

YOUNG LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATION AND  
CONSTRUCTION OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND THEIR  
METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT  
IN AN EFL CLASS

A Thesis Presented by

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## **DEDICATION**

I want to dedicate my work to my family, especially my parents, who were unconditional during my learning process, to my friends who supported me with company and great conversations, and other faculty members in the Master's Program who helped me throughout my writing process in my professional development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Diana Pineda, for encouraging me to keep writing my thesis throughout the whole process. I have improved my writing skills, and I am in deep debt for her patience, unconditional support, and total disposition. This thesis would not have been possible without my students and school community at my workplace, who demonstrated support from the moment they knew I was about to start this path of learning.

## **ABSTRACT**

**YOUNG LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATION AND  
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IN AN EFL CLASS  
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**M.A, LAURA ANDREA MEDINA DIAZ, B.A. UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA  
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EFL elementary schools should allow learners to participate in the construction and negotiation of self-assessment criteria from an early age as part of the skills they might learn in their education. Allowing students to propose criteria for self-assessment helps them to develop an awareness of attitudinal and linguistic aspects of their English language learning which can contribute to their lifelong learning. This action research study intends to enlighten EFL elementary school teachers on what happens with young learners' metacognitive knowledge development when they participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria. how young learners can participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria and what happens with their metacognitive knowledge development.

The primary purpose of this study was to understand how second graders' participation in the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria contributed to the development of their metacognitive knowledge. The participants were eight girls from a

bilingual elementary school. Data collection included my journal and three interactive data collection instruments: photo language, situations mural, and patchwork quilt.

The results indicate that young learners' participation in the construction and negotiation of self-assessment criteria is crucial for their metacognitive knowledge development which includes planning, awareness, self-assessment, monitoring, self-correction, and revision. Moreover, students' active involvement in their assessment led them to develop their assessment literacy. Although some aspects of second graders' metacognitive knowledge were still limited such as autonomy and self-regulation.

Findings from this study suggest further research on three aspects. First, more research to explore the relationship between metacognitive knowledge development and young learners' autonomous learning. Second, knowing that students are able to judge their own learning process, more exploration of other assessment instruments such as checklists, mark schemes, or exam items should be included. Third, more attention should be given to teachers' professional development on the involvement of students in the assessment decision-making process because the sociocultural component of metacognition supports children's ability to propose assessment criteria and develop partnership skills.

*Keywords:* young learners, metacognitive knowledge development, negotiation, construction, democracy, participation, self-assessment, student assessment literacy.

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## Introduction

In 2020, the school where this study was implemented was looking to move from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach. By that time, the school believed that assessment for learning was the best way to actively involve students in their learning and to support students' ongoing growth and improvement (Chappuis *et al.*, 2012; Lamb, 2010) since democratic assessment and assessment for learning both have in common the active participation of students in their assessment process. However, I noticed that there was little involvement of students in the definition of assessment because they accepted the criteria without complaining or were unclear about the procedures to follow. According to Lamb (2010), assessment becomes significant when it is adapted to work on students' needs; therefore, sharing learning objectives is the first example to involve students in this procedure. Moreover, the author claims that involving pupils in peer and self-assessment lead students towards their metacognitive knowledge development.

Considering a more participative approach to assessment that were aligned with the school's plan to have a more student-centered education led me to democratic assessment practices in my classes. In this study then, I advocated for sharing with students the power entitled to me as the teacher to make decisions in the classroom regarding assessment procedures (Lynch, 2001; Ruscoe *et al.*, 2018). Research suggests that assessment turns into a dynamic process when teachers share their power in the classroom which it is related to my research because I enhanced students' potential in the classroom, a potential that is more difficult to achieve if there are power issues in the classroom (Areiza, 2013; Becerra, 2006; Del Campo *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, Picón-Jácome (2012) asserts that negotiating rubric assessment criteria

with students may positively affect the teaching and learning process. Areiza (2013) adds that the negotiation of criteria gives learners a perception of transparency in the assessment process.

In line with this, my work in the school with seven-year-old girls helped me understand assessment as an ongoing task that needs to be scaffolded, which it is one of the principles of the development of democratic assessment in the classroom (Apple & Beane, 1995). In fact, the reason why I decided to do research on this topic came in part from seeing my students' feelings of frustration due to their misunderstandings with the assessment procedures and the impact this had on their parents' expectations when they received bad grades. It was observing my students' feelings and the impact assessment had on their parents what led me to advocate for more democratic assessment practices in my classroom. Furthermore, I noticed the type of beliefs students had of the assessment process when they said that teachers were in charge of assessment, something that could have also been an indicator of the lack of involvement in assessment procedures. According to Lamb (2010) and Pintrich (2002), there is a need to help learners to be aware of what, why, and how they learn, which is something that is facilitated when the assessment process is scaffolded. The idea of this study came from the existing contradiction between what the school claimed and students' lack of participation in the assessment process; it is clear, however, that teachers play a key role in the involvement of students. In fact, many authors like Lynch (2001), Picón-Jácome (2012), and Suskie (2002) make a call for teachers to share with students the power and responsibility to make decisions in the classroom and to implement more democratic assessment practices at school.

