the learning opportunities that the use of cartoons as multimodal texts could provide to the development of students' reading and writing abilities.

This study contributes to developing the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy since it addresses multimodality through cartoon texts in the R2L cycle and focuses on the benefits that this multimodal resource provides to support and develop students' reading and writing skills. The research evidence on Genre-Based pedagogy and the Reading to Learn approach revealed that various studies have focused on multiple genres (Rose, 2011; Chen & Su, 2012; Damayanty, 2017; Listyani, 2017; Ramirez, 2020). However, the previous studies have only focused on the linguistic aspects and structure of the texts and none of them has explicitly addressed multimodality in the R2L cycle, nor focused on the gains cartoons as multimodal texts could provide to the understanding and written production of different genres. Thus, this study theoretically advances the field by including multimodal learning through cartoon texts in the implementation of the R2L cycle.

This study consists of the following five chapters. In chapter 1, the introduction, the statement of the problem, research questions, aim and scope of the study, and an explanation of the relevance of the research are presented. In Chapter 2, the theoretical underpinnings of language which guide this inquiry are discussed. This chapter includes a critical review of the historical context and current practices of GBP. Chapter 3 deals with the methodological issues and research design, providing the theoretical foundations for the Action Research design, description of the data collection techniques

and instruments used in the study as well as how data was analyzed. Furthermore, it includes a detailed description of the participants and context and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 describes the findings related to developing reading and writing skills. Chapter 5 focuses on the discussions and recommendations. Finally, Chapter 6, states the conclusions and reflective evaluation of the research, and suggests further research agendas.



## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter presents a conceptual framework in which the main concepts supporting this study are defined. Concepts about Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Genre-Based pedagogy (GBP), Reading to Learn (R2L), and Multimodality are analyzed to contextualize the reader. Additionally, it discusses different authors' points of view about how students' reading and writing skills have been effectively improved and developed through the use of Genre-Based pedagogy and Reading to Learn (R2L). Finally, theories and studies that have used multimodal resources in reading and writing, showing the importance of multimodality in communication.

### **2.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).**

Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory that proposes that the study of language should include how language affects, how it is produced, and how the context affects language. Therefore, to understand the meaning of what people say or write, it is necessary to know the context in which language was produced. In addition, in SFL, language use has the purpose of assisting certain human needs depending on the context where the language is used. SFL assumes that language use is purposeful because its function is to make meaning of the world and each other. According to Halliday (2013), when people speak or write to communicate to someone, they use language as a resource of meaning in context. Thus, meaning depends on whether people are aware of the context where the discourse was delivered or not because, in SFL, the context plays an important role.

Furthermore, Systemic Functional Linguistics has been used in different educational contexts worldwide to support students and teachers in interacting with texts, making sense of texts and in the language learning mediated by texts. According to

Eggins (2004), SFL is a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic meaning-making resource. In other words, SFL has become an engaging topic of research to solve problems in which language plays an important role.

In addition, SFL has created an explicit model called the architecture of language (Halliday, 2009). This architecture refers to the dimensions of organization which define the system of language. The dimensions include different configurations of meanings such as the realization, the metafunctions, the register, and the genre (Halliday, 1989) which can be analyzed in other contexts such as the context of culture, the context of the situation, and the text in context. According to Moss (2017), these configurations of meanings are found in different types of texts. Researchers who use SFL in different contexts of language base their studies on SFL as a whole framework of language, but they focus on the dimensions of their particular concerns.

The context of culture refers to the connections we make between the language we observe and the discourse's genre. In the context of culture, we can find a constellation of genres. A genre is a social process that takes place in stages, and it is goal-oriented (Martin, 2009). According to Eggins (2014), genre is described as the impact of culture on language by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure of cultures institutionalized as ways of achieving goals. Genre is a social process-oriented goal in which social and understanding of language in use are connected with different types of discourse.

Register is involved in the situational context which is a more immediate context in which the text is produced, and comprises three dimensions- the field, the tenor, and the mode - which are part of the register. According to Eggins (2014), the register is described as the impact of the dimensions of a language event's immediate context on the way language is used. Each dimension corresponds to the three metafunctions of language. The field is related to the ideational/experiential function, people's actions and

relationships, places, time, and circumstances in which events occur. Tenor refers to who is taking part in the language

exchange, the nature of the participants, their status and roles, and their attitudes.

Therefore, the tenor is related to interpersonal metafunction. The mode, which is associated with the textual metafunction, refers to how language is used, the organization of the texts, the feedback available, and whether the language used is oral or written.

Metafunctions of language are included in the text in context which refer to the three kinds of meaning people make when using language. Halliday (1977) defines three types of meanings, ideational or experiential meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Firstly, ideational/experiential meaning refers to people's experiences. This meaning involves what happens, how, when, where, why, and to whom. In other words, the experiential meaning involves the participants, the time, the context, the circumstances, and the sequence of use of language. Secondly, interpersonal meanings are related to the way people interact and the feelings and ideas they share with others. Interpersonal meaning is about the roles people take in the act of communication and the attitude expressed. Thirdly, Textual meanings, which this study will focus on, manage the flow of information: how ideational and interpersonal meanings are distributed in a text and how the information is organized to be communicated clearly. Textual meanings prioritize and position information in a text to make intentions clear to the reader or listener. According to Moss (2017), these three kinds of meaning occur simultaneously in each act of communication in which genres have an important function and social purpose. Example 1 below illustrates how these three simultaneous meanings can combine and act in a conversation.

In the following situation, two friends agreed to go shopping in a busy mall in the north area of the city. When they were there, one of them realized he had lost his

cellphone. So they decided to go to the technological section to buy a new one. They were looking through different shop glasses and suddenly there was one cellphone that called the boy's attention and he decided to ask about it.

**Client:** *I would love to buy this mobile phone.*

**Seller:** *Great!*

**Client:** *'What's the price for it?*

**Seller:** *This mobile phone is on sale for \$1500.*

**Client:** *Seriously?*

**Seller:** *That's the price.*

**Client:** *That's way too much money.*

**Seller:** *That is actually very inexpensive for this mobile phone.*

**Client:** *Could you lower the price for some?*

**Seller:** *How much are you talking about?*

**Client:** *\$1000 is as high as I'll go.*

**Seller:** *I'm very sorry, but \$1500 is the final price.*

The example above shows a common situation of buying and selling something. The client wants to buy the mobile phone but the price is too high for him so he is trying to negotiate the price. However, the client does not buy the phone since he does not have enough money for the final price. This exchange/act of communication can be analyzed from a SFL perspective by referring to the three types of meaning. From the experiential meaning, it could be said that the subject matter is constructed in common sense. The experience in the conversation is the "negotiation" of an expensive product in a technological store. The participants are a client interested in buying a phone and a salesperson who works there or maybe the owner of the shop. The participants try to negotiate the price of the product without reaching an agreement.

From the interpersonal meaning, it could be inferred that the participants do not know each other because the boys selected the shop at random and they use typical language as when a client does not know the seller. The role of the participants is buying

and selling. The client perceives that the mobile phone is expensive. He is trying to persuade the seller in the negotiation to lower the price but the seller has the power of finalizing the sale. The salesperson shows a strong position to control the negotiation and maintain the cost of the mobile phone.

From the textual meaning, this is dialogue that occurs between a client buyer and a seller. The discourse is held in common spoken language. The participants receive immediate feedback. The client first expresses his interest in the mobile phone. Then, he asks for information about the price, and, finally, he states his disagreement with the cost of the product because he thinks it is too expensive and tries to negotiate the price. However, participants do not reach any agreement. As shown above, context and language go hand in hand. Additionally, the metafunctions system provides structure and facilitation and encompasses the elements of communication which guide the language exchange.

### **2.1.2. Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP).**

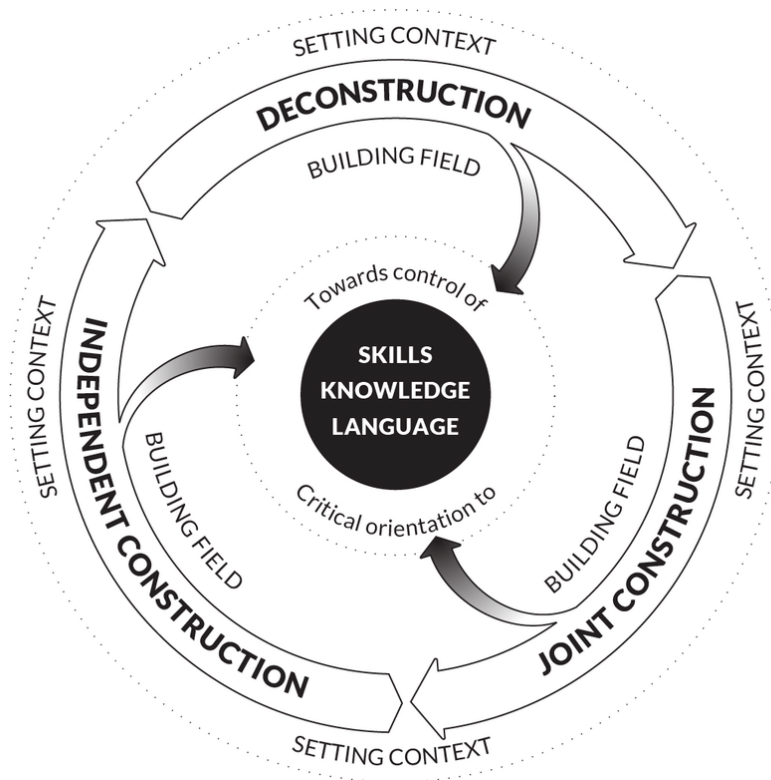
Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) considers genres as an abstract level of analysis that coordinates field, mode, and tenor (Martín & Rose, 2008). Genres can be found in all texts because each text is an example of a specific genre in context. Therefore, Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) in SFL focuses on the whole text rather than its isolated features. In academic contexts, GBP identifies writing as a process in which teachers and students collaboratively construct language and create the meaning of texts. This approach guides and regulates writing by making students familiar with the language from joint to independent construction. GBP is a method used in SFL to support students in analyzing texts, providing students with models that they have to follow to ensure their writing process and control their written production until they can produce free writing.

Genre-Based Pedagogy is based on constituents that conform to the different

types of texts (genres). GBP proposes a systematic process in which the professor assists students' reading and writing in different genres and supports them until they can write independent texts. Genre-based pedagogy (GBP) was designed as a project in the Sydney school to assist students during their writing process. Reading to Learn in the GBP was initially used in a Pitjantjatjara indigenous community in central Australia, then it started being implemented across all of Australia and the world. GBP has evolved in three different stages throughout the years. Initially, GBP was only implemented in the primary curriculum through a writing project and language and social power project. Later, in the 1990s, GBP began to be used in the secondary curriculum through the "Write it right Project." Secondary students were supported in writing different genres such as description, report, recount, explanation, etc. The third stage, named Reading to Learn (R2L), emerged over the past two decades. R2L is a program designed to integrate reading and writing through the primary, secondary, and tertiary curriculum.

To teach writing explicitly in the classroom and give students gradual support with their writing, proponents of GBP designed a teaching-learning cycle (TLC). This TLC consists of four teaching phases: *Setting the Context, Modeling and Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Independent Construction of a Text*. According to Herazo (2012), this cycle develops students' ability to create whole texts, oral or written, under the teacher's guidance. Thus, this cycle provides collaboration and scaffolding useful strategies to help students go beyond the sentences and identify language features and functions. Figure 1 shows the TLC of Genre Based Pedagogy and its stages.

**Figure 1. Learning to Write, reading to Learn (Martín & Rose, 2012)**



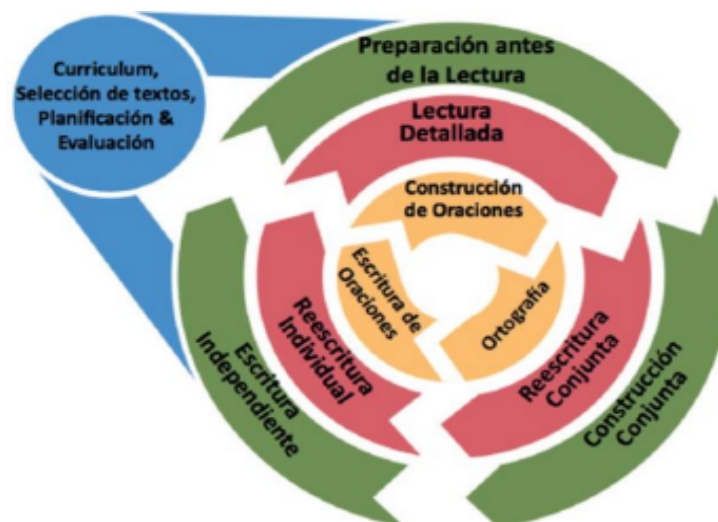
As illustrated in figure 1, *Setting the Context* involves understanding the genre in use, the social function of the genre, the participants, the context, and how the language was transmitted. In the *Modeling and Deconstruction* stage, the teacher and students analyze the genre in terms of vocabulary and grammatical and rhetorical features. In the *Joint Construction* stage, the teacher and students collaboratively organize ideas and construct an example of the text that students will write in the independent construction phase. This stage helps students familiarize themselves with independent writing. Finally, in the Independent Construction, learners use what they have learned in the previous phases to construct a text individually while the teacher monitors them. The teacher guides learners through these phases to build their understanding of the basic structure, linguistic features, social function, and the purpose of a genre.

### 2.1.3. Reading to Learn (R2L).

The Reading to Learn (R2L) approach is the third version of GBP and promotes the interaction between teachers and students when they are reading a text. According to

Rose (2015), R2L can be developed across the curriculum at all school levels to integrate the reading and writing skills. Through R2L, teachers scaffold students to comprehend the language features of the academic texts, developing students' reading and writing skills according to their needs. This process takes place through the Teaching-learning cycle of R2L, in which students can acquire skills that allow them to write independent texts and become competent readers. According to Rose (2011), there are three levels of scaffolding support in reading to Learn as shown in **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2. Language y textos (Rose and Acevedo, 2017).**



The Teaching-learning Cycle of the Reading to Learn Program includes three levels of support to develop reading and writing skills. These levels integrate at different points in the classroom teaching process and complement each other. The first level of support (outer circle) focuses on the whole text and proposes the following strategies: *Preparation before reading, Joint Construction of a Text, and Independent construction of the Text*. In this first level, students' previous knowledge and the schematic structure of the text are revised for students to comprehend the whole text. The teacher provides a step-by-step oral summary of the text in terms all students understand. Then, the teacher reads the text aloud and discusses with students' concepts and key terms throughout the



reading, and scaffolds students in identifying the functional stages of the text and the purpose of each of them. After that, the teacher guides students to construct a new text together on the board. Finally, students write their own texts on a related topic in the same genre following the model. Students write a model text with characteristics and stages of the genre taught but using their own ideas and background.

The second level of support (middle circle) focuses on segments of the text such as paragraphs and proposes the following strategies: *Detailed reading, Joint-rewriting and Individual rewriting*. In the detailed reading stage, the teacher selects short texts from reading. Then the teacher guides students through the passage sentence-by-sentence. Students will be asked to identify different words or phrases in each sentence. The teacher affirms students' responses and asks them to highlight the words they already identified in the text. Finally, the teacher elaborates on students' answers explaining how each of the words identified and highlighted makes sense in the text. After that, the teacher guides the class through the joint re-writing of the passage, borrowing language patterns or detailed content from the text. The teacher and students discuss concepts and key terms throughout. Finally, students independently rewrite texts.

The third level of support (inner circle) focusses on the sentences and includes the following strategies: *Sentence making, sentence writing and spelling*. In this level, the teacher selects one or more sentences from the detailed reading passage. Students are required to manage the concepts and to create appropriate sentences, considering the model text. The teacher guides students to write the sentences correctly stage by stage. Students are supported and guided in the creation of sentences, maintaining the spelling and syntactic patterns. Students have the opportunity to practice the writing of sentences by doing different activities. For example, teachers can provide students with cardboard strips that then can be cut for students to organize them or asking students to write the sentences on small whiteboards. These kinds of activities enhance students' creation of

sentences according to the genre they are working on.