A study by Lamb (2010) which sought to find connections between the negotiation of assessment criteria and young language learners' knowledge construction revealed that students lacked the ability to discuss learning strategies or to plan their work. Although the purpose

Lamb's study is not related to my study in the whole sense, it gives idea of what I could achieve in mine. In one hand, Lamb (2010) referred on his study the relation between self-assessment in relation to learner autonomy while in mine I wanted to focus on the relationship between the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria and students' metacognitive knowledge development. Nevertheless, it seems discrepancy, this study was the core of mine because of the implications in the self-assessment, how he works with it in the study-as an action research- and the element of autonomy that is implicit in the metacognitive knowledge development which implies a need to empower students' learning through self-monitoring and self-evaluation that can also lead them to develop better planning skills (Lamb, 2010). In addition to this, students' lack of participation in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria can lead them to focus on the outcomes rather than on the process, which happens regularly when assessment is considered part of the class and not an ongoing task (Arias & Maturana, 2005).

According to the literature (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Chappuis *et al.*, 2012; Lamb, 2010; Pintrich, 2002), there is a close relationship between students' active participation in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria and students' metacognitive knowledge development. This relationship is supported on the authors' claim that what learners think and do influences aspects of metacognitive knowledge development. Consequently, metacognitive knowledge helps learners develop their language learning (Wenden, 1998). As a result, students' active participation in the definition of self-assessment and their metacognitive knowledge development are interdependent which it is considered relevant by Lamb (2010) due to the active role students have when they interact with peers and teachers.

Metacognitive knowledge is a branch of metacognition that includes "the scientific study of an individual's cognition about his or her own cognition" (Pintrich, 2002, p. 220).

Consequently, this study intends to examine what happens with second graders' metacognitive knowledge development when they participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment assessment criteria in the English class.

In contrast with this, what I found in the literature is that teachers reject the idea of including students in tasks that are usually entitled to teachers like assessment tasks. The few studies that show how students can be part of the assessment process may be an indicator of the challenge that this represents for teachers. As a matter of fact, there are authors who have talked about democratic assessment (i.e., Apple & Beane, 1995; Picón-Jácome, 2013; Restrepo, 2014), the construction of assessment criteria (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Lamb, 2010; Pintrich, 2002; Suskie, 2002; Wenden, 1998; Yang & Xu, 2008), and self- assessment (Borova *et al.*, 2021; Eneau & Develotte, 2012; Picón-Jácome, 2021; Shohamy, 2001b); however, very few authors have referred to the relationship between students' involvement in the construction and negotiation of self-assessment criteria and their metacognitive knowledge development.

The aim of this study thus is to investigate how the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria with young learners may contribute to their metacognitive knowledge development regarding planning, awareness, self-assessment, monitoring, self-correction, and revision, which adds to the knowledge on how sharing the responsibility in the construction of assessment criteria with young learners can contribute to their metacognitive knowledge development. Knowing that the role of teachers in the construction of assessment criteria is fundamental, this study can also inform teachers' practices and contribute to fill in the gap on teachers' need for better qualifications on assessment in the Colombian context (Arias & Maturana, 2005; López & Bernal, 2009). To guide this study, I proposed the following research question: What happens with second graders' metacognitive knowledge development when they

participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment assessment criteria in the English class?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Democratic assessment practices and metacognitive knowledge were my initial interests when I decided to investigate the topic of assessment and make of it a more organic experience that helped my students monitor and show their learning without the tensions I had already seen they experimented. Throughout this chapter, I explain how students' negotiation of criteria for self-assessment was facilitated by the democratic approach followed in the class, how this helped them develop their metacognitive knowledge, and how through these two they began to be assessment literate. In the end, I suggest further research to examine the connection between the construction of assessment criteria and students' metacognitive knowledge development.

Lamb (2010) claims that negotiation is the main characteristic of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and he defends that teachers need to adapt their teaching to the context and students' needs. Following the same idea, this negotiation can take place when teachers share the learning objectives in the classroom, involve students in self- and peer-assessment, and give them the opportunity to receive feedback. It is by playing an active role in the negotiation of assessment and constantly reflecting upon their learning that learners decide on every aspect of the assessment process. This is something that the participants of this study did for the construction of self-assessment, similar to what Picón-Jácome (2010) did designing rubrics with his students to facilitate discussion and reflection about the criteria. Include a sentence related to democratic assessment

Restrepo (2014), Sierra and Frodden (2003), Tassinari (2012), and Yang and Xu (2008) used self-assessment in their classroom practices. They defined it as a procedure through which learners provided information about their abilities and progress and realized their achievements and aspects to improve. From Rust and O'Donovan's (2003) perspective, self-assessment refers to "all judgments by learners of their work" (p. 162).

Metacognitive knowledge is the acquisition of learning while learners manage, direct, monitor, and guide particular ways to control their learning (Bloom, 2013; Harris *et al.*, 1994; Kilbourne, 1991; Pintrich, 2002; Wenden, 1998; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). According to Pintrich (2002), the inclusion of metacognitive knowledge in the taxonomy of the four knowledge components (factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) changed the cognitive approach to a socio-cultural one. This revolutionary idea came because students need guidance to learn about their own learning; therefore, it supposes accompaniment from people. As a result, metacognitive knowledge development was born in learning communities (Pintrich, 2002) which implies interactions among students.

This move of the taxonomy of knowledge towards a more cultural perspective includes "metacognitive knowledge, self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-regulation" that make part of metacognitive knowledge development (Pintrich, 2002, p. 219). Wenden and Rubin (1987) claim that metacognitive knowledge is more important to learning than attempting to teach strategies because this knowledge is the basis to select and activate strategies. There are few studies with young learners in the field of metacognitive knowledge. Most of them are set in the area of mathematics (i.e., Kuzle, 2019). Consequently, the contribution of this study to the assessment field will come from connecting students' metacognitive knowledge development and the definition of self-assessment criteria in an EFL classroom. Metacognitive knowledge



development is correlated to autonomy because it helps students to appropriate their learning. It impacts students' learning by (1) giving them the same opportunities in the classroom and (2) encouraging students' confidence and responsibility (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). According to some authors (Benson, 2007; Holec, 2011; Oxford, 1990; Picón-Jácome, 2012; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017), promoting autonomy requires that the teacher gives students spaces to participate in the decisions made in the classroom.

In order for learners to develop metacognitive knowledge, they need to have an active role in classroom practices (Lamb, 2010; Little, 1995; Picón-Jácome, 2021). Involving students in the learning process is essential to understand how fairness and democracy play a role in the classroom (Apple & Beane, 1995; Shohamy, 1998). The more students are involved in classroom assessment procedures like self-assessment, the more it will help their metacognitive knowledge development, specially to help them understand what and how they learn in order to foster autonomous learning. Holec (2011) defined autonomy as “the ability to assume responsibility for one’s own affair” (p. 3), that is to say, the capability to be in charge of one’s own learning. According to O’Malley and Chamot (1990, cited in Kallio *et al.* 2018, p. 97), metacognitive knowledge can be divided into declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. These three types of knowledge can be categorized with different Wh-questions. For instance, declarative knowledge corresponds to the what, it is the knowledge of facts. Procedural knowledge responds to the how to do things, including instructions or descriptions. Finally, conditional knowledge answers to the when and why of previous knowledge. These three types of knowledge are interconnected and it is impossible to develop one without the other. Despite the great importance that has been given to autonomy in language learning, research with young learners’ autonomy development is scarce. A local study by Restrepo (2014) with first-grade elementary

students showed that implementing direct language learning strategies like memory, cognitive and compensation strategies students improved their monitoring and evaluation skills, and their development of strategies like self-awareness, self-rating, and improvement when judging their academical performance.

The involvement of learners in the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria fosters students' metacognitive knowledge development and in doing so, they also develop their assessment literacy. One of the principles to develop student assessment literacy is emphasizing learners' empowerment to engage them in the co-creation of self-assessment criteria. Healy, Flint and Harrington (2014, cited in Davari Torshizi & Bahraman, 2019, p. 60) stated that when students participate in the process of negotiating and constructing self-assessment criteria, they improve qualities like "trust, risk, interdependence, and agency, which are central to the student-teacher relationship." These are abilities that are necessary for students to be involved in dialogues to construct self-assessment criteria. Smith et al. (2011) define student assessment literacy as the ability to work with standardized guidelines towards the production of predictable objectives, and assessment tasks to monitor and improve students' learning. In Giraldo's words (2020), from a development perspective, assessment literacy includes the design and evaluation of language assessments and from a knowledge perspective it includes understanding and using scores from assessments to make decisions about people's language ability. For Giraldo, assessment literacy "represents the different levels of knowledge, skills, and principles required to engage in assessment" (p. 190).