This study considers the **biographical recount genre** which presents the most important events in someone's life in a chronological order. The purpose of a biographical recount is to retell significant events in a person's life (Coffin, 2006). Biographies tell the reader a true story about a famous person who has made a significant impact on society. This genre involves the meaning of what happened in the past and how it happened, giving value to the past events in a person's life. A biographical recount is written by another person who is outside the story using a third person narrator (he, she, and they) (Mohallim, 2015). Additionally, Derewianka as cited in Mohallim (2015) explained that a biographical recount is a kind of text that describes a person's life through the use of specific name, places, time, events, and it involves a comment of the person's achievement.

Three stages can be identified in this type of text, *Orientation stage*, *Record of events stage* and *Evaluation of person stage* (Coffin, 2006). Each stage has a different function, for example, the *Orientation* sets the scene, introducing who the person whose life is being described in the biography, what that person did to contribute to society, when that person impacted on the society, where that person was from, and why he or she became famous; the *Record of events* records the main events in a person's life and it is written in a chronological order; The *Evaluation of person* evaluates the historical significance of the events in a person's life and his/her contributions to the society. It is like a personal summary or comment. In terms of form, there are some language features that differentiate biographical recounts from other non-fiction genres, for example, biographical recounts are written in third person and "often dated with circumstances" (Martín & Rose, 2008. p. 104). The following language features show examples of circumstances of location in time used as point of departure in the first clause of each event: Time phrases (*In 1989; Two years later; During this time; For seven years*) and

Time events (*Soon after he died; When she was only 14 years old*).

#### **2.1.4. Reading and Writing Abilities.**

Reading is one of the activities we do every day, and in many cases automatically. According to Seidenberg (2017) cited by Handcock and Ferris (2018), reading is one of the activities we do every day, whether we want to or not. Any sign on the street, a restaurant menu, some instructions, reading a recipe; we read for pleasure, for school, for work. However, reading goes beyond that. Alderson (2000) informs us that it is a complex activity that encompasses so many aspects that theories about it will never be completed. Schumm (2006) explains that reading is not an easy task since it involves processing information about a word, sentence, paragraph, a text; it also involves engaging with the reader before, during and after reading, the reader's interpretation of linguistic and multimodal components presented in the texts, and the reader's response to the author's message. Grabe (2009) defines reading as a complex and automatic process that involves a combination of sub processes such as comprehending, interactive, purposeful, learning, linguistic, rapid, efficient, strategic, flexible, and evaluative processes. According to these definitions, reading is a process that can be complex due to the amount of sub processes it involves and the readers' ability to code the information presented.

The process of reading not only involves the recognition of words and the ability to make sense of them but also the acknowledgement of a series of semiotic modes presented in the text which help the readers understand better what they read. A semiotic mode is a sign system, socially shaped and culturally given for making meaning which are used in representation and communication. For example, images, writing, layout, music, gestures, graphics or symbols (Kress, 2009). When reading a text which contains more than one semiotic mode, there are more possibilities that the reader has a better understanding of the message presented in the text. According to Bateman

(2014), when combining different modes in an act of communication, in this case, reading, the meaning can be worth more than when using only one mode such as linguistic symbols. Additionally, the reader's background plays an important role in the interaction and comprehension of each component presented in the reading process. According to Tsagari et al. (2016) reading is an interactive process whereby information within the text is combined with the "reader's background. That is to say, in the process of reading, it is essential to the ability to use our sight sense and brain to look and interpret the written or visual symbols a writer has provided for us and the ability to connect the previous knowledge with those linguistic or visual symbols from the text.

Regarding writing skill, writing is a process that not only involves converting our thoughts into words, sentences or paragraphs and providing meaning from them but also using different semiotic modes to create a better version of the message we want to transmit. According to Stein (2000), when writers incorporate representational resources in their writings, their discourses become dominant. In other words, the use of images and other multimodal resources during the writing process enhance the meaning of the ideas, feelings and thoughts transmitted, showing proficiency and efficacy in the message. Thus, the process of writing cannot be reduced to a linguistic description but it should always incorporate a variety of semiotic modes such as images, signs, symbols among others that provide the reader a wide representation of the message. Additionally, when writers use different visual modes in the writing process, they boost the reader to make associations between linguistic patterns and images, getting a better understanding of the message received.

Writing also involves the well organization and structuration of our thoughts in pieces of writing that communicate something in one or more languages. The significance of writing has been well attested by various language researchers. For instance, Eckes et al. (2016) defines writing as a multifaceted and complex skill in the

second or foreign language (L2) contexts. That is to say, the writing process is multifaceted since it involves not only the well-use of grammar structures, vocabularies, cohesion and spelling but also the proper-use of other semiotic modes such as signs, images, symbols among others. Al-Gharabally (2015), as cited in Grabe and Kaplan (1996), argues that writing is an important and effective means of self-expression, communication and information gathering and Syafi'i (2017) states that writing is one of the four language skills learners must acquire to demonstrate their competence in using the English language. According to these definitions, the writing process is essential when communicating in different languages and can be more effective when using a wider variety of semiotic resources to express our ideas or thoughts.

Taking into account the aforementioned, it can be concluded that reading and writing abilities are essential skills in communication. That is why these two skills play a key role in all educational contexts and levels. According to Benítez et al. (2018), reading and writing abilities are important processes at all educational levels, especially in higher education, considering that reading and writing play prominent roles in acquiring and communicating knowledge in different areas. Therefore, it makes the development of both skills a crucial part of students' learning process.

Furthermore, reading and writing abilities go hand in hand with multimodality since the reading process involves the recognition and interaction with different multimodal elements such as written text, visual images, graphic elements, etc. which support readers in the meaning-making of texts. Similarly, multimodal elements provide writers with useful resources to construct more significant and challenging texts. The next section presents a more detailed description on multimodality.

### **2.1.5. Multimodality.**

Multimodality can be described as an interactive system in which more than one semiotic mode is used to make meaning in a specific act of communication. According to Saint Georges & Weber (2013), the modes are socially made and culturally available

material semiotic resources for representation. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) stated that through multimodality common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes, and it is therefore quite possible for music to encode action, or images to encode emotion. This demonstrates the importance of interpreting all semiotic modes presented in each message received since the producer uses material-semiotic resources as a tool for making meaning. In other words, multimodality in the interpretation of messages is crucial since it provides a clear complete idea of what is communicated.

In the same vein, communication is multimodal since it produces meaning through different semiotic modes. In other words, when communicating something, various semiotic modes such as images, signs, music, language among others are combined by the producers to transmit a meaningful message to the receptors who are called to interrelate all signs presented. However, even when communicators combine several multimodal resources to transmit a message, the message will communicate nothing if it is not interpreted by a receptor. According to Kress (2009), communication depends on the transformative and interpretive engagement by a participant in an interaction with a message made by another. In other words, if another participant does not interpret the message, whatever its form, there is no communication because the interpretation is the criterion of the communication. As a result of the interpretation of all multimodal resources found in the information transmitted by the producer, a meaning is made and the interaction is fulfilled.

Multimodality focuses on the material resources beyond the spoken and written language and it makes communicators think about what semiotic modes could be the most appropriate to transmit a message according to the social purpose of each act of communication. Therefore, it is important to clarify that each semiotic mode has its potential for making meaning in communication. According to Bateman (2014), the value of a combination of different modes of meaning can be worth more than the

information that we get from the modes when used alone. That is to say, each semiotic mode acts in a different way and when different modes act together the potential of communication increases due to the contribution each semiotic mode makes to make meaning. For example, a piece of information becomes more interesting and meaningful for readers if it is highlighted with colors and explicitly summarized through images. Thus, when receiving a message, the receptor has to analyze not only the linguistic aspects but also the other features present in the text. As a result, the receiver makes a more meaningful sense of the message because the normal state of communication is multimodal (Kress 2009).

This study considers **cartoon texts** as a multimodal resource to present biographical recounts and promote the reading and writing of this genre. “Cartoons represent a form of art that has been promoted into an important visual language, which influences the human sentiments and transmits messages using symbols and pictures” (Dalacosta K., Kamariotaki M., Palyvos J. A., Spyrellis N., 2008, P. 1). Cartoon texts are multimodal texts which combine printed text, visual images, design elements and other semiotic modes to communicate a message. Furthermore, cartoon texts are non-linear graphic texts which can be used as a medium to display any genre, using familiar pictures and situations with speech bubbles to transmit a message. According to McCloud (1994) as cited in Serafini (2012), the multimodal nature of these texts make them more similar to hypertexts and digital texts than they are to traditional print-based texts. Thus, the reading of these multimodal texts require readers to interpret not only written text but also visual images and design elements which accompany that written text.

In this chapter, the main concepts of the study were defined, providing a conceptual framework for the concepts of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP), Reading to Learn (R2L), reading & writing, and

Multimodality, which are key terms needed to conceptualize their L2. In the next chapter, I will present the main theories supporting this study.

## **2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

To support this study, the most significant research studies related to Genre Based Pedagogy (GBP), Reading to Learn (R2L), and Multimodality are included. Therefore, this chapter first presents the research on Genre-Based Pedagogy, then, current research on Reading to Learn, and finally, studies on multimodality.

Current research on Genre-based pedagogy (GBP) has demonstrated that it facilitates and improves students' writing not only in primary and secondary curriculum but also at the tertiary level (Tuan, 2011; Chen & Su, 2012; Nagao, 2019).

The following empirical studies show evidence on the use of GBP to support students on the creation of academic texts, with the purpose to help them improve only their writing abilities. Tuan (2011) implemented GBP to improve the writing performance of 45 tertiary students in the recount genre at the Vietnamese university. Findings revealed that most of the students gained control over the key features of the required recount genre in terms of social purposes, language features, and schematic structure. Chen & Su (2012) implemented GBP to 41 university students in central Taiwan. This study was conducted with the only purpose to improve students' summary writing of a text about adventures. Results confirmed the effectiveness of GBP in enhancing students' writing performance when summarizing. This study also showed improvement in the content and organization of students' writing.

Furthermore, Nagao (2019) implemented GBP to 27 first-year university students at a Japanese high school and observed improvements in learners' writing, specifically in the lexicogrammatical features and generic structures of a discussion genre essay. Recently, two studies showed positive results after implementing GBP to improve



students' understanding of texts and students' written organization. In 2020, research on GBP is still focusing on different genres or aspects of GBP and findings show that it is still beneficial. Similarly, Gill & Janjua (2020) conducted a study in which they implemented GBP to 40 undergraduate Pakistani English Language Learners (ELLs) at a university in Pakistan. Findings showed that genre pedagogy had a significant effect on students' organization of argumentative as a result of the instructional technique.

Additionally, Syafi'i, (2017) investigated how the implementation of a cartoon movie in GBP improved 8 English students' writing of narrative texts from the English Department of STKIP Al Hikmah Surabaya who attended Literal Writing course. The author found that GBP assisted with a cartoon movie successfully improved students' ability to write narrative texts. Syafi'i contributes to this study since his work demonstrates that GBP combined with cartoon movies is strongly effective for improving students' writing of a certain genre.

Other studies have focused on the R2L pedagogy to assist students on both reading and writing skills. Research on R2L has demonstrated that this pedagogy is strongly effective in improving students' reading comprehension and written production of different genres. The following empirical studies have been successful on using R2L to improve reading and writing abilities using academic texts, for example, Wildsmith & Steinke (2014) observed improvement in 46 students' reading and writing performance of academic writing at a South African University. The intention of this study was to carefully monitor the R2L implementation process in order to gauge the effects of the approach on the learners' reading skills and their subsequent ability to write and structure texts within an academic context. Findings revealed that students' reading comprehension greatly improved after the intervention and students improved their writing at the micro and macro level of the text.

Similarly, Damayanti (2017) implemented R2L to 42 students from eighth grade

at a secondary school in the Bandung Barat region in Indonesia. This study aimed to enhance students' written narrative achievement through R2L intervention that incorporates oral story sharing activities. Results were analyzed in terms of how each text achieved its purpose, how it moved through stages and phases of meaning, the control of field and the relationship with the reader and its coherence. Findings indicated that there is a shift in students' ability from writing fragmented and spoken-like language to more literate written narratives. Results also revealed that R2L helped students minimize spelling and grammar errors.

Furthermore, Shum, Tai & Shi (2018) applied R2L to 13 non-Chinese students at a secondary school in Hong Kong to examine the effectiveness of the R2L program in teaching Chinese writing of the discussion genre. The study was designed to understand how R2L pedagogy helped in improving students' genre writing achievement and how it could be applied in the classroom practices. Students' perception of their experiential learning with R2L pedagogy was also looked at in order to supplement the findings from text analysis from students' perspectives. Results revealed that students significantly improved their writing with regard to the construction of the schematic structure and the linguistic repertoire of transitivity, modality, and cohesion.

Later, Doria & Salgado (2019), conducted a study that implemented R2L combined with Toontastic 3D (a storytelling and animation application used to animate and narrate kid's adventures, news stories, or school reports). This study was applied to 3 ninth-grade students in a public school in Monteria. Results showed that R2L combined with Toontastic 3D helps students construct and tell anecdotes independently with meaning despite their grammar mistakes. In 2020, Becerra, et al. implemented R2L to ninth graders' comprehension of explanatory texts in EFL and students' perceptions about R2L. Participants' results in national standardized tests had been traditionally low, especially in EFL reading. Results revealed that students become better readers of

explanation texts and perceived R2L as a useful approach to develop their ability to understand written texts in EFL.

Similarly, Ramirez (2020) investigated how ten or above Speaking-Spanish immigrant mothers learn to construct a procedural genre (recipe) from experience with the language using R2L and a Cultural Linguistic Relevant Pedagogy (CLRP). This study demonstrated that the participants gained control over this procedural genre. Also, they were able to experience enduring academic success, developed an enhanced sense of their language, culture, and place of origin. In addition, they developed critical consciousness that transformed the inequitable practices that silenced the role of their first language. Recently, Vencesla (2021), applied R2L to teach English Foreign Language (EFL) reading and writing with Indonesian speaking entrepreneurial management students at Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. This study showed that the participants improved in terms of purpose, stages and faces and attitude.

Furthermore, Rivera, et al. (2021), used R2L to explore how a rural-school teacher supports ninth graders' understanding and production of spoken biographical recounts. Findings revealed that learners' spoken meaning-making potential increased during the R2L lessons, both in terms of the amount of new content students conveyed throughout the stages and phases of the genre and in connection with the variety of lexico-grammatical resources students used. Findings also showed that the teacher's use of metalanguage, both verbally and represented in a diagram, became a key scaffold in students' independent construction of biographical recounts.

All the studies previously mentioned have highlighted that GBP and R2L have been mostly applied to written texts to support and improve students' reading and writing skills. Furthermore, researchers on GBP and R2L have focused on the linguistic components and structure of the texts to read and write different genres. Thus, even when researchers included texts with a variety of semiotic modes such as visual images,

graphs, design elements; or music, videos and cartoon movies in the GBP and R2L cycle, they did not explicitly address these modes of representation. That is to say, previous research has not addressed multimodal resources such as cartoon texts to optimize the GBP and R2L cycle and help students develop their reading and writing skills, leaving aside the elements of multimodality, which are a fundamental part of the language.

Research on multimodal language has confirmed the importance of including it in the students' learning process. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Stein, 2000; McKee & Carr, 2016; Syafi'i, 2017; Taylor, 2017). Moreover, Multimodality goes hand in hand with language, and they cannot be separated because communication is multimodal. To illustrate, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996), proposed using "visual grammar" (images and illustrations) in communication, especially in secondary schools where images do not play an important role.

The stated above demonstrates how important is the use of multimodality in all educational levels, especially to those students who are beginning the secondary level. In this regard, Stein (2000) stated that visual images produce specific effects of display that cannot be reduced to a linguistic description. The author also claimed that multimodality could help students access dominant discourses while incorporating representational resources. This shows how the visualization of images stimulates students' knowledge through the association they make between the linguistic descriptions and the images.