## Setting

This study was conducted in an EFL class with second graders at a religious private school for girls. In this institution, learners from second grade receive sixteen hours of Bilingual Project, which includes Science, English, and Arts. Besides, students receive Music and Math-technology in foreign language instruction in a cycle of six days. As part of the institutional regulations for the assessment in all the subjects, teachers have to design rubrics to assess students' achievements during each term. The rubrics are presented to students and parents in advance to provide them with a clear view of the contents to evaluate. This study intends to include students as active agents to propose their own achievements as a previous action to the design of rubrics because students see the assessment as tedious and out of their learning.

Regarding testing regulations, teachers are expected to administer quizzes at least three times in a term. Moreover, learners must take an achievement test called Integrated Test through Competency (PIC), designed by teachers of each subject based on the ICFES (national official examination) test. Students need to take the PIC twice a year. The test outcomes and other assessment instruments are graded on a scale from 0 to 5, where one is the lowest and five is the highest.

Although young learners did not usually participate in the assessment process, sharing the learning objectives with them was part of the planning of the class. Every class the teacher should read the objectives aloud to let students know what was expected from them. Self-assessment was not a new procedure for students and was the most known by them in the EFL classes. Young learner's participation in the negotiation and construction of criteria for self-assessment was encouraged in this study to describe possible contributions in their metacognitive knowledge development, which also made the assessment process more democratic and

enhanced students' responsibility in the learning process, as stated in the institution's educational project (PEI).

## **Participants**

The participants in this study were eight girls between seven- and eight-years old in second grade of elementary school. The number of girls corresponds to the only online class I had from August 2020 to May 2021. Students expressed their willingness to participate in the study after I presented it to them and their parents. They had similar educational and socio-economic backgrounds –from middle to high class, received instruction under the same conditions regarding method, resources, and time, and were not remarkably different in their physical and/or cognitive capabilities. The number of participants was appropriate for the nature of this study which was action research.

My role in this study was as the teacher-researcher. I have been teaching in formal settings for about ten years and I believe that the participation of young learners in the assessment can help them be more aware of their learning process. This involvement can facilitate teachers' time concerns to provide individual feedback because if students know how to self-assess their work, the responsibility of evaluating will not rely only on the teacher. I must confess though, that involving young learners in the assessment process was a discovery path, one for which I felt curious and motivated to implement this study.

## Method

To explore the connection between second graders' participation of assessment criteria and their development of metacognitive knowledge, I conducted action research guided by a critical and sociocultural paradigm. This study is critical because the power that is traditionally entitled to the teacher was shared with young learners to give them voice and make the assessment process more democratic, the research participants were considered subjects and not merely objects in the study (Quiroz Trujillo *et al.* 2002). The study is also subscribed to a sociocultural paradigm because despite metacognitive knowledge has been traditionally part of a cognitive paradigm, Pintrich (2002) stated that metacognitive knowledge needs to be developed with the support of other beings for learners to become more knowledgeable and responsible of their thinking. This claim represents a move from a cognitive model to a Vygotskian and cultural model of learning because students can become more aware of their thinking when situated models of learning take place and when they belong to a learning community.

According to Burns (1999) Action Research seeks teacher and students' equal collaboration in classroom practices through an action plan developed during the study. My job as the teacher-researcher was to identify patterns in the classroom practices and to give voices to the participant young learners. The importance of finding patterns in the classroom comes from the need to unveil behaviors, strategies, and attitudes that can be improved. In the study, I followed each of the 11 stages proposed by Burns: exploring, identifying, planning, collecting data, analyzing and reflecting, hypothesizing and speculating, intervening, observing, reporting, writing and presenting. Each of these stages were interwoven as the continuous conversations with my advisor evolved to make decisions based on the analysis and interpretation of the data.

From the beginning of the master's, I kept a journal to reflect on what happened in my classroom practice that helped me narrow down some hunches I already had regarding assessment. From the very beginning, my curiosity was inclined to find out if active participation in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria could be connected to students' development of metacognitive knowledge. Enlightened by the literature I read on assessment, I defined an action plan and collected data that had modifications based on the reflections of what happened every time and action was implemented, just as it occurs in action research. There was a pre-analysis stage in which hypothesizing and speculating helped me find patterns in the data regarding the research question. The research journal was my companion to constantly reflect on what happened in every stage of the research, altogether with the rigorous and constant dialogue I sustained with my advisor. The dialogical approach of these conversations led me to the identification of the three main themes of what happened with my study. Being able to talk about what had happened helped me to write the findings of the study and to see the contributions to the field assessment.

In this study, learners negotiated and constructed self-assessment criteria to evaluate their performance in two writing workshops. I implemented three interactive data collection techniques: photo-language, situations mural, and patchwork quilt (Quiroz Trujillo *et al.*, 2002). Photo-language aimed to explore students' previous experiences with assessment; the objective of situations mural was to encourage their reflections on assessment; and patchwork quilt pretended to guide students in the construction of self-assessment criteria. Based on students' proposals, I organized the self-assessment format and students self-assessed their performance in the workshops. During the first workshop, students self-monitored and self-reflected on their work; while in the second workshop, they received feedback from a peer verifying each other's

activity. As the main objective was self-assessment, students struggled with the first activity so in order to scaffold the process of self-revision and self-monitoring. I suggested students to have peer revision because I observed that they were struggling when they did the self-assessment in the first workshop. In that order of ideas, Lamb (2010) supports the idea that a peer revision is a step to move into self-assessment.

The idea of using interactive data collection instruments comes from Quiroz Trujillo *et al.* (2002) for whom research participants are part of a study as subjects rather than objects. In line with this, Shohamy (2001) emphasizes the importance of including students in the classroom not as knowledge consumers but as subjects who can construct their learning. The self-assessment procedures used in this study were inspired by the work of Hutchinson *et al.* (2021), Restrepo (2014), Sierra and Frodden (2017), and Yang and Xu (2008). During the definition of the assessment criteria, I guided learners through questions to help them develop ideas of what to see in the writing workshops regarding linguistic features such as present progressive, tricky words<sup>1</sup> and prepositions. One of the difficulties students had to define these criteria was that they had an idea of what they wanted to propose but they did not know how to name those language structures.

Before learners developed their writing workshops, they had the chance to be in groups and check what they were asked to do in each point. They had to write keywords or features they found important in order to achieve the writing task. After being in groups, students shared what

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<sup>1</sup> Tricky words are words that early readers struggle with. This might be because they have unusual spelling, contains new sound and graphemes, or do not follow the phonetic rules.

they found in the workshops. When I found something similar among groups, I asked questions to guide students to identify patterns in there. Based on their ideas, they wrote the self-assessment criteria in the format with complete sentences and examples of how to accomplish it.

After the learners finished their writing workshops, I gave them time to self-assess their work based on the criteria we had agreed on. They were asked to grade their performance in the writing workshops using a happy face for always, a normal face for sometimes, and a sad face for never (See appendix C). In the first workshop, I had showed an example of how to use the self-assessment by revising a workshop we had done with the whole group. Once they knew what to do, they self-assessed individually. For the second workshop, students were asked to work in pairs to self-assess their work.

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## **Data Collection**

To answer my research question, I gathered data from five different sources, three that were interactive –photo language, patchwork quilt, and situations murals, students' self-assessment that was implemented twice, and the research journal that I kept since I entered the



master's. The data were collected in Spanish and English during the three months the data collection lasted.

Regarding ethical considerations, due that the research participants were children, their parents were in charge of providing approval through the consent forms (Drew *et al.*, 2008). I invited learners and parents to a meeting, where they received all the information concerning their participation in the study. Since children are considered a vulnerable population, I had to guarantee that data collected in this study derived "from normal teaching/learning processes and that the use of the information obtained was primarily intended for the benefit of those receiving instruction in this setting" (Drew *et al.*, 2008, p. 183). I did this by (1) clearly stating in the consent form how the children's physical and psychological integrity would be protected and (2) giving learners the opportunity to be empowered and decide if they wanted to participate in the study (See Appendix A and B).

### **Interactive data collection.**

To collect the data for this study I adopted the interactive data collection instruments proposed by Quiroz Trujillo *et al.* (2002). According to them, research participants should be regarded as subjects and their voices should be included as part of what results in the study. Besides, they conceive reality, teaching, and the data collection as inseparable elements of research. As a consequence, the results of the data techniques evolve to become part of a more comprehensible, critical, and alternative knowledge. I used photo-language, patchwork quilts, and situations murals. I chose those due to the learners' ages and because they allowed me to reflect more easily on the knowledge constructed through these techniques.

### *Photo-language.*

The first data collection technique was designed with the purpose of obtaining information from young learners in a more organic way, following principles of respect and democracy, and “the commitment that the participants were not the means to reach any process” (Quiroz Trujillo *et al.*, 2002, p. 17). As classrooms are usually a representation of multiple realities, the photo-language technique was used as a research procedure that facilitated the collection of data in a less disruptive way. Knowing that, the participants and the researcher were already involved in a teacher-students relationship and knowing that students were little girls, this guidance for self-assess needed to be included as part of the research procedure.

This technique was applied with the intention of having students sharing their experiences regarding writing as an open conversation where students could express their ideas based on pictures that moved their feelings. In this technique students were asked to work in groups to share their memories when they saw a picture of a girl crying with a pencil in her hand, two girls thinking about what to write, a group of girls writing a poster, a girl with a book and a pencil who was happy, and an adult helping a girl (See appendix C). The pictures were used to encourage students to answer questions about writing like:

- What do you prefer when writing in English: sentences, stories, news, or poetry?
- When you write in English, what do you feel?
- What do you do to make writing easier?
- What do you do to have more ideas when writing?
- How different is your writing when your teacher tells you that she will assess you on?