In 2012, Serafini emphasized on the challenges associated with the visual and multimodal aspects of the texts readers encounter. He stated that graphic texts such as cartoons, comics, manga, graphic novels, among others are a form of sequential art relying heavily on graphic design and visual images to tell a story. Later, McKee & Carr (2016) proposed a teaching syllabus to support primary students reading to learn while learning to read. In his study, he used R2L and images, labels, and prose and found that

multimodality is very useful in helping beginning readers to navigate the complexities of informational text. Thus, the use of visual images as multimodal resources maximizes students' comprehensibility of texts, illustrating linguistic descriptions and generating lasting and meaningful knowledge of them and interaction with the written discourse not only in primary levels but also in secondary students.

Other studies have empirically attempted to confirm that multimodality is a practical resource in communication. Taylor (2017) conducted a study using Eye tracking in SFL to analyze multimodal texts searching for a meaningful way of 'reading images.' Findings revealed that the Multimodal system is useful in educational contexts. Similarly, Halloran et al. (2019) investigated multimodal semiosis across linguistic texts, photographs, scientific graphs, infographics, hyperlinks, and videos, using various multimodal resources. The study showed that multimodal semiosis is key to making meaning in communication.

Evidently, all studies on multimodality highlighted that communication can not be separated from multimodality. In this regard, the different modes of representation such as visual images, graphs, signs, design elements, among others, cannot be separated from texts because the communication is multimodal. Furthermore, the studies confirmed that multimodality shows potential for interacting positively with R2L.

In conclusion, R2L pedagogy and multimodality have been addressed separately and both have been useful in the reading and writing process. Indeed, multimodal elements such as cartoon movies, graphs, visual images, videos, etc. which researchers have included in the R2L pedagogy have not been explicitly approached to complement and optimize the sequence of this pedagogy. Therefore, this study addresses the biographical recount genre from a multimodal approach following the sequence of the R2L pedagogy.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents (1) the research approach and design, (2) the context and participants, (3) the intervention and research procedures, (4) the methodological principles for data collection along with how these principles address the research questions, (5) the data analysis and (6) ethical considerations.

#### 3.1. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

Researchers' beliefs, reality, and values represent the nature of the research they hold. When conducting research, researchers adopt a particular stance that leads their research study. This specific stance follows a paradigm or worldview that guides action. Creswell (2009) defines worldviews as a general orientation about the world and the nature of the research a researcher grasps. In other words, the research design is influenced by the researcher's perceptions of the world. This qualitative research followed a Constructivist worldview while exploring students' reading and writing skills when implementing R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts. Constructivism seeks to study individuals or phenomena from the site where they live or work. That is to say, researchers that follow this worldview position themselves in the location where the participants live or work.

In this line of argument, the proposal addressed in the present study is rooted in a qualitative research methodology. In general terms, qualitative research is an interpretive approach that explores in detail the experiences of learners in their social contexts. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative research covers a set of interpretive techniques and material practices in which researchers understand people's experiences and interactions in their natural settings. Thus, the researcher acquires a wider and meaningful learning about the phenomenon studied. Leavy (2017) argues that this qualitative approach aims to generate significant experiences in learners and that the qualitative research is most appropriate if your main purpose is to explore and describe a

phenomenon.

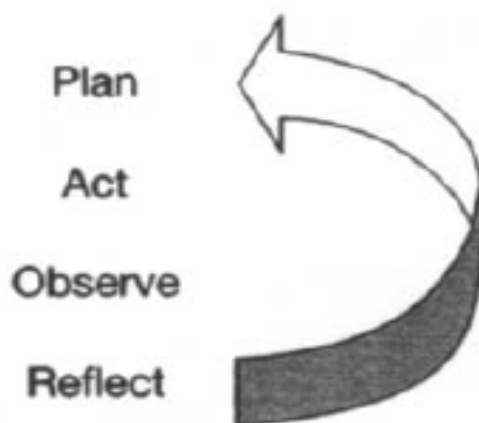
The present study meets the requirement, following a qualitative approach when addressing the research questions since these aim to investigate, understand and describe the fifth graders' experiences in reading and writing processes when taking part in a R2L instructional unit using cartoon texts as a multimodal resource. Furthermore, the questions that hold this research can be answered by exploring, understanding, and describing the process in which teachers and learners interpret and construct language collaboratively.

As an option for conducting qualitative research, this study assumes an **Action Research Design**. The Action Research Design was selected since there is an implementation plan of a new pedagogy to improve certain English skills in students. According to Norton (2009), the intention of the action research is to make things better than they were before. In the case of this study, the R2L approach using cartoons as multimodal texts is implemented to fifth-grade students to investigate what happens in their reading and writing skills. Additionally, during the implementation of the R2L approach, the researcher takes the role of a teacher and researcher at the same time.

According to Somekh (2005), the involvement of participant-researchers who are insiders to a natural and social situation gives access to kinds of knowledge and understanding that are not accessible to traditional researchers coming from outside. That is to say, the participant-researchers gain a deeper understanding of the situation where they are involved than the researchers that observe the situation from outside. That is why, the present qualitative study is rooted in an action research design in which the researcher and the teacher are the same person, who is an active part of the activities while observing what happens. Additionally, this study follows the stages proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1986): *Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection*. Figure 3 shows the basic action research model.



**Figure 3. Action Research (Patrick Costello, 2003).**



**Planning stage:** In this stage, the R2L approach was selected as a solution to help the fifth-grade students overcome their difficulties to read and write in English. Once R2L was selected as the means for helping students, It was decided what type of text (genre) to be used. The type of text selected was biographical recount to fulfill school requirements to work on this genre. After selecting the type of text, it was decided to use the biographical recount text presented through cartoon texts because of students' interests in watching, reading or drawing cartoons. Two biographical recount texts which contain pieces of information, cartoons, speech bubbles, and lots of colors and graphics were selected to be used because those characteristics make them attractive for participants. Thus, I decided to use the biography of William Shakespeare for the diagnostic task, the biography of Elvis Presley for the first cycle and the biography of Walt Disney for the final cycle.

The lessons of the R2L intervention cycles were planned taking into account the following sequence of activities. First, it was planned to apply a diagnostic task before the R2L interventions in order to observe students' weaknesses and strengths in reading and writing, and identify learners' needs. Then, it was planned to implement the first R2L intervention cycle. Eight lessons of fifty minutes were planned to be executed in this first intervention cycle. These lessons were planned to be executed in a

complementary week after the end of the first term (late March 2022). Finally, it was planned to conduct an improved R2L intervention cycle in the complementary week at the end of the second term (late May 2022).

**Action stage:** This stage began with a diagnostic reading and writing task (see appendix 1) to inform students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts before the R2L intervention cycles. This diagnostic task was implemented in February using a task-based learning approach. The biography used for this task was the one about William Shakespeare. It began with a discussion about some pictures which contained images about Romeo and Juliet, the book of this novel and its author, William Shakespeare. After the discussion, students read the biography about William Shakespeare and matched the words in bold from the text with their meanings. Then, students ordered the main events from William Shakespeare's life and finally, they answered some comprehensible questions about the text. Regarding writing, students answered some questions about a famous person of their interest and then wrote the biography of that famous person using the answers of the questions and based on the sample text provided.

Once students' results in the diagnostic task were analyzed and described, the first R2L intervention cycle was implemented. This first cycle was conducted in late March 2022, specifically from March 17 to 28 during the complementary week at the end of the first term. It took eight lessons of fifty minutes each one and the biography used was the one about Elvis Presley. Once data from this first cycle was gathered, analyzed and compared with results from the diagnostic task, a second cycle was implemented in late May 2022, specifically from May 16 to 23 during the complementary week at the end of the second term. It took eight lessons of fifty minutes as well and the biography used was the one about Walt Disney. Data from this second cycle were collected, analyzed and compared with results from the diagnostic task and

the first cycle.

**Table 1. Action Research Schedule**

Cycle	stage	R2L curriculum genre	Date
Cycle 1	Planning Action Reflection	Preparing for reading, Detailed reading, Note Making, joint-rewriting, independent writing.	From March 17th to 28th
Cycle 2	Planning Action Reflection	Preparing for reading, Detailed reading, Note making, joint-rewriting, independent writing.	From May 16th to 23rd

**Observation stage:** In the observation stage, several types of data were collected using different data collection techniques. Thus, through audio recordings, data about students and teacher interaction during the detailed reading stage were collected. These data were gathered to record students' opinions about the purpose, content and schematic structure of the biographical recount texts. Through a focus group, data about students' opinions regarding how the cartoons as multimodal texts boost them to understand and write biographical recounts were also collected. Moreover, the teacher-researcher's insights about the role of cartoons as multimodal texts in her fifth graders' understanding and writing of biographical recounts were also collected.

Finally, students' reading tasks and writing samples are collected to inform students' changes in their abilities to understand and write biographical recounts. Thus, the unit of analysis of this study is students' changes in their ability to understand and write biographical recounts before and during the R2L intervention using cartoons as multimodal texts.

**Reflection stage:** In the reflection stage, the data collected in the observation stage were analyzed to generate ideas to better implement R2L in subsequent cycles. To

determine the changes in students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts when implementing R2L, and the role of cartoons as multimodal texts in students' better understanding and writing of biographical recounts, a diagnostic reading and writing task was administered before the intervention. Thus, data gathered in the diagnostic task were transcribed, analyzed and compared with the data collected in the students' reading tasks and writing samples gathered in the final R2L intervention cycle. In both, the diagnostic task and the final task, biographical recounts were used. In the diagnostic task, the issue was the biography about William Shakespeare and the issue of the final task was the biography of Walt Disney. Additionally, data collected from a teacher's journal, a focus group and audio recording from the lessons, were also transcribed, analyzed and compared with the data gathered from students' reading tasks and writing samples to answer the research questions.

### **3.2. PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT**

This study took place at a private school in Monteria, capital of the department of Córdoba. This department is located in the northwest of the country in the Colombian Caribbean region, and it is considered the cattle capital of Colombia. This school is located in the downtown area of the city, and has offered its educational service for about 65 years. Additionally, since 2015 up today, this institution has reached first place on the state tests (SABER-11 TESTS). This fact has increased the demand of students in the school. Thus, about six hundred fifty students have signed up to this school in the last four years.

Furthermore, this institution has been a Cambridge Senior School since 2012 after an agreement with Cambridge University Press to teach English using Cambridge resources. That is why, since that year, this school has emphasized the teaching of English as a second language. Likewise, this institution is certified by the Secretary of Education as a bilingual school. This bilingual school has 10 English teachers and a coordinator of the bilingual

program. Moreover, the institution includes CLIL projects, Field Trips, and Conversation Clubs with an English native speaker in the curriculum.

In addition, this school is equipped with various technological devices. For example, seventeen classrooms are available to teach English and other bilingual subjects. Each classroom has a laptop with internet access, a web camera, speakers, and a projector. The school also has a language lab equipped with 25 computers, a computer for the teacher with a web camera, speakers, and a projector—these digital resources facilitate the teaching and learning process as the teacher can project and reproduce audiovisual material. For example, teachers can work on listening activities using audiobooks and videos, work on collaborative/ group reading skills by projecting reading texts, and practice vocabulary with word lists and images and other materials through the projector. Students also take advantage of these technological tools since students have access to activities appropriate for their level through the Cambridge platform when they work in the language lab.

Finally, this school follows a traditional method to teach all areas of the curriculum and offers students from preschool, primary a bilingual education. Thus, preschoolers and primary students receive fifty percent of their curriculum in English. The subjects such as Values, Religion, Art, Geometry, English, Drama, Science, and Reading Comprehension are taught in English. For example, preschoolers and primary students receive ten English lessons each week. In contrast, secondary students receive five English classes each week and one Reading comprehension class in addition to the five English classes they receive. In secondary school, English as a second language is taught by levels following the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

With regards to the participants, eighteen students from fifth grade are the participants of this study. Six of the participants are male, and twelve are female. Their ages range from 10 to 11 years old. All participants live in the urban area of Monteria

and come from middle-class families. The textbook used to teach this grade is “Power Up 5.” In this course, students work on the four English language skills together. At this grade, students are asked to read different types of texts, identify vocabulary in context and use visual cues and background knowledge to make predictions. Students are also required to write short descriptions about topics of their interest, and write short texts based on models.

In language classes, these students usually read different types of texts, identify vocabulary, make predictions, and write short descriptions and texts based on models. Even though these students have a considerable number of English classes per week, they face great difficulties completing reading and writing assignments. For this reason, these students were chosen to participate in this study as the theoretical background for R2L suggests this tool would be beneficial in students’ performance in the reading and writing tasks. Participants’ parents were informed that their son or daughter would participate in all reading and writing activities developed during the implementation of the R2L approach. Their data would be anonymized to be included in the analysis, and the data collected from students to whom parents do not accept their participation would not be considered in the analysis of the results. Once the parents were informed about the research study which took place in their children’s classroom, materials were piloted. The purpose of piloting the materials was to identify issues which can enhance the comprehension of the material.

### **3.3. R2L INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT**

The R2L approach was adapted to the students’ curriculum, taking into account students’ reading and writing needs. The R2L approach targeted biographical recounts to fulfill the school requirements of promoting students’ understanding and written production of biographies at this level. The adapted R2L intervention followed five stages of the R2L cycle: *Preparing before reading*, *Detailed reading*, *Note Taking*,

*Joint-rewriting and Independent writing.* Each of the stages included multimodal resources such as images, videos, cartoon texts, graphs, music, among others to help students comprehend better the biographical recount and to guide them in their writing step by step. The R2L approach was used for two weeks, with eight lessons of 50 minutes each week. The teacher focuses on how a biographical recount presents past events in a person's life through circumstances of location in time.

The R2L cycle started with a diagnostic task (reading task 1) about the biography of William Shakespeare (see appendix 1). After that, five stages of the original R2L cycle were implemented. As its name suggests, in the *Preparing before Reading stage*, students were prepared to read a biographical recount by giving them some information about the text using different semiotic modes such as images, videos, graphs and every day spoken language. Students' background knowledge was activated through the use of images, sounds, gestures, kinesics, videos, and oral questions. Once students activated their background knowledge, students were told that they were going to read a biography. Students were also told the type of text, its purpose, content, structure and finally, who the biography was about. Information about what the text was about and how the information was sequenced was also provided to inform students about the information they were going to find in each stage of the text. L1 and L2 were used to explain this part.

After that, students were shown a diagram made with shapes and pictures and created by the teacher to explain to them the different stages that biographical recounts have and the function of each stage, providing students with understanding about the purpose and the higher level structure of the text.

**Figure 4. Stages of the biographical recount genre.**



After explaining what each stage of the genre consisted of, the teacher checked for understanding through asking students some questions about the type of text, its purpose, function and structure.

In the *Detailed Reading* stage, students were provided with cartoon-text which displayed the biography of Elvis Presley. This biography was a multimodal text that contained written text, cartoons, speech bubbles, lots of colors, and other graphic elements which represented the information contained in the text (see appendix 2). Each student had a copy of the text and it was read as follows, first, the cartoons that accompanied the written text were addressed. Thus, the teacher guided students to answer simple questions about the cartoons from each part of the text with the purpose to provide them with information about the most important events in the person's life, before going to the written part. Then, the teacher read aloud the written text, segment by segment, checking understanding after each sentence was read. To check understanding, the teacher asked questions about the information contained in each sentence.

Additionally, students were asked to identify different key words or phrases in each sentence from the text. Thus, students were told the meaning and location of each key word or phrase using everyday spoken language and the cartoons in the text. So,



students identified the key words or phrases in the text through the meaning provided. The teacher affirmed students' responses and asked them to highlight the words. Finally, the teacher elaborated on students' answers explaining how the words or phrases made sense in the text. All students reported the vocabulary in their notebooks and organized the words into categories. The categories were nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs in the past, and time expressions.

Thus, during this lesson students practiced listening, reading, pronunciation, and spelling of each word. After that, the teacher used a timeline with cartoons taken from the text to revise the most important events in Elvis Presley's life and the stages of the genre (see appendix 3). To finish, students read the biography again and identified the three main stages of the genre and how the cartoons represent each of them. Then, students completed the second reading task. This task consisted of ordering the record of events in Elvis Presley's life, matching words with their meanings and answering comprehension questions about the cartoons text (see appendix 4).