Once they shared answers from these questions, students watched a video about self-assessment to have an idea about what self-assessment was. All the information about the photo language was presented in English with possibilities of explaining in Spanish. I used photo-language for four purposes: (1) to understand students' feelings regarding writing activities, (2) to identify students' previous experiences with writing, (3) to see how familiar students were with self-assessment, and (4) to set the floor for the inclusion of self-assessment.

### *Situations mural.*

Situations mural was the second interactive data collection technique that I used for my action research because it allowed students to describe aspects of assessment in groups and to build knowledge for writing the assessment criteria. In this order of ideas, I took the essence of the data collection which is to generate proper environments for the recognition of the participants and their realities from a holistic perspective. The main purpose was to facilitate dialogue in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria.

Groupwork was essential for this technique to scaffold the construction of self-assessment criteria for the first writing workshop. Students monitored their performance in the workshop with the criteria they had established. Situations mural was developed in two parts: in the first one, students shared ideas about features they needed to include in the self-assessment based on the writing workshop. In the second part, they did the writing workshop individually within a time limit.

The second interactive data collection consisted of incorporating students into groups to construct knowledge about writing assessment criteria. First, they looked at the workshop and discussed what items they could propose to include in the self-assessment. I created a chart on

Jamboard and each group wrote the ideas they had. When all the groups had finished with this part, students listened to each proposal and voted for the criteria they thought would be the most appropriate to evaluate the workshop. In the second part, I used Classroom to share an assignment with the workshop. The assignment was in a PDF format that students opened in Kami, an application that young learners use to write in the PDF. Students had 45 minutes to complete the workshop. Once they finished it, I showed them a workshop done by me in order for them to draw and make sure they understood how to color each face to self-assess their work. Then, each learner self-assessed their workshop.

I used the information collected from the situations mural (1) to encourage students to participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria, (2) to help them identify the linguistic patterns of what they had to self-assess, and (3) to scaffold the girls' process to define self-assessment criteria.

### ***Patchwork quilt.***

Quiroz *et al.* (2002) claim that Patchwork quilt allows the researcher to observe students' perceptions, changes, and emotions through an interchangeable series of ideas. I chose this data technique under the premise of symbolic interactionism that consists of the recognition of subjects who act by meanings, those meanings come from the interaction among subjects, and the meanings are modified with the interaction through the process of interpretation. Consequently, for the patchwork quilt, I selected some images representative of their experiences with self-assessment. Patchwork quilt intended to encourage the girls to establish connections between their self-assessment criteria they had prepared and their performance in the writing workshop.

The first step of the implementation of this technique aimed to support the process to identify self-assessment criteria to write. There were four questions to guide this activity (1) Who do you write to? (2) What do you write for? (3) What do you like to write about? and (4) What is your favorite moment when you write? I designed these questions because in the first instrument, I had asked them about writing for school, but not for writing about their own interests.

The writing practice in Padlet was a need that I found when the girls were correcting their work in the situations mural. Hence, I created a Padlet with columns with the learners' names. From the video call, I presented five pictures and each learner had to choose one to write as many sentences as possible; when they ran out of ideas from one picture, they could select another picture to write about. The idea for this came from the need that students practiced writing for different scenarios and writing longer sentences with more details.

The correction of sentences in Padlet was followed by a moment where students revised everyone's sentences and they wrote comments about what their peers had or did not have to correct. As the class was in a virtual environment, the learners needed silence and both, student-student and teacher-student communication were entirely through writing. I revised their comments to confirm, add or correct what could be necessary. Then, each learner could read the comments and make the required changes to their sentences. This procedure allowed me to see how prepared students were for a new writing workshop and to use self-assessment for self-monitoring and self-correction.

The next step was an online game called Kahoot. The inclusion of a based-game learning platform was relevant because in the photo-language, I realized that learners struggled with the recognition of writing mistakes. I designed eight questions that contained sentences with

different kinds of mistakes such as missing punctuation, misspelling, lack of present progressive, or the unnecessary correction of sentences that were well written. The objectives of using Kahoot were to train learners in the recognition of common writing mistakes and to develop self-monitoring and self-correction skills.

For the development of the second writing workshop, students had to follow the same process. They evaluated their commitment to construct the assessment criteria for the workshop; then, each learner colored the faces to self-assess their work, and corrected the work of the classmate they were working with. The revision of the second writing workshop aimed to (1) give voice to students in the assessment process that had traditionally belonged to me, (2) identify initial actions to develop students' metacognitive knowledge, and (3) recognize how students were able to monitor and give feedback to their classmates.