In the *notetaking* stage, the teacher explained that the time expressions help to order and link the events in a biographical recount and that there are two sophisticated ways of expressing time in biographical recounts: Time phrases and time events. The teacher and students read the biography once more and listed all the time expressions they found in the text. After that, students were provided with a worksheet that contained cartoons and time expressions from the text. The activity consisted of completing the stages of the genre (orientation, record of events and evaluation) with relevant information from the text. Thus, students were told to use the cartoons from the text and the words and phrases they had highlighted in the detailed reading stage as a guide to know what to write (see appendix 5).

When completing the records of events, students followed the sequence of events through cartoons taken from the multimodal text and numbered them. Then, students

completed the events in a chronological order based on the cartoons that they numbered. The purpose of this activity was to work on sentence making to practice the lexical-grammatical features of each stage of biographical recounts.

In the *Joint-rewriting* stage, the teacher leads the construction of a biographical recount. Students follow the organization and syntax of the model text that they had already read to write their own version, using cartoons and their own words and content. Students were asked to plan the three stages before starting to write. The teacher revised the function of the orientation and evaluation stages based on the timeline that represented the stages of Elvis Presley's life. The teacher began the joint construction on the board not only using written text but also making drawings suggested by students for each event from the person's life. Students were asked to think of new words that could replace the ones in the model text and started making notes of those different linguistic resources. Then, students gave suggestions to the teacher who not only wrote what students suggested but also the teacher assisted students on making appropriate sentences, for example, students were suggested to use a more sophisticated term instead of using a more everyday term.

After the biography was finished, all students wrote it in their notebooks including the drawings. To finish, students were asked to search for information about a famous person to write a biography. Students were asked to bring that information to the following class.

In the *Independent writing* stage, independently, students were asked to create a biography about a famous person of their interest using cartoons as in the model text and other modes of representation of their preference. Students' writings were based on the language features they highlighted and the stages of genre they learned in the previous stages. Before writing, students were given some time to plan the new biography while the teacher provided them with a basic scaffold for organizing their ideas before writing

the text.

The R2L cycle was repeated with the biography of Walt Disney (see appendix 6). After this second R2L cycle, students completed the third reading task (see appendix 7) that included the same kind of questions as in the first reading task. Moreover, students complete a Note Taking sheet for Walt Disney Biography (see appendix 8) and the final independent biography (see appendix 9).

**Table 2. R2L cycle using cartoons as multimodal texts.**

<b>UNIT:</b> R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts to improve fifth-graders' ability to understand and write biographical recounts.			
<b>GOAL</b>	To promote students' abilities to read and write biographies.		
<b>Dimensions of Language</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Suggested content</b>	<b>Basic Learning Rights</b>
<i>Context of culture</i>	<p>To recognize the importance and purpose of biographical recounts in their social context.</p> <p>To identify the schematic structure of a biographical recount.</p>	<p>The social context of biographical recounts and historical features of past events and achievements in a person's life.</p> <p>Orientation, record of events and evaluation.</p>	<p>Recognizes general and specific information in biographical texts.</p> <p>Reads and comprehends facts presented in biographical texts through the use of previous knowledge and interpretations.</p> <p>Creates biographical texts after collaboratively writing samples.</p>

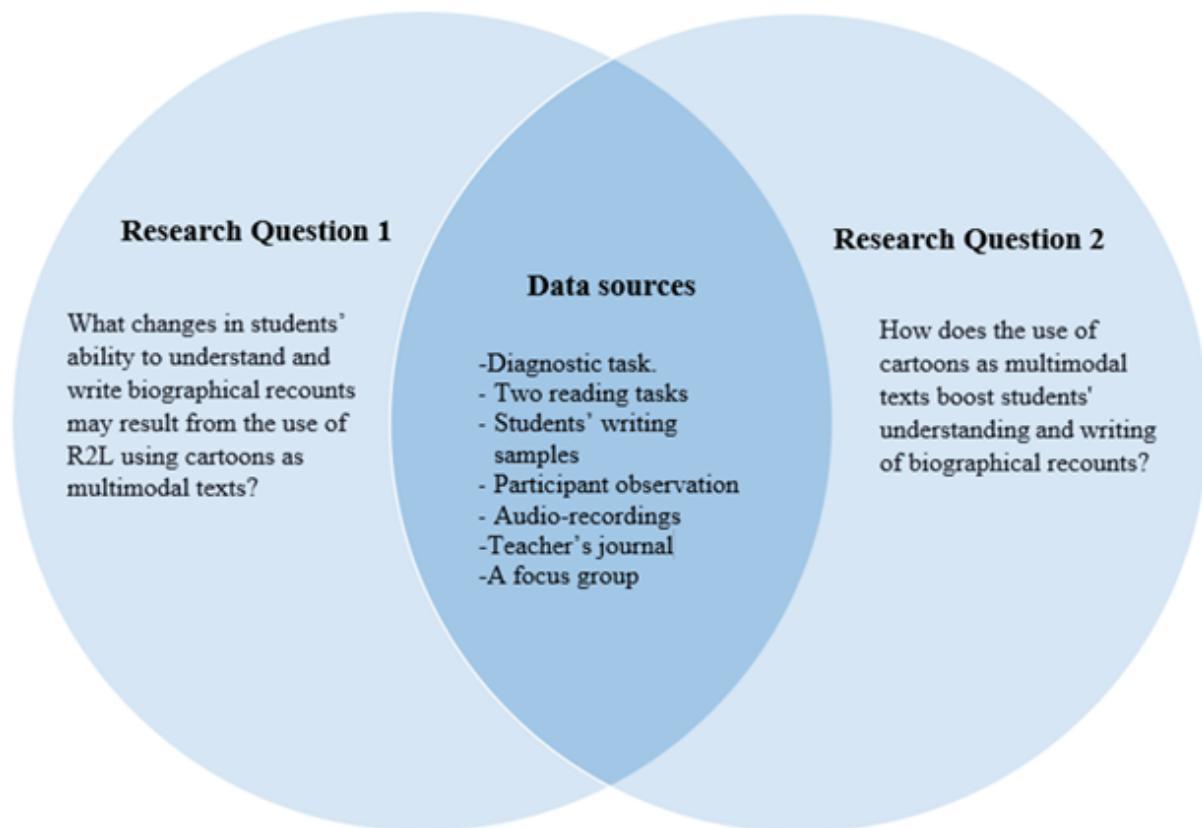
<i>Context of situation</i>	To inquire about the text's subject matter, the activities, and the relationship between the writer and the expected readers. Moreover, the type of discourse and how it is transmitted.	REGISTER: The relationship between the writer and the expected readers, the relation of power and status.  Characteristics of biographical recounts (written text, formal language, delayed feedback, monological discourse)	
<i>Lexico-grammatical</i>	To identify relevant features of the language used in biographical recounts.	Experiential, interpersonal, and textual choices.  Use of past, time expressions, and structures used in biographical recounts.	
<b>TEACHING POINTS</b>		<b>R2L ADAPTED STAGES</b>	
<p><b>Lexico-grammatical choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vocabulary about people's careers and personality adjectives to inform about famous people's personality and profession.</li> <li>-Time expressions: time phrases and time events.</li> <li>-Personal pronouns (he-she).</li> <li>-Comparative words (as).</li> <li>-Adverbs of intensity (very)</li> <li>-Simple conjunctions (for, and, during) to connect ideas in the texts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Past of be (was-were born)</li> <li>-Simple past: verbs in past, ago.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pronunciation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Simple past-<i>ed</i> endings</li> </ul>		<p><b>Preparing before reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Checking background knowledge</li> <li>-Presentation of the type of text: Purpose, type of text, expected readers, content and structure of the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detailed reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Detailed reading of the text, word by word, sentence by sentence.</li> <li>-Highlighting language features along with the text.</li> <li>-Making connections between cartoons and the information presented in the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Joint-construction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rewriting step-by-step the text, following the language features highlighted in the detailed reading, and using cartoons as a guide to inform what happens in each stage of the text.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Sociolinguistic aspects:</b> -Value other people’s life and contributions to the world.</p>	<p><b>-Independent construction:</b> -Writing a new biography about a famous person. Informing the life of a famous person, based on the language features they learned in the detailed reading, and the joint-construction stage.</p>
<p><b>ASSESSMENT</b></p>	
<p>Formative assessment is used in this R2L instructional unit to help students learn and improve their reading and writing skills. Additionally, summative assessment is used to see the possible changes in students’ reading and writing skills after the R2L intervention.</p> <p><b>Assessment moments</b> The formative assessment is done during the process (interaction) from the “Preparing before reading stage” up to the “Independent writing stage” to see what students are able to do, how they do it and for what purpose. The summative assessment is done after the detailed reading stage and in the independent writing stage. There are two main assessment activities in this R2L instructional unit using cartoons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two reading tasks</li> <li>- Students’ writing samples</li> </ul>	

### 3.4. DATA COLLECTION

In this study, the data sources consisted of a diagnostic task, two reading tasks, students’ writing samples, participant observation, audio-recordings, a teacher’s journal, and a focus group. Graphic 1 shows the data collection techniques used in this study and how these techniques help to answer the research questions.

#### **Graphic 1. Data collection Techniques.**



The diagnostic task was implemented two weeks before the R2L with the purpose to document students' ability to understand and write biographies before the intervention. According to Alderson, et al. (1995), a diagnostic test is used to identify those areas in which a student needs further help with one of the four main language skills. Thus, in this study, it is important to implement a diagnostic task to determine students' weaknesses and strengths in reading and writing of biographical recounts before R2L. Additionally, the reading tasks and students' writing samples provided information about students' progress and changes in their ability to understand and write biographical recounts during the R2L intervention.

Each reading task was implemented after the detailed reading stage and the students' writing samples were collected once students finished the independent writing stage. According to Grabe (2009), in the classroom, teachers have a responsibility to develop appropriate reading tasks and appropriate interpretations of those tasks outcomes so that students are not evaluated unfairly. With regards to writing tasks, Polio & Williams (2009),

state that teachers need to assess students' writing to assign grades and to give feedback. Therefore, the reading and writing tasks were created taking into account the constructs developed during R2L, such as vocabulary knowledge, matching, open questions, among others.

Participant observation was another data source since it is “a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture” (Musante & DeWalt, 2010, P. 1). Therefore, this method is essential to record by ourselves students' reactions and emotions when being part of a new methodology and use of resources that they have never used. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), participant observers see things firsthand and use their knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed.

Consequently, audio recordings were carried out. This technique was used during the detailed reading stage, to record students' opinions about the purpose, content, schematic structure and lexico-grammatical features of the biographical recount genre. Moreover, through the audio-recordings, students' opinions about the role of cartoons as multimodal texts in their understanding and writing of biographies were also recorded. According to Oyola & Ortega (2020), audio recordings help the researcher obtain specific data that could not be gathered if it were not recorded, preventing subjectivity.

In addition, a journal was used to document the teacher-researcher's observations, perceptions and insights during the R2L intervention. Yinger & Clark (1981), describe a journal as a powerful learning tool, suitable for professional thought and reflection. Finally, a focus group was implemented to obtain students' opinions, perceptions and thoughts about the role of cartoons as multimodal texts in their understanding and writing of biographies during R2L. Krueger & Morgan, (1993) affirm that focus groups have a strong advantage in

obtaining information about people's insights since these interactions provide an explicit basis for exploring this issue. Thus, from this focus group, the opinion of each student is taken into account even when it is similar or different to the others opinions.

### 3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis in qualitative research is to gain a deeper insight of the phenomenon investigated. According to Hook (2009), data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and continuously, not to forget what each piece of data means. That is why in this study, each piece of data gathered was transcribed, coded and named as soon as possible after it was collected in order to avoid accumulating data and to keep the track of students' reading and writing tasks. Thus, to analyze data gathered from the diagnostic task, the reading and writing tasks, audio recordings, teacher's journal and focus group, three different data analysis methods were used for answering the two main questions of this research.

First, The *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test* was used as one of the techniques to analyze the results from students' reading tasks. The *Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test* is a nonparametric test used for paired data based on independent units of analysis (Rosner, Glynn & Lee, 2006). Through the *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test* researchers can obtain robust results without the restriction of normality assumption in the population (Shieh, Jan & Randles, 2007). Doane and Seward (2007) as cited by Meek, Ozgur & Dunning, (2007) suggested that the Wilcoxon signed-rank test is robust to non-normal, and asymmetrical, population shapes. Therefore, in this research, once the reading tasks were collected, the mean score for each reading task was calculated and then compared using the *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test* to gain understanding into whether R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts promoted students' understanding of biographical recounts.

For analyzing students' writing samples on the topic "Write about a famous person of your interest", *Discourse Analysis* was used to gain understanding of how students used



language in their biographical recounts before and after the implementation of R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts. According to Lazaraton (2009), *Discourse Analysis* is used when researchers are interested in understanding how language is used in spoken or written communication. Additionally, the analysis of these texts were based on the three evaluative criteria of the recount genres developed and explained by Droga and Humphrey (2003).

Therefore, the students' writing samples focused on: (1) Students' control over the social purposes of the required recount genre: to give accounts of the most important events in the life of a specific character in history (for biographical recount genre). (2) Students' control over the schematic structure of the recount genre. These include: The orientation phase, the sequence of events in chronological order phase and the reorientation phase. (3) Students' control over the language features of the recount genre. These include: focus on the main specific human participants, process types (i.e. material process, relational process and mental process), circumstantial adverbs of time, and the past tenses of verbs.

After transcribing students' writing samples into word documents, the entry points described above were identified and highlighted in the texts using different colors, for example, the schematic structure was enclosed using three different colors, orange for the orientation, green for the record of events stage and purple the evaluation stage. The time expressions were highlighted using the color yellow. The use of past tense (verbs) was highlighted in green, and the expressions in the texts that show human participant process types were highlighted using blue for material process, fuchsia for mental process and gray for relational process. To finish, students' first writing task was compared with students' final writing task to gain understanding into whether R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts promoted their writing of biographical recounts.

Finally, this study considered *Thematic Analysis* as the main method for analyzing data gathered from the reading tasks, students' writing samples, the teacher's journal,

audio-recordings and the focus group. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), Thematic Analysis is a method used to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within data. Through this method, the data set is organized and described in great detail. Therefore, to identify the themes which will be reported in the findings sections, this study followed the 6 stages of Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), (1) Familiarizing yourself with the data, (2) Generating initial codes, (3) Searching for themes, (4) Reviewing themes, (5) Defining and naming themes, and (6) Producing the report. The stages above are flexible depending on the research questions and the interests of the researcher.

Finally, **the Triangulation** technique was used to strengthen validity and reliability of this research and to decrease biases within this study. Triangulation is used for checking validity when the researchers intend to combine more than one data source, investigators, methodologic approaches, theoretical perspectives or analytical methods within the same research (Thurmond, 2001). Three reading tasks, students' writing samples, a teacher's journal, audio recordings and a focus group were used as a validity check for this research. Through these data collection techniques, a clear and understandable perception of the phenomenon was gained.

### **3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

To ensure ethical research, students' parents and school directors were informed about the study. For that, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggestions were taken into account. Parents were informed about the site chosen for the study, the activities that would be done at the site during the research study, and who the researcher was. Additionally, parents and school directors were told the time the researcher spent in the site, how the reports would be reported and, what the profit of the researcher and the students was. Firstly, a letter of consent was sent to the school principal, asking for permission to conduct the study in her school.

After receiving the approval, the process was revised and the procedures were detailed since the participants were under 18 and needed their guardians' consent for them to participate. After the design was done, a letter of consent was sent to parents informing them of the study (see appendix 10). In this letter, students' parents said that their children's English teacher was the one conducting the study. Moreover, participants' parents were told that the R2L program had been adapted to students' curriculum. Similarly, students' parents were informed that this methodology would not interrupt students' learning process. In other words, the lessons focused on Reading to Learn (R2L) without interrupting the classes. However, it was expected that students gained knowledge through it as it had occurred in other educational contexts after implementing the R2L pedagogy.

Regarding students' participation in the study, if students' parents did not want their son or daughter to participate, they were informed that the data collected from those students would not be considered to analyze the results. However, even though students did not have their parents' consent to participate in the study, students participated in all the activities that the teacher proposed to develop since the R2L program had been adapted to their curriculum. Thus, the difference between students who had got their parents' consent and those who did not was that the data from students who did not acquire their parents' permission would not be analyzed. Additionally, students' names who participated were not revealed; the names were changed by pseudonyms such as S1, S2, S3s. The audio recordings were transcribed; then, they were categorized and analyzed. Finally, all these files were organized and stored in a safe, password-protected computer for the researchers' private use.

## **4. FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the findings regarding the two main questions of this research: (1) What changes in students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts may result from the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle? and (2) How does the use of cartoons as multimodal texts boost students' understanding and writing of biographical recounts?

### **4.1. CHANGES IN STUDENTS' ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND WRITE BIOGRAPHICAL RECOUNTS**

Analysis of students' reading tasks and writing samples revealed significant changes in their ability to understand and write biographical recounts when using cartoon texts. Students demonstrated changes in terms of the use of the schematic structure of a biographical recount genre, for example, by the end of the lessons, students identified a famous person and provided reasons for his/her fame in the orientation stage. Then, in the record of events, most of the students organized, wrote and represented through cartoons the main events of the person's life in a chronological order. However, in the independent writing stage, students limited themselves to writing and representing between three and five main events of the person's life, using completed but short sentences to describe each event.

Finally, in the evaluation stage, it was evident that students evaluated the famous person but they just focused on the role of that famous person and how that person was considered in society. Likewise, students presented changes in terms of the use of lexico-grammatical features of biographies, for example, by the end of the lessons, students were able to identify and use verbs in the past, time expressions and process types such as Material process, Mental Process and Relational Process that they struggled to use before R2L.

#### 4.1.1. Changes related to the schematic structure of students' biographies.

A general analysis of the biographies created by students during the independent writing stage of R2L showed changes in their ability to use the schematic structure of the biographical recount genre. Thus, taking into account that the participants were 18 fifth grade students, N° means the number of students that used each feature of the structure of biographies; % means the percentage that represents that number of students who used each feature of the structure of biographies.

**Table 3. Changes in students' use of the schematic structure of biographies.**

Students' control over the schematic structure of the biographical recount genre									
Before R2L					During R2L				
Texts	Social Purposes	Orientation	Sequences of events	Evaluation of person	Texts	Social Purposes	Orientation	Sequence of events	Evaluation of person
N°	15	8	0	1	N°	18	15	16	17
%	83.33	44.44	0	5.55	%	100	83.33	88.88	94.44

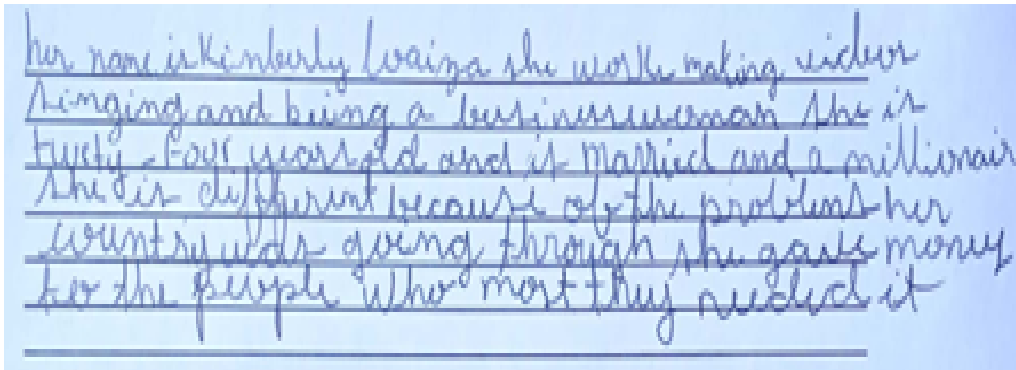
N°= number of students

Table 3 shows that before R2L, most of the students had difficulties to follow the typical phases of a biographical recount (an orientation, a record of events and an evaluation of person). Contrary, it is evident that during R2L, more than 80% of the students were successful in gaining control over the schematic structure of the biographical recount genre. Students demonstrated all typical phases of a biographical recount text. Thus, in the orientation stage, students identified a famous person (a singer, a youtuber, a footballer, an actress, an actor). Then, students provided the reasons for the fame of that main participant, revealing the social purpose of their texts: *To retell significant events in a person's life*. Finally, students created cartoons to represent the information contained in this stage.

In the same vein, in the sequence of events, students demonstrated understanding of the typical features of a biographical recount genre by unfolding the main events of the famous person's life in a chronological order, using verb tenses and time expressions appropriately. Furthermore, students used different semiotic modes such as written text,

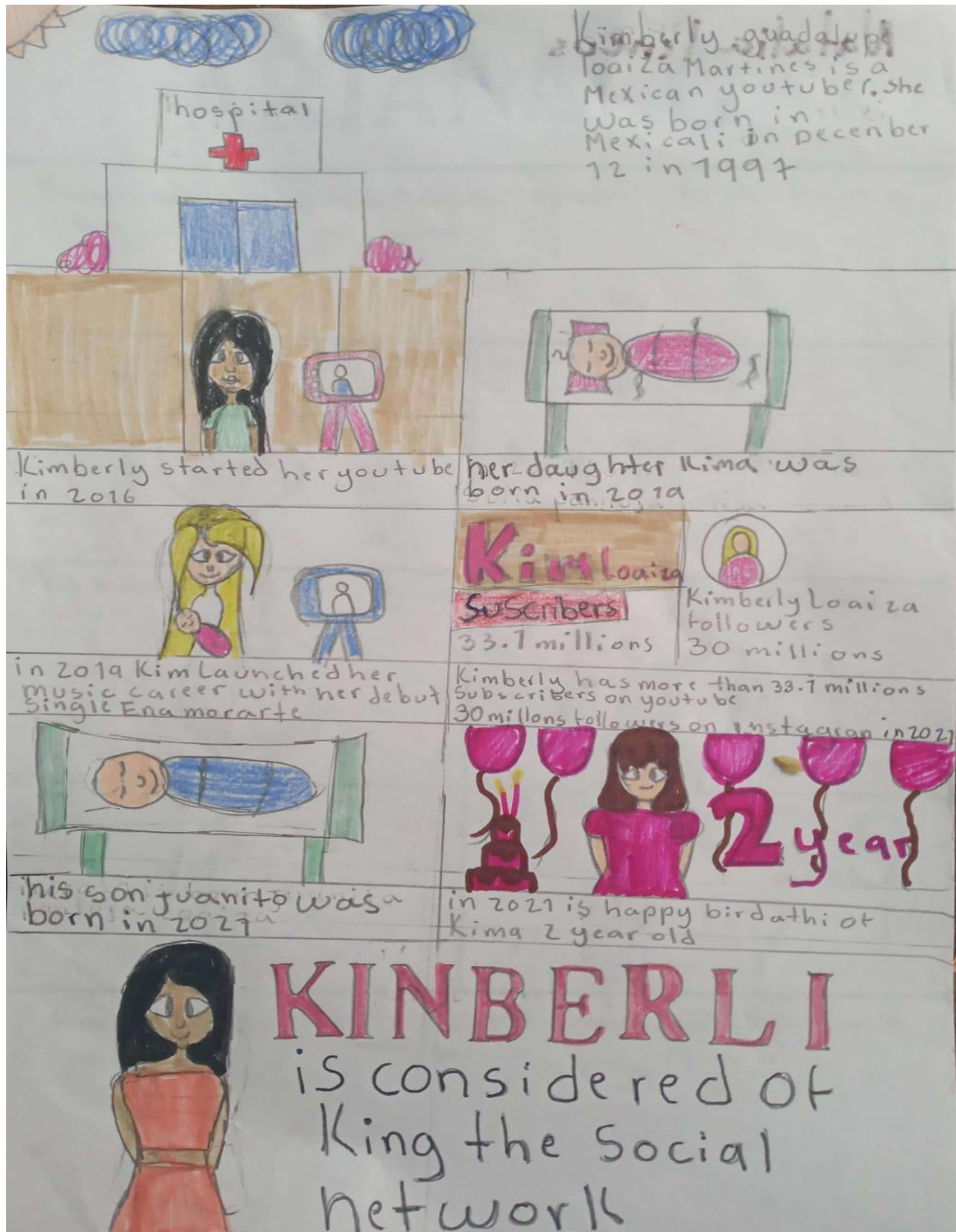
cartoons, colors, layout, signs and design elements to represent each of the significant events of the person's life. Finally, students summarized the famous person's contributions to society by writing between two or three sentences and creating cartoons to represent them. For example, Nathaly's biographies before and during R2L clearly show the changes in the use of the schematic structure of the biographical recount genre.

**Image 1.** Biography written by Nathaly before R2L.



her name is Kimberly Loiza she work making video  
singing and being a businesswoman she is  
twenty-four years old and is married and a millionaire  
she is different because of the problems her  
country was going through she gave money  
for the people who most they needed it

**Image 2.** Biography written by Nathaly during R2L.



On the other hand, changes in students' ability to identify the schematic structure of a biographical recount genre were also evidenced in students' reading tasks. Analysis of these tasks showed that before R2L, most of the students were unable to identify the

reasons for a famous person's fame. Moreover, students were unable to organize the main events of a person's life and to answer questions related to how that famous person contributed to the society. Contrary, during R2L, students demonstrated comprehension and control over the schematic structure of the biographical recount genre.

Likewise, students were able to identify a famous person and vocabulary related to the reasons for that famous person's fame (orientation). Furthermore, students were able to identify and order the main events of a person's life in a chronological order (record of events stage). Finally, students were able to answer questions related to how that famous person contributed to society. For example, Alexa's reading tasks before and during R2L provide evidence on how the changes in the schematic structure are reflected in the reading tasks.

**Image 3.** Alexa's reading Task before R2L (Reading Task 1).

a. to carry out an action 2 X      f. to perform plays 6 X      ALEXA  
 b. experience something unpleasant 5 X      g. a contagious bacterial disease 3 X  
 c. a sudden occurrence of something 1 X      h. to establish 4 X  
 d. to close something 8 X      i. to leave one's job 7 X  
 e. the end of something 9 X

**After reading**  
 • Read the biography again.

1. How did William Shakespeare **make the difference**? Choose the correct option.  
 a. He owned a playwright X  
 b. He performed many plays  
 c. He married Anne Hathaway

2. Number these **events** from **William Shakespeare's life** from 1 to 8.  
3 He settled in Stratford.      6 He underwent ups and downs.  
1 He was born in 1564.      X 4 The Globe Theatre was rebuilt.  
5 His plays were written.      X 7 He owned part of a company.  
8 He started acting.      2 He got married.

• What did you learn about William Shakespeare? Answer the following question with your own words.

1. What did he do?  
was a celebrated poet, playwright and actor.

2. Where did he began his career?  
playwright, poet and actor X

3. What did he own?  
?

4. Where were most of Shakespeare's plays performed?  
Chamberlain & Men X

**Image 4.** Biography written by Nathaly during R2L.



**AFTER READING ACTIVITIES**

1. Match the words with the pictures below.

a. amusement park  
e. studio  
b. farm  
f. animated cartoons  
g. plan  
c. silly symphonies  
h. art  
d. creator  
i. gang

2. Look at the pictures and order the events from Walt Disney's life from 1 to 8. Then, match the pictures with the sentences below.

4. Pluto began.  
1. He moved to a farm.  
8. Walt died at the age of 65.  
7. Disneyland opened.

6. He planned the Amusement Park-Disneyland.  
2. He moved to Chicago and took art classes.  
5. Donald Duck made his first appearance.  
3. He made the Silly symphonies.

3. Answer the following questions about the text.

- What did Walt Disney create? He created animated cartoons
- What animated cartoons did he create? Pluto, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy.
- Who was Walt Disney's best friend? His brother Roy
- What did the skeletons of the Silly symphony do? In 1929
- What were there in the Amusement Park-Disneyland? manmade waterways, shade trees, small scale building

In the same line of argument, changes in the use of the schematic structure of biographies were also evidenced in the teacher's journal. For example, the teacher's insights written the last day of the R2L intervention, affirmed that students followed the typical phases of a biographical recount genre when writing biographies and that they improved with regards to the diagnostic task and first R2L cycle. **Image 5** shows the teacher's insights.

May 23rd, 2022

Today students created their final product, a multimodal text that contains the biography of a famous person of their interest. Students improved with regards to the one they created in the diagnostic task and cycle one because in this case they followed the complete schematic structure of a biographical recount. In other words, students write an orientation, the record of events and the evaluation stages. Additionally, students illustrate each stage of the text and include written parts. To complete this part, students used the information they brought

Finally, in the focus group interview, students also mentioned something related to the changes in schematic structure of their texts, specifically, related to the record of events. **Transcript 1** shows Vale's opinion.

1:41	Teacher	Perfecto, la pregunta número 2 dice, en qué biografía se te hizo más fácil entender y organizar los eventos de la vida de la persona y por qué? vale...
1:51	Teacher	Vale...
1:52	Vale	en la de Walt Disney porque como dije en la pregunta anterior, cómo tenía más imágenes, eso a uno le ayudaba a entender lo que estaba pasando.
2:07	Teacher	sí y cómo te ayudaron entonces esas imágenes a organizar los eventos?
2:12	Vale	me ayudaron en qué cómo en el librito que usted nos entregó cada evento tenía su imagen entonces a uno le ayudaban cómo a imaginarse ese día en el evento, lo que estaba pasando.

As evidenced, students expressed that it was easier for them to organize the events when working with the biography of Walt Disney during R2L than when working with the biography of William Shakespeare before R2L. Students attributed this difference to the cartoons that the multimodal text contained (Walt Disney's biography). For example, Vale clearly affirmed that the cartoons that accompanied each event in the text helped her to understand better what was happening and to organize the events from Walt's Disney's life.

On the whole, during the R2L cycle students presented meaningful changes in the use of the schematic structure of biographical recounts. It was evidenced in students' reading tasks in which they were able to identify issues related to the Orientation, Record of events and Evaluation of person. Moreover, it was evidenced in students' independent biographies in which most of them followed the phases appropriately, achieving the purpose of the genre. Thus, by the end of the lesson students were able to understand and construct biographies following all stages of the genre regardless of some lexico-grammatical mistakes.

#### **4.1.2. Changes related to students' use of lexico-grammatical features.**

Analysis revealed meaningful changes in students' use of lexico-grammatical features of a biographical recount genre in their reading and writing tasks. In their writing tasks, for example, during R2L students were able to use a variety of linguistic resources when writing biographies that they were unable to use before R2L. These resources allowed students to fulfill the functions of the *Orientation*, *Record of events* and *Evaluation of person* stage. *Orientation* corresponds to the stage of a biographical recount in which we set the scene, introduce the person (*main participant*), what that person did to contribute to society (*process*) and when that person impacted on the society (*time expression*). *Record of events* correspond to the stage in which the main events in a person's life are written in a chronological order. It requires the use of past tense of verbs (*created-was born, lived*) and circumstances of location in time used as point of departure in the first clause of each event: Time phrases (*In 1989; Two years later; During this time; For seven years*) and Time events (*Soon after he died; When she was only 14 years old*). Finally, *Evaluation of a person* corresponds to the stage in which we evaluate the historical significance of the events in a person's life and his/her contributions to the society.

#### **Table 4. Changes in students' use of lexico-grammatical features of**

## biographies.

Students' control over the language features of the biographical recount genre									
Before R2L					During R2L				
Texts	Main participants	Process types	Past tense of verbs	Time expressions	Texts	Main participants	Process types	Past tense of verbs	Time expressions
N°	16	12	9	8	N°	18	17	17	18
%	88.88	66.66	50	44.44	%	100	94.44	94.44	100

N° of students

This table represents the changes on 18 fifth grade students regarding the use of language features in their biographies. Thus, N° means the number of students that used each feature of the structure of biographies; % means the percentage that represents that number of students who used each feature of the structure of biographies.

While students' struggled to use the appropriate language features to write a biographical recount text before R2L, more than 90% of the students succeeded in using appropriate linguistic resources of the biographical recount genre during R2L. For example, students focused on a main participant and through the schematic structure, they used proper past tenses, time expressions and the process types such as Material process, Relational Process, Mental Process.