Finally, my research journal has been a companion since I began the journey of my master's. In it, I registered what happened in my classes regarding students' assessment in my school, reading reflections, and the connections to my teaching practice. During the data collection phase, I kept track of what happened with the three interactive data collection instruments, and I included details of what happened in the classroom. It can be said that my journal was the witness of the dialogic relationship I sustained with the research participants during the implementation of the interactive data techniques. My journal allowed me to register the meaningful interactions of what happened with my students in terms of their metacognitive knowledge development when they constructed assessment criteria in groups (Altrichter *et al.*, 1993).

## **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data collected from the sources mentioned above, I followed the steps suggested by Burns (1999). According to this author, the process of data analysis includes five stages: (1) assembling the data, (2) coding the data, (3) comparing the data, (4) building interpretations, and (5) reporting the outcomes. Due to the nature of this study, the first two stages were done simultaneously. Once I implemented the photo language, I coded the data to determine if it was necessary to make any adjustments in the further collection of data. I devoted between two and three days to the implementation of each technique. In addition to this, I wrote entries in my journal describing what had happened during each intervention of the study. To compare the analysis of the data collected, I created a chart where I organized the emergent categories from each instrument. To build the interpretation of the data analysis, I wrote a description of what happened in my study, created codes that gave shape to the analysis, and inserted memos with my realizations that helped me understand what the data were telling me (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, I reported the outcomes through a descriptive narrative grouped in the main themes derived from the data analysis.

## **Triangulation and Trustworthiness**

The validity of the interpretations of the results of this study was given by means of methodological triangulation that included my perspective, the participants', and my advisor's. In this study I used five different instruments to collect data: photo language, situations murals, patchwork quilts, students' self-assessment, and my teacher's journal. According to Mathison (1988), methodological triangulation allows the use of multiple instruments to examine a social

phenomenon. The examination of the social phenomenon included giving voices to the participants and this gave a different perspective of what happened with students' assessments. The transcriptions of every informal conversation that I kept in my journal were part of the data collection that gave the participants a voice in the research and their reactions were part of the data analysis.

Altrichter *et al.*(1993) state that a researcher uses triangulation to combine methods of data collection and different perspectives to create a triangle through the teacher's, the learners, and a neutral party perspective. The interactive data collection instruments used in this study, my research journal, and informal conversation sustained with students compiled three views: young learners, the teacher, and my advisor that played the role of a critical friend. Despite the fact that my advisor did not attend any of my classes, I recorded each of the classes where the data were collected, wrote my reflections in the journal and discussed what happened with my advisor to make sure the data analysis was not biased by my own perspective. My thesis advisor was the third party that ensured the inclusion of another perspective in the data analysis and interpretations. Her position as an outsider offered deep understanding and constant questioning to my research scenario.



## Findings

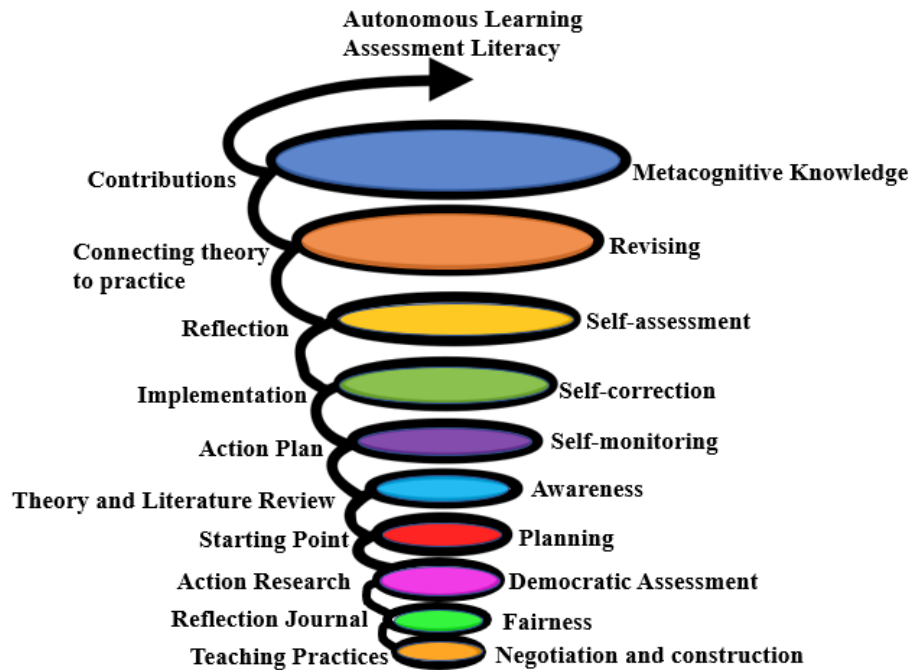
This study explored the connection between second graders' participation in the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria for writing and the development of their metacognitive knowledge. I implemented three interactive data collection techniques: photo language, situations mural, and patchwork quilt. The negotiation took place when students shared the criteria they had constructed in small groups for the two self-assessments with which they were going monitoring their learning in two writing workshops. I implemented one workshop after the situations mural and applied the second after the patchwork quilt. In addition to this, I kept a journal where I collected my teaching reflections regarding students' participation, alternative class activities, and the actions taken for the research. In total, I implemented six data collection instruments: the two self-assessments constructed by the students, the three interactive data techniques, and the journal. The data analysis revealed that students' active participation in the negotiation and construction of assessment criteria contributed to the development of their metacognitive knowledge. In addition to that, due to the nature of action-research, the interactive data collection techniques scaffolded the girls' process to self-assess which unexpectedly led to their language assessment literacy development.