**Table 5. Changes in students' use of language features in their writing tasks.**

			Circumstances of time	Main participant	Past tense of verbs	Process types
George	Before R2L	Orientation	February 5, 1985	Cristiano Ronaldo		
		Record of events				
		Evaluation of person				
	During R2L	Orientation	19, February, 2004.	Milie Bobby Brown	was	His profession is actress
		Record of events	In 2016	Brown	played	Brown played //Netflix
		Evaluation of person		he	was	he was a good actress
		Orientation		Kimberly		

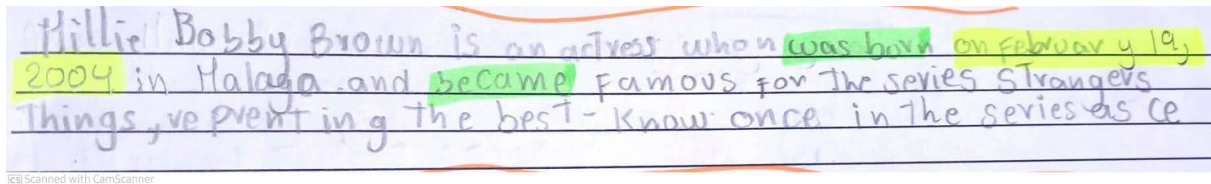
Vale	Before R2L			Loaiza		
		Record of events	in 2016			
		Evaluation of person				
	During R2L	Orientation	in 1925, 12 December	Kimberly Loaiza	was	She is youtuber
		Record of events	in 2010	Kimberly Loaiza	created	Kimberly created Roast..
		Evaluation of person		Kimberly Loaiza		
Juliet	Before R2L	Orientation		Tom Holland		...best know for Spider man
		Record of events				
		Evaluation of person				
	During R2L	Orientation	In June 1, 1996	Tom Holland	was	Holland is a famous actor...
		Record of events	In 2012	he	started	He started a two-year...
		Evaluation of person		Tom Holland		...is considered the better actor

For achieving the function of the *Orientation*, *Record of events* and *Evaluation of person* in biographical recounts, as table 5 shows, there were not significant changes in identifying and selecting the main participant in the biographies written by students. In both cases, before and during R2L, most of the students selected a main participant, only two students did not present a main participant before R2L and one did not during R2L. Students' participant choices did not vary much from one biography to the other, only four students changed the main participant when writing the final biography.

Contrary, when writing the biographies during R2L, all students were able to follow the track of the main participant by using his or her name again or the subject pronouns (he-she). For example, In the orientation stage, Vane started talking about Millie Bobby Brown by writing her full name, then, in the record of events, Vane used Millie's last name

(Brown) and the pronoun “She” to refer to Millie Bobby Brown (main character). Finally, in the evaluation of person, Vane used the full name again. It was a significant change since before R2L only five students were able to follow the main participant track in one or two sentences as the text unfolds.

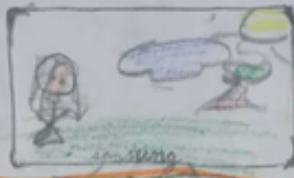
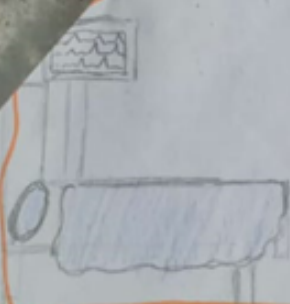
**Image 5.** Biography written by Vane before R2L.



**Image 6.** Biography written by Vane during R2L.

19 February 2004

(Millie Bobby Brown)  
(hospital)



Millie Bobby Brown

(born 19 February 2004)

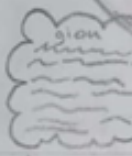
is an English actress and model. Millie was born in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, in the United Kingdom.

She is the youngest of four children of English parents Kelly and David Brown.

2013)

Alice in the wonderful land

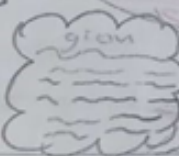
Millie Bobby Brown played Alice in the wonderful land



2016)

Stranger things

Brown played Eleven in the Netflix science fiction drama series Stranger things



2017)

She played Ruby in the movie 'The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones'



2018)

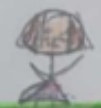
Brown was cast to star and produced the film adaptation of the novel 'The Holmes Mysteries'



→ book

2019)

Brown had her feature film debut in the Godzilla sequel, 'Godzilla: King of the Monsters'



Stranger things



Millie Bobby Brown she most people know her role as Eleven in the Netflix series Stranger things

With regards to the use of time expressions such as *in 1989*, *when he was two*, *in March, 2003*, etc. there were some changes in students' writing tasks. For example, before R2L only four students used a time expression in the *Orientation* stage, and four students used a time expression in the *Record of events*. Contrary, during R2L all students presented a time expression in the *Orientation* stage. Students used this time expression to indicate the main participant's birthdate and they followed the sequence (month-day-year) which was suggested or explained in class. Only four students varied on this sequence and used a different one (day-month-year or year-day-month). The use of time expressions was also evidenced in the *Record of events* stage. Most of the students used four to six time expressions as point of departure in the first clause of each event and they used them to organize the events in a chronological order.

Additionally, there were some changes related to the use of the past tense of verbs in students' biographies. In the *Orientation*, for example, before R2L only seven students used the past tense of the verb "be + born" to present the main participant's birthdate, the rest of the students did not use the past tense of any verb. Similarly, in the *Record of events* only three students used one to three verbs in past tense. Contrary, during R2L, most of the students used the past tense of the verb "be+born" (was born) to indicate the main participant's birthdate in the *Orientation* stage. However, four students omitted the past tense of "be" and presented only the verb "born". Then, the use of the past tense of the verbs increased in the *Record of events* in which all students used the past tense of different verbs such as *played*, *created*, *started*, *released*, among others. Finally, regarding the changes in the use of human process types, it was evidenced that students used more Relational and Material processes in their biographies during R2L than before R2L, for example, *she released her third album* (material process), *she is a famous singer* (Relational process). Thus, in the *Orientation* stage, while only six students used Relational process type before R2L, sixteen



students used this type of process during R2L. Then, in the *Record of events*, while only five students used Material process type before R2L, all students used it during R2L. Similarly, in the *Evaluation of person*, while no students used Relational process type before R2L, fifteen students used this process type during R2L. Findings above are evidence that during R2L students presented significant changes in the use of lexico-grammatical features of the biographical recount genre in their writing tasks.

On the other hand, for achieving the function of the *Orientation*, *Record of events* and *Evaluation of person* in biographical recounts, there was evidence of some changes in students' reading tasks. For example, while only seven students were able to identify a main participant before R2L, all students were able to identify a main participant during R2L. It was also evidenced in the detailed reading stage during R2L. **Transcript 2** shows detailed reading of the *Orientation* stage during R2L.

1:05	T	Ok, let's start... Look at the picture, who is the man in the picture?
1:08	Gaby, Angel	Walt Disney
2:09	T	The first sentence tells us that Walt Disney is known all over the world. Who is known all over the world?
2:27	Gaby	Walt Disney
7:15	T	Look at the picture, what can you see in the picture?
7:17	Alex	Family
7:20	T	How many children can you see?
7:23	Angel	five
7:35	T	How many boys?
7:40	All	four
7:50	T	How many girls?
8:00	All	one
8:05	T	Who is Walt Disney?
8:08	Alex	"Walt Disney es el que tiene el suéter verde"

As evidenced, during R2L students were able to identify the main participant through the cartoons that accompanied the text. Analysis of this transcript shows that Gaby and Angel were able to identify the main character of the text (Walt Disney) for the first time through the cartoons from the text. Then, Gaby used the written text and cartoons to conclude that Walt Disney was known all over the world and finally, Alex identified Walt Disney as a child in a cartoon that showed Walt Disney's family. The findings from this transcript are compelling evidence that R2L combined with cartoons as multimodal texts facilitated student's target language comprehensibility and production of biographical recounts in English.

Additionally, before R2L all students struggled to identify Material process and the past tense of verbs. Thus, students were unable to organize the events in a chronological order. Contrary, during R2L only four of the eighting participants failed in identifying Material process and the past tense of verbs. That is why, most of the participants were able to organize the events appropriately. With regards to the circumstances of time, there was no evidence of changes in the use of circumstances of time before and during R2L since students were not asked to use them in the reading tasks. However, in the detailed reading lesson during R2L, students identified several time expressions while reading. For example, George clearly identified the time expression "in 1917" and asked the teacher to confirm whether he had to write it down or not. **Transcript 3** shows George's question.

23:25	T	Let's read, In 1917, he went to Chicago and took art classes at night.
23:30	George	Teacher, osea, pero hay que anotar esa time expression..
23:34	T	Yes..

Finally, in the focus group interview, when answering the question "What biography was easier for you to understand and organize the events from a person's life, the one about William Shakespeare or Walt Disney?" Sarah highlighted that she understood better the

biography of Walt Disney used in the second R2L cycle. Furthermore, she explained that she used the written time expressions and cartoons from the text as a guide to better understand what was happening in Walt Disney's life. **Transcript 4** shows Sarah's insight.

2:56	Teacher	Sarah:
2:57	Sarah	a mí me parece también que la de Walt Disney porque aparte de mostrarnos las imágenes, yo con las fechas y con las imágenes pude entender más lo que pasó y no tener que comprender lo que dice sólo el texto sino también pude ver la imagen para guiarme.

Overall, by the end of the R2L intervention, students were able to understand biographical recounts and create them independently using the linguistic resources they were taught and different modes of representation . Additionally, by the end of the R2L cycle, students were also able to identify and use appropriate lexico-grammatical features within each phase of the schematic structure of the genre. Thus, it helped them better understand and write biographies that achieved the purpose of the genre.

#### 4.2. USE OF CARTOONS AS MULTIMODAL TEXTS

Findings revealed that the use of cartoon texts complemented and optimized the R2L cycle by challenging students to analyze not only the written text but also the other modes of representation that accompanied the text. With regards to the writing of biographical recounts, cartoon texts provided students new and useful resources to construct more significant and challenging texts. Thus, students were able to better understand and write biographical recounts thanks to the cartoons as multimodal texts used during R2L and the support carried out in the lessons suggested by this pedagogy.

Likewise, the analysis of the data gathered from the reading tasks, writing samples, audio-recordings, focus group interview and the teacher's journal showed that the impact of the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle over students' understanding and

writing of biographical recounts was mostly positive. By the end of the lessons, students claimed that the cartoons along the text helped them better understand what was happening in the texts. Moreover, students expressed that the cartoons acted as a guide that helped them write their biographies.

#### 4.2.1. Use of cartoons as multimodal texts in students' understanding of biographies.

Findings revealed that students' understanding of biographical recounts significantly improved when using cartoons as multimodal texts in the R2L cycle. While students struggled to answer questions related to the purpose, language features and stages of a person's life in a biographical recount genre before R2L (reading task 1), they responded to such questions better in the subsequent reading tasks (reading tasks 2 & 3).

**Table 6. Students' achievements in reading before and during R2L.**

Score	Reading Task 1			Reading Task 2			Reading Task 3		
	N° students	%	Mean	N° students	%	Mean	N° students	%	Mean
1	1	0.18	2.18	0	0.00	8.77	0	0.00	8.94
2	5	27.77		0	0.00		0	0.00	
3	5	27.77		0	0.00		0	0.00	
4	4	0.72		0	0.00		0	0.00	
5	1	0.18		0	0.00		1	5.55	
6	2	11.11		1	5.55		0	0.00	
7	0	0.00		2	11.11		1	5.55	
8	0	0.00		4	22.22		2	11.11	
9	0	0.00		6	33.33		7	38.88	
10	0	0.00		5	27.77		7	38.88	
	18			18			18		

Table 6 shows that when using cartoons as multimodal texts, students' mean scores increased from 2.18 in the first task to 8.94 in the third task, which accounts for an increase of 6.76 points in mean score. The number of students scoring from 1 to 6 decreased from 100 percent to 5.55 percent in the second and third reading task, once the R2L lessons using cartoons as multimodal texts started. Contrarily, the number of students scoring from 8 to 10 increased from 0 percent in the first reading task to 83.33 percent in the second task and finally, 88.88 in the third reading task. The comparative analysis of student mean scores

confirmed that student scores improved during the R2L intervention using cartoons as multimodal texts. The Wilcoxon signed ranks test showed that the implementation of R2L using cartoons as multimodal texts contributed to meaningful changes in students' results in reading tasks (value  $W=0$ , critic value= 28).

It was evident that the use of cartoons as multimodal texts helped students improve in each item of the reading tasks. The multimodal text provided students with visual cues which guided them through the reading and helped them to follow the track of the main participant as the text unfolded. Thus, it facilitated the development of the reading tasks during R2L. For example, cartoons from exercise 1 provided visual cues that helped students to easily identify the meaning of key words from the text. Moreover, cartoons from exercise 2 also provided visual cues for students to identify and order easily the events from Walt Disney's life.

**Transcript 5** shows students' opinions.

2:56	Teacher	Sarah:
2:57	Sarah	a mí me parece también que la de Walt Disney porque aparte de mostrarnos las imágenes, yo con las fechas y con las imágenes pude entender más lo que pasó y no tener que comprender lo que dice sólo el texto sino también pude ver la imagen para guiarme.
3:16	Teacher	Perfecto... Angel.
3:17	Angel	a mí también la de Walt Disney porque tenía imágenes y yo podía comprender el tema mejor y la imagen se hacía llegar a ese momento dónde estaba sucediendo eso y comprendía mejor.

Another reason provided by students about the use of cartoons as multimodal texts in their understanding of biographies was that the texts contained lots of cartoons that helped them understand better what was happening. Thus, students talked about concentration, understanding and imagination. For example, Juliet claimed that she concentrated better when working with cartoons as multimodal texts since she could feel that she saw what was happening in the text. Similarly, Angel and Vale clearly affirmed that they understood better

the biography of Walt Disney because of the cartoons that accompanied the text. **Transcript**

**5** shows Juliet's, Angel's and Vale's insights.

00:54	Teacher	Juliet...
00:55	Juliet	la de walt disney por qué tenía más imágenes si yo me o sea me concentro más con las imágenes porque siento que que estoy viendo lo que está pasando de acuerdo con el texto.
1:07	Teacher	Angel...
1:08	Angel	Yo coincido con todas las respuestas de mis amigas de Walt Disney porque tenía más imágenes y eso me ayudó a entender más la lectura.
1:22	Teacher	Vale...
1:23	Vale	con la de Walt Disney porque la de William Shakespeare solamente era un texto así de corrido y la de Walt Disney tenía imágenes y ayudaba a la persona a entender más y a imaginarse lo que estaba pasando en el texto.

Additionally, the focus group interview showed that students were also able to remember specific events from Walt Disney's biography. Students claimed that they were able to remember the events from this biography because they relate them with the cartoons from the text. For example, Juliet and Sarah affirmed that they were able to remember events from the text thanks to the cartoons that accompanied each stage of Walt Disney's life. These findings demonstrated that the use of cartoons as multimodal text was essential in students' understanding of biographies. **Transcript 6** shows Juliet's and Sarah's opinions.

9:53	Teacher	Ok, Juliet
9:56	Juliet	En lo de shakespeare nada más recuerdo lo de Romeo y Julieta y en lo de Walt Disney, ahora no recuerdo cómo es que se llama pero él creó un programa de unos esqueletos, ehhh pero no me acuerdo cómo es que se llama.
10:12	Gaby	Silly Symphonies
10:13	Juliet	las Silly Symphonies
10:17	Teacher	y que se les viene a la mente cuando recuerdan esos eventos.
10:21	Juliet	la imagen de los esqueletos
10:26	Teacher	okay, qué se les viene a la mente cuando recuerdan eso que dijeron.
10:31	Sarah	en el caso de las biografías que de pronto tenían imágenes, me recordó bastante a la imagen pero en el caso de las que no tenía imágenes yo simplemente, pues, intenté buscar algunas características de las que yo haya escuchado.

Consequently, the impact of the use of cartoons as multimodal texts was also evidenced in the detailed reading lessons. Students discussed what they could see in the cartoons that accompanied the text before reading each sentence. For example, before reading about the skeletons, Alex already knew that he would read a sentence about skeletons created by Walt Disney, Sarah described the place where the skeletons were and what they were doing, and Sam wondered if they were the skeletons of Mickey Mouse's gang. Thus, the cartoons from the multimodal texts facilitated students' understanding about the text, providing students with previous knowledge about what they were going to read. **Transcript 7** shows teacher and students' interaction during the detailed reading lesson.

31:49	T	Ok, what can you see in this picture?
32:05	Sarah	They are like in the hell and they are dancing
32:14	Alex	I can see skeletons dancing
33:14	T	This part tells us that Walt Disney created Silly Symphonies, Walt Disney made Silly symphonies and made Mickey Mouse.
33:43	SAM	Osea profe, ellos están haciendo los esqueletos de los personajes?
33:49	T	Silly Symphonies eran cómo unos musicales
34:12	T	What did Walt made?
34:15	Gaby	Silly Symphonies
34:17	T	Silly Symphonies and...
34:20	Sarah	Silly symphonies and Mikey Mouse
36:38	T	What did Walt Disney show in 1929?
36:41	Angel	He showed a bunch of skeletons
36:55	T	What did those skeletons do?
37:07	George	Rose from their graves and danced till dawn.

Finally, a segment of the teacher's journal showed that during the detailed reading interaction, students' opinions about the cartoons from the texts were in accordance with what was written in it. In other words, cartoons that accompanied the texts provided students with lots of information about what they were going to read, facilitating their understanding of the most significant events of the main participant's life. Moreover, cartoons facilitated the identification of key words and phrases from the text. Thus, the teacher's insights showed further evidence about how the use of cartoons as multimodal texts benefitted students' understanding of biographical recounts. Likewise, these findings are also evidenced in the detailed reading interaction. **Image 7** shows the teacher's insights.



We started reading segment by segment, part by part. Students talked first about the pictures then we went to the reading. Student's answers about the pictures demonstrate understanding of the most significant events in Elvis Presley's life.

Students demonstrated good interpretation of the images and the answers students gave about what each illustration meant in each part of the text were in accordance with the information provided in the written part. Students also identify very quickly the words and phrases from the text according to the meanings provided.

**Image 8** shows a fragment of the detailed reading interaction.

60:59	T	Look at the picture, who are they?
61:32	Alex	Walt Disney y el que va a hacer el parque
62:03	T	What are they doing?
62:05	Sam	It's a construyendo, how do you say construyendo?
62:09	T	building
62:11	Sam	Building at the park
62:17	Alex	Park in the Disneyland
62:22	Gaby	How do you say mapa en inglés?
62:25	T	Map
62:26	Gaby	Map of Disneyland
62:52	T	Walt Disney was talking with the architect who was going to build the park.  So, let's read, "Then, to top off all his other work, Walt began to plan the amusement Park of his Dreams-Disneyland. What did Walt begin planning?
63:23	Sarah	The plan of the park

Evidently, the use of cartoons as multimodal texts greatly benefitted students' understanding of biographical recounts. Through the use of cartoons as multimodal texts, students were able to make meaning of the biographical recounts, concentrating themselves on key cartoons that guided them to follow the track of the main participant's life as the text unfolded. That is to say, the multimodal texts provided students with

written text and cartoons that supported their reading and helped them better understand the life of the main participant. Moreover, the use of cartoon texts challenged students to develop skills to interpret not only the written text but also the other multimodal elements presented in the text.

#### 4.2.2. Use of cartoons as multimodal texts in students' writing of biographies.

Findings revealed that the use of cartoon texts provided students with useful multimodal resources to present the biographical recount genre, across a variety of modes such as written text, cartoons, graphs, colors and layout. Thus, through the use of cartoons and other multimodal elements, students were able to create independent biographies based on the schematic structure and lexico grammatical features of the biographical recount genre learnt during the R2L cycle. For example, analysis of students' writing samples, a focus group interview, and the teacher's journal showed that the multimodal texts favored students' writing.

**Table 7. Students' achievements when creating independent biographies.**

Students' achievements when creating multimodal biographies								
Schematic Structure					Language Features			
Texts	Social	Orientation	Sequences of events	Evaluation of person	Main participants	Process Types	Past	Time expressions
	Purposes						tense of verbs	
N°	18	15	16	17	18	17	17	18
%	100	83.33	88.88	94.44	100	94.44	94.44	100

Table 7 shows that through the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle, students were able to create meaningful multimodal biographies, following and showing control of the key features of the biographical recount genre. Thus, based on the sample multimodal texts, students created independent biographies following the structure and lexico-grammatical features of the text and using different modes of representation such as written text, cartoons, design elements and other multimodal resources, to make their biographies more significant and challenging for the readers.

Specifically, students used cartoons in all stages of their text to accompany it, representing each event from the main participant's life. For example, for the orientation

students created a representative cartoon of the famous person with the purpose to show if it was a singer, actor, youtuber, among other professions. For the record of events, students presented the most significant events of the person's life using written text, cartoons and design elements to make their writing more interesting and meaningful. Finally, in the evaluation stage, students created cartoons which represented the top moment in the famous person's life.

Another reason provided by students for the use of cartoons was that they used cartoons with the purpose to guide the readers. In other words, students wanted the readers to understand the text better since students found cartoons useful to help the readers imagine what was happening in the text. Moreover, students wanted the readers to have an idea about what they were reading and not to create false expectations in them. For example, Vale used the cartoons to help the reader imagine what was happening in the text, Gaby used them to help readers understand better what she wrote, Juliet used them to help readers to get connected with what was happening in the biography, and Sarah used the cartoons to help readers not to imagine things that are not true about the main participant. **Transcript 9** shows students' opinions.

5:31	Teacher	Perfecto... Pregunta número 4 y penúltima. al escribir la biografía final, esa que ustedes crearon de la persona que ustedes escogieron para qué usaron las imágenes. Vale...
5:46	Vale	ehhh... yo usé las imágenes para que la persona que por ejemplo fuera a ver esa biografía, aparte del párrafo, aparte de lo que tenía escrito abajo, fuera como imaginando lo que pasó en ese momento.
6:13	Teacher	Ok... Gaby.
6:28	Gaby	yo utilice las imágenes para que la persona que vaya a ver o leer esa biografía pueda entender mejor lo que escribí.
6:36	Teacher	Ok, Juliet.
6:38	Juliet	yo iba a decir algo así pero es más como para que la persona que esté leyendo se pueda hallar de lo que está pasando en la biografía.
6:46	Teacher	Perfecto... ehhhh Angel...
6:48	Angel	para que la persona cuando lea se haga como alucinación de la situación que está pasando en el texto pero en dibujo animado.
6:59	Teacher	Ehhhhh... Sarah...
7:01	Sarah	para que de pronto la persona tenga idea de lo que está leyendo y que no tenga que imaginar tantas cosas porque hay veces que uno puede estar pensando que la persona tiene unas cualidades que en verdad no tiene.

Additionally, in the joint-rewriting stage students found the cartoons from the sample text useful to determine what to write and when to write or not. Students highlighted that the cartoons guided them through their writing, supporting them on what and when to write. Sarah and Gaby clearly affirmed that the cartoons acted as a guide for them to write. **Transcript 8** shows Sarah's and Gaby's opinions.

3:36	Teacher	Ok, vamos a la parte de escritura, al re-escribir, osea volver a escribir la biografía de Walt Disney, ¿en qué te ayudaron las imágenes? Sarah...
3:56	Sarah	Me ayudaron bastante, cuando iba a escribir porque podía ver en qué momento tenía que escribir, cuando no y, en qué momento pues tenía que poner el evento.
4:13	Teacher	Gaby...
4:13	Gaby	Para reescribir la biografía, me sirvieron mucho las imágenes porque si no entendía algún párrafo o una palabra, con la imagen me podía guiar para saber qué escribir.

Consequently, students claimed that cartoons helped them to remember how each event from the main participant's life was, facilitating students' re-writing of biographies. For example, Vale clearly affirmed that cartoons helped her to remember what had happened and to imagine what to write. **Transcript 10** shows Vale's opinion.

4:37	Teacher	Pero al momento de reescribir esa biografía... ¿En qué te ayudaron las imágenes? Vale...
4:46	Vale	en qué las imágenes, ósea a uno le hace recordar, entrar en la mente cómo fue ese momento, entonces ya uno se puede ya imaginar lo que uno ya va a hacer.

Finally, analysis of the teacher's journal showed that the use of cartoons from the multimodal texts was essential for students to rewrite the sample text. In other words, cartoons from the multimodal text acted as a guide for students when writing. Moreover, the teacher's insights confirmed that students used cartoons to represent the typical phases of the biographical recount genre, Orientation, Record of events and Evaluation of person. Thus, students were able to create multimodal biographies with cartoons and other multimodal elements, achieving the purpose of the genre. **Image 9** shows the teacher's insights.

**May 20th, 2022**

The pictures from the text and the timeline were key to reconstructing the text as students said the pictures were the guide for them to write. Students write the text again starting from the orientation for which they created their own version of the picture from the original text, adding written information as well. Then, in the record of events stage, students rewrite the most significant events from Walt Disney's life, making a drawing for each event and, in the evaluation stage, students also made a drawing to represent the famous person

In conclusion, the use of cartoons as multimodal texts was essential in the re-writing and writing of biographies, providing students with useful multimodal resources to create independent biographies. Analysis revealed that students used cartoons from the multimodal texts to guide their writing in the joint-rewriting stage. Likewise, findings also revealed that students wanted to guide the reader through the use of cartoons that represented each part of the text. Furthermore, students used cartoons created by themselves to write independent multimodal biographies, representing each phase of the text. Therefore, the use of cartoons as multimodal texts was useful not only to support students' writing process but also for achieving the purpose of the biographical recount genre.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to develop EFL students' reading and writing skills by incorporating cartoons as multimodal texts and following the sequence of the reading to learn (R2L) pedagogy. Therefore, this study aimed to answer two main questions: (1) What changes in students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts may result from the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle? (2) How does the use of cartoons as multimodal texts boost students' understanding and writing of biographies?

Regarding the first question, two types of changes were found when using cartoon texts in the R2L cycle, (1) changes in students' ability to use the schematic structure required to understand and write biographies and (2) changes in students' ability to identify and use the language features of a biographical recount genre. Thus, according to the findings, the first change enclosed students' ability to identify the typical phases of a biographical recount: orientation, record of events and evaluation of person, when reading multimodal biographies. Likewise, this first change involves students' ability to create biographies following the typical phases of the genre and using a variety of multimodal elements such as written text, cartoons, design elements, among others, to represent each of these phases. With regards to the second change, it enclosed students' ability to identify a series of linguistic resources of the biographical recount genre such as main participants, process types, past tense of verbs and time expressions. Moreover, this change involves students' ability to use this variety of linguistic resources when writing biographies.

These findings confirmed the conclusions of other studies showing that R2L greatly improves students' reading comprehension and writing at the micro and macro level of the text (Wildsmith & Steinke, 2014; Shum, Tai & Shi, 2018; Becerra et al., 2020). Furthermore, results confirmed that R2L contributes to enabling students to understand challenging texts, and then to apply what they have learned from reading to

writing new texts (Kartika-Ningsih & Rose, 2021; Rose & Acevedo, 2017).

Concerning the second research question, the use of cartoons as multimodal texts significantly supported and improved students' understanding and writing of biographies. With regards to students' understanding, the use of cartoon texts challenged students to develop skills to interpret not only the written text but also the cartoons that accompany the text. Furthermore, cartoon texts provided students with visual cues which helped them better understand the text, follow the track of the main participant, remember the most significant events from the person's life, predict what they were going to read and identify the meaning of key words from the text. Therefore, the use of cartoon texts greatly benefitted students' understanding of biographical recounts.

Likewise, cartoons as multimodal texts supported and developed students' writing of biographical recounts by providing them with useful multimodal elements such as written text, cartoons, graphs and design elements to present their biographies. Furthermore, cartoon texts were useful for students because they acted as a guide for them to determine what and when to write, and remember how each event from the main participant was. Additionally, when writing independent biographies, based on the sample multimodal texts, students used cartoons to accompany the typical phases of the biographical recount genre with the purpose to guide the readers as they wanted the readers to better understand the biographies. Moreover, students used cartoons to help the readers have an idea about what they were going to read.

These findings confirmed the conclusions of other studies that the combination of different modes of meaning makes a more meaningful sense of the message that we get from the modes when used alone (Bateman, 2014; Kress, 2009; Harollan, et al., 2019). It also confirmed that visual images produce specific effects of display that cannot be reduced to a linguistic description (Stein, 2000). Moreover, results from this study demonstrated the importance to include multimodality in the learning process since it is



useful to help readers to navigate dominant discourses while incorporating representational resources (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Mckee & Carr, 2016; Taylor, 2017).

Overall, the inclusion of multimodality through cartoon texts in the R2L cycle was essential in students' understanding and writing of biographies since it provided a clear complete idea of what was communicated and challenged students to go beyond the writing of words, sentences and paragraphs. Thus, cartoon texts provided students with a variety of resources and opportunities to practice their reading and writing skills through a specific type of genre: Biographical Recounts.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to (1) describe the changes that occurred in students' ability to understand and write biographical recounts from the use of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle; and (2) to analyze the ways in which the use of cartoon texts supported and developed students understanding and writing of biographical recounts. The results obtained showed that the inclusion of cartoon texts in the R2L cycle contributed positively to the development of students' ability to understand and write biographies. Furthermore, the use of these multimodal texts in R2L, created in students an interest in reading and writing about famous people since they expressed that cartoons from texts helped them to understand the texts better and acted as a guide for them to write.

This study is significant since it advanced the field of R2L by explicitly approaching a multimodal resource "cartoon texts" to develop students' meaning-making of texts and the writing of the biographical recount genre. Therefore, the inclusion of these multimodal texts advanced the different stages of the R2L pedagogy. For example, In the *Detailed Reading* stage it provided students with visual cues which facilitated understanding of each segment of text as well as challenged students to develop new skills to recognize and interpret written text and other multimodal elements presented in the text. Additionally, in the *Note-Taking* and *Joint-rewriting* stages, these multimodal texts provided students with cartoons which guided them to know what and when to write in each event from the text, following the stages of the genre.

Finally, in the independent writing stage, cartoon texts provided students with a new alternative to write biographies across a variety of multimodal elements such as written text, cartoons, graphs and design elements. Likewise, students used cartoons created by themselves to help the readers better understand their biographies. Therefore, the use of cartoon texts complemented and optimized the R2L cycle by allowing students to construct "meaningful learning" (Ausubel, 1961) from texts as well as to use

what they learned in the lessons to create new texts.

On the other hand, this study dealt with some limitations in terms of research: first, it was difficult to find cartoon texts which displayed biographies interesting for fifth graders. Thus, the biographies used in the cycle were the biography of Elvis Presley and Walt Disney. However, these biographies became interesting for students since by the moment of the implementation of the R2L cycle, Elvis Presley was being performed in the program “Yo me llamo”. Likewise, the biography of Walt Disney became interesting for students since they were interested in watching Mickey Mouse cartoons and movies. Furthermore, by the end of the R2L lessons, students asked me to address the biography of Michael Jackson.

Another limitation was observed when implementing the first R2L cycle since the biography of Elvis Presley was too long for students to interpret images and text. Therefore, when approaching the biography of Walt Disney in the second R2L cycle, the pages were selected so that they fulfill the structure of the text without being too long. Thus, when working with cartoons as multimodal texts in R2L, it is recommended to avoid using long texts. Long readings and discussions could be tedious for students.

Furthermore, this study has some implications for teachers who want to implement it in other educational contexts. Thus, if the school is not equipped with technological resources such as video beans, computers and speakers, instead of using a video to activate the students’ previous knowledge, teachers can display that video using a sequence of cartoons in the *Preparing Before Reading* stage. On the contrary, if the school is equipped with technological resources, students may create their independent biographies using a web-based learning management system such as Canvas.

In conclusion, this study provides researchers with a new alternative to complements and optimizes the implementation of the R2L pedagogy. Therefore, researchers on R2L may address other genres such as Exposition, Narratives,

Arguments, or Explanations in EFL lessons, integrating multimodality through multimodal texts such as “graphic novels, comics, manga, cartoons, and other graphic texts” (Serafini, 2012).

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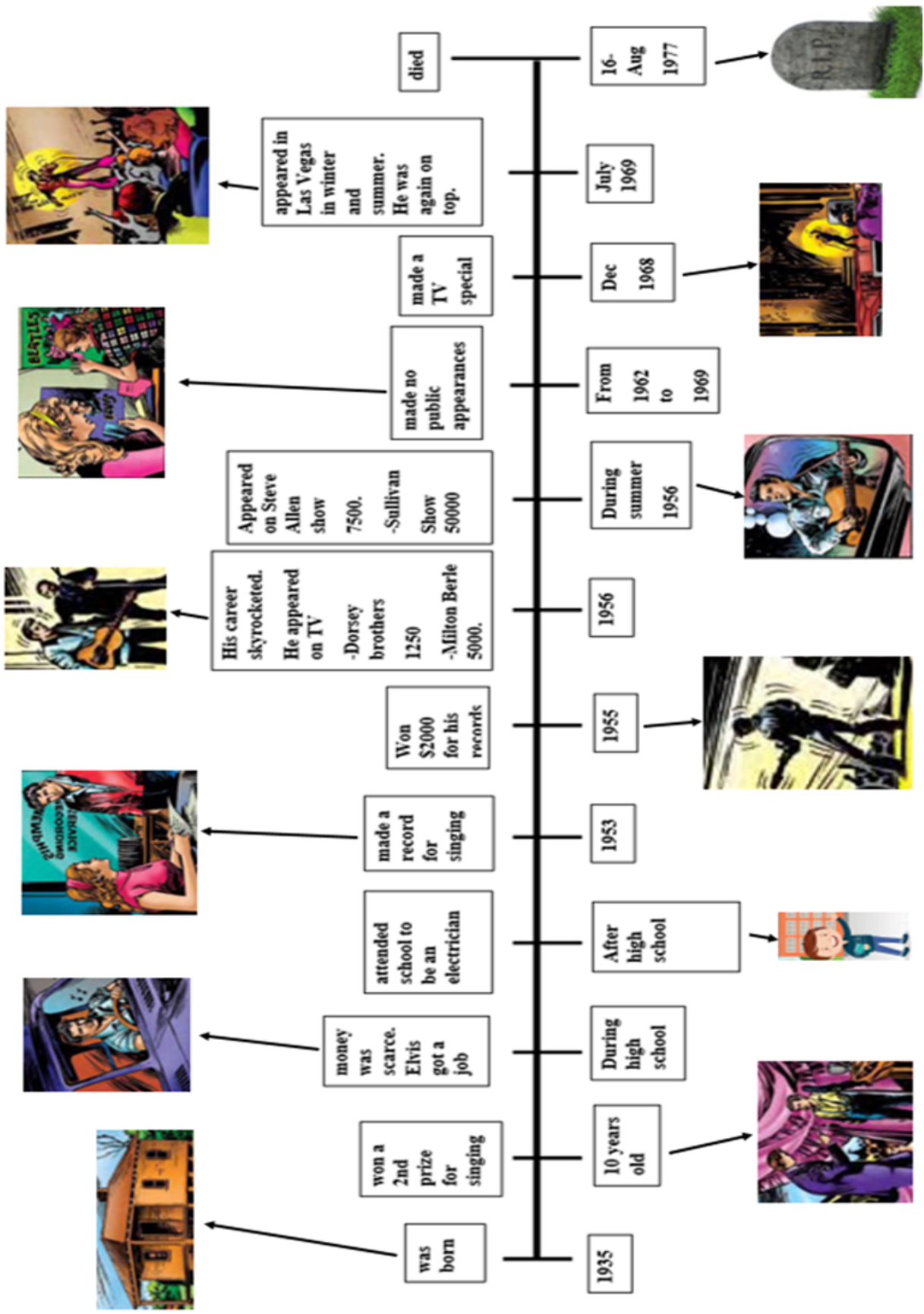
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Appendix 2. Page taken from the cartoons text (Elvis Presley's Biography)



### Appendix 3. Timeline about Elvis Presley's life





## Appendix 5. Note Taking sheet for Elvis Presley's biography

### READING TO LEARN

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

Task 3: Note Taking sheet for Elvis Presley biography.

1. Complete the stages (*orientation, record of events and evaluation*) with information about Elvis Presley's life.

A. ORIENTATION (*who, when, where, why/famous*)

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B. RECORD OF EVENTS

- Number the pictures about Elvis Presley's life events from 1 to 9.



- Look at the pictures above and complete Elvis Presley's life events.

#	Time (year)	Event
1	in 1935	<i>Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.</i>
2	when he was 10	<i>He...</i>
3	During high school	
4	in 1953	
5	in 1956	
6	From 1962 to mid-1969	
7	In December 1968	
8	In July 1969	
9	In August 1977	<i>Elvis Presley died a multimillionaire.</i>

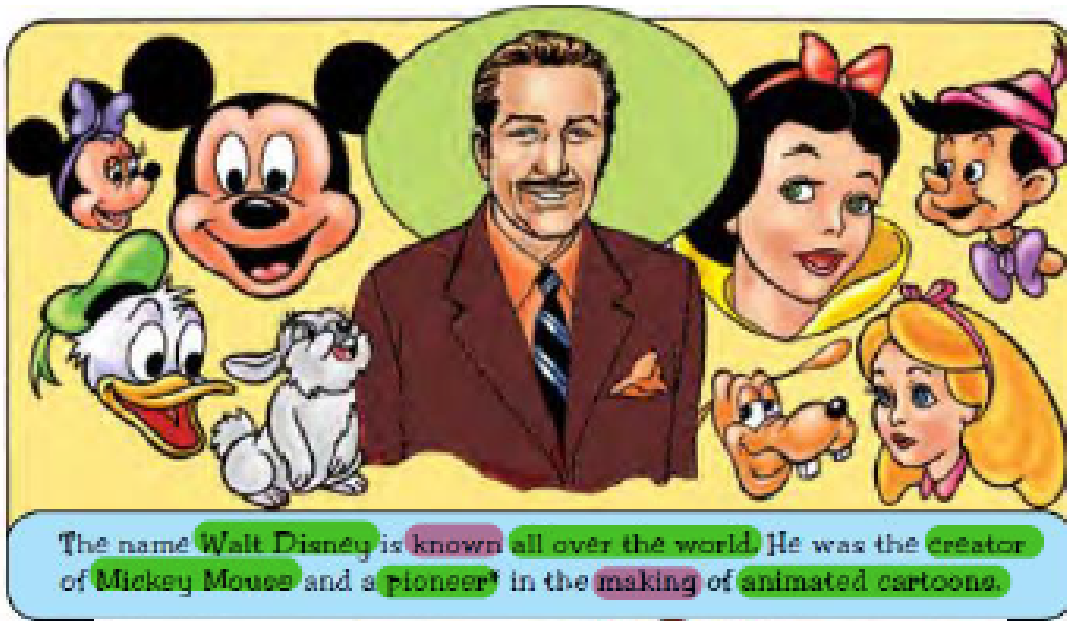
C. EVALUATION OF PERSON

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Appendix 6. Page taken from the cartoons text (Walt Disney's Biography).

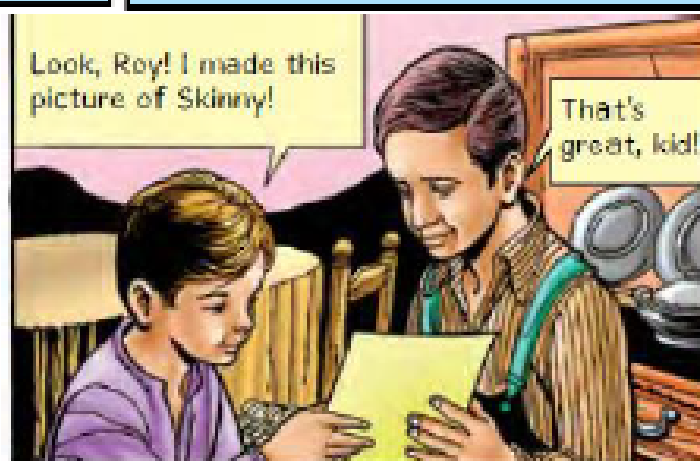
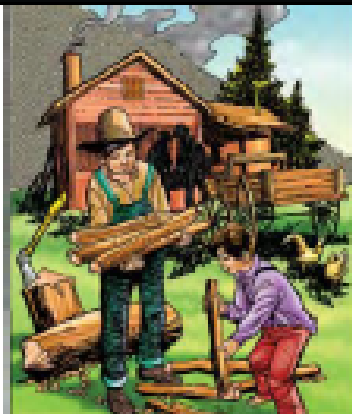


He was born in Chicago in 1901, the fourth of five children. His father, Elias Disney, was working as a building contractor at the time.



When Walt was four years old, the family moved to a farm near Marceline, Missouri.

Walt's best friend was his brother Roy. Roy was eight years older than Walt.



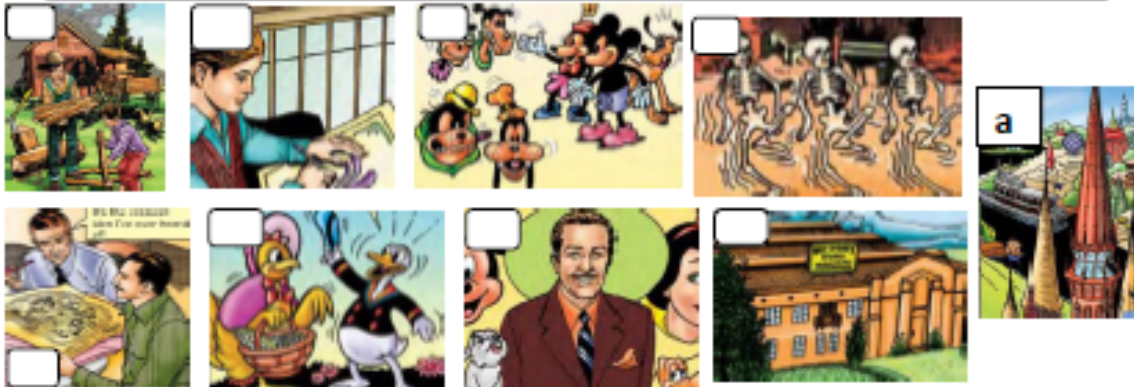
Appendix 7. Reading Task 3

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

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

1. Match the words with the pictures below.

- |                   |                      |                     |            |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|
| a. amusement park | b. animated cartoons | c. silly symphonies | d. creator |
| e. studio         | f. farm              | g. plan             | h. art     |
|                   |                      |                     | i. gang    |



2. Look at the pictures and order the events from Walt Disney's life from 1 to 8. Then, match the pictures with the sentences below.



- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ___ Pluto began.                | ___ He planned the Amusement Park-Disneyland. |
| <u>1</u> He moved to a farm.    | ___ He moved to Chicago and took art classes. |
| ___ Walt died at the age of 65. | ___ Donald Duck made his first appearance.    |
| ___ Disneyland opened.          | ___ He made the Silly symphonies.             |

3. Answer the following questions about the text.

- What did Walt Disney create? He created animated cartoons
- What animated cartoons did he create? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who was Walt Disney's best friend? \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 8. Note Taking sheet for Walt Disney's Biography

### READING TO LEARN

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

Task 3: Note Taking sheet for Walt Disney biography.

I. Complete the stages (orientation, record of events and evaluation) with information about Walt Disney's life.

#### A. ORIENTATION (who, when, where, why/famous)




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#### B. RECORD OF EVENTS

- Number the pictures about Walt Disney's life events from 1 to 12.



- Look at the pictures above and complete Walt Disney's life events.

#	Time (year)	Event
1	When Walt was 4 years old	<i>The family moved to a farm</i>
2	In 1917	<i>He...</i>
3	In 1919	
4	In 1929	
5	In 1930	
6	In 1931	
7	A little later	
8	In 1934	
9	In 1940	
10	In 1952	
11	In 1955	
12	At the age of 65	

#### C. EVALUATION OF PERSON




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## Appendix 10. Letter of consent

### CONSENTIMIENTO PARA USO DE DATOS DE CLASE EN UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN DE APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMA INGLÉS

El efecto de usar la metodología leer para aprender usando caricaturas en las habilidades de lectura y escritura de estudiantes de grado quinto.

*Dina Ogaza*

Introducción: Teniendo en cuenta que su hijo(a) es parte del grado 5° y que en el transcurso del primer y segundo periodo, en la clase de inglés se estará llevando a cabo la implementación de la pedagogía Leer para Aprender con el fin de promover en los estudiantes la lectura y escritura del género biográfico, le solicito muy respetuosamente me permite el uso de los datos recogidos durante las actividades de clase para análisis dentro del marco de mi tesis de Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad de Córdoba. La implementación del programa de pedagogía de géneros textuales en este curso está liderada por mí, Dina Ogaza, docente de inglés actual de grado 5B.

Por favor lea cuidadosamente este documento; no dude en preguntarnos si tiene alguna duda antes de decidir si autoriza o no la participación de su hijo (a) en este estudio.

**Propósito:** La metodología de géneros textuales busca promover las habilidades de lectura y escritura de los estudiantes a través del análisis de los textos según su propósito. Específicamente en esta clase, estará abordando textos biográficos según está planeado dentro de la programación de clases.

El estudio busca determinar los efectos de la implementación de la pedagogía de género, en el desarrollo de las habilidades de lectura y escritura en inglés de los estudiantes de grado 5°.

**Procedimientos:** Las actividades se realizarán dentro del desarrollo planeado previamente para las clases de inglés de la siguiente manera:

- El programa se aplicará durante dos semanas.

- El programa R2L (Leer para aprender) ha sido adaptado al currículo de los estudiantes, quiere decir que los vocabularios, estructuras y otros temas serán los mismos.

Los estudiantes leerán 3 textos acompañados de la profesora siguiendo las etapas de preparación a la lectura, lectura detallada, reacción al texto, escritura conjunta y escritura independiente según se establece en la pedagogía de género.

- Si usted decide que su hijo(a) no hará parte de la investigación, los datos de su hijo (a) no serán tenidos en cuenta en el análisis de los datos recolectados. Sin embargo, el/la estudiante participará de todas las actividades desarrolladas en clase debido a que el programa ha sido adaptado al currículo de los estudiantes.

Si decide permitir que los datos de su hijo(a) sean incorporados al estudio tenga en cuenta lo siguiente:

- La docente de inglés dirigirá la implementación.

- El nombre de los participantes no será revelado. Los nombres serán cambiados por pseudónimos tales como S1, S2, S3, etc.

**Riesgos/Beneficios:** Este estudio no representa ningún riesgo para el bienestar físico o afectivo de su hijo(a). El/la estudiante tendrá el beneficio de mejorar sus habilidades de lectura y escritura en inglés y la oportunidad de hacer parte de la investigación de la eficacia de un método que ha dado excelentes resultados en otros contextos educativos.

**Confidencialidad:** Todos los datos serán confidenciales y solo tendrán acceso a ellos la docente investigadora de este estudio. Borraremos las grabaciones de las clases y los audios una vez estas sean transcritas. En ningún caso usaremos el nombre de los estudiantes en los documentos resultantes del análisis o durante la presentación de resultados de este estudio. En todos los casos usaremos pseudónimos.

**Participación:** La participación del estudiante en este estudio la decide el padre o acudiente. Si usted no desea que su hijo(a) participe, los datos del estudiante no serán tomados en cuenta en el análisis de resultados de este estudio. Si decide participar los datos recolectados del estudiante serán analizados.

**Contacto y Preguntas:** Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en contactar a Dina Ogaza, a través del correo [dinaogazag@correo.unicordoba.edu.co](mailto:dinaogazag@correo.unicordoba.edu.co)

**Manifestación de consentimiento:** Su firma a continuación indica que Usted ha leído este documento, ha tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y está de acuerdo con que su hijo(a) participe en este estudio. Recibirá una copia para su archivo personal.

Firma del padre o acudiente del participante	Firma de Investigador Principal
Fecha	Fecha