Regarding the assessment procedures implemented, I noticed that the learners could construct assessment criteria with the teacher and that doing this, helped them understand and have a clear picture of what they had to do in the writing assignments. I could identify that when students constructed the self-assessment criteria, they developed the ability to be aware of what they were learning. For instance, at the beginning they relied more on the teacher's approval, and by the end of the study they showed their ability to monitor their work, and be more autonomous when they worked in pairs.

Students' assessment literacy was an unexpected outcome of their metacognitive knowledge development, which was the starting point of this research. Figure 1 illustrates the step-by-step process of what happened in the study as a result of the action research implemented. In the findings, I first describe how democratic assessment practices helped second graders develop their metacognitive knowledge when fairness and the negotiation of assessment criteria were included. Then, I refer to how the girls developed their metacognitive knowledge through planning, being aware, monitoring, self-correcting, self-assessing, and revising. Finally, I elaborate on how students' participation in the assessment process evidenced an emerging stage of their assessment literacy development through meta-dialogue and partnership in the classroom.

The following figure offers the whole picture of what happened in this study. The figure is a drawing of an ellipse tornado shape that on the left side represents all the stages followed as part of the action research process and on the right side, it shows the evolution of what happened in the study; beginning with the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria with the girls and what occurred as a result of the actions implemented to answer the research question. As it can be seen in figure, the shape was small in the beginning and increased throughout the tornado as findings of the study emerged from the analysis of data collection. Autonomous Learning and Assessment Literacy appear on top representing the findings of the study. The arrow in the end of the tornado shows that students' metacognitive knowledge is endless process that they may continue developing. Figure 1.

*Visual Organization of the Research*



### **Democratic Assessment Practices in the Classroom**

According to Apple and Beane (1995) and Shohamy (2001), democracy starts in the classroom when every individual suggests, talks, and designs tasks to foster learning. One of the purposes of promoting democracy in the classroom is to maintain human dignity, equity, freedom, and justice. When a classroom becomes democratic, it involves continuous opportunities to explore issues, imagine responses, and act out. In this study, I found out that the negotiation of assessment criteria and the fairness that it generated were the pillars for a democratic classroom.

#### **Negotiation.**

Equitable power in class means to make students part of the assessment process by using instruments that are adjustable to students' ages and cognitive level, and why not, that they can also create (Suskie, 2002). There are steps to make our assessment methods as fair as possible:

(1) have clearly stated learning outcomes and share them with students; (2) help students understand how they should perform the assessment task; and (3) use different kinds of measures (Suskie, 2002). During this research, I realized the importance of my role as the teacher who needed to release the power entitled to me to assess students. I examined the idea of how much teachers need to be in charge of students' assessments. Part of my reflective process in this study implied my realization that "Teachers need to detach from the idea that we have the control of the classroom" (Laura's journal, June 8<sup>th</sup>/2020). In doing that, I propelled for a more democratic and fairer classroom where the girls knew the assessment criteria before they were assessed and felt empowered to support their peers.

At the beginning of my research, I considered doing this study with my teaching teammates; however, I realized that they were not as committed as I was to reflect upon my teaching due to my master's studies. Echoing my journal, I discovered that my teaching style had moved towards students' needs as I described it in the following excerpt,

My role as a teacher has changed in different ways. The first perspective is regarding the way I interact with my students. I am more open to listening to students' ideas and opinions. I can rephrase and use examples because I understood that's the way they understand better. I avoid replying immediately but wait for someone else to answer or ask questions again that the students who asked can clarify their doubts. (Laura's journal, September 21<sup>st</sup>/2021).

When I invited students to participate in the assessment process, I guided them through different procedures as Picón-Jácome (2012) suggests. Scaffolding the assessment process with some preparation activities helped pupils become familiar with the assessment. Case in point, the girls of this study were involved in modifying assessment instruments such as checklists and

rubrics. In the beginning, they needed guidance to understand the type of criteria they should include. Nonetheless, a rewarding result was finding out myself expressing in my journal that I had followed “A process of including students where the idea was not only that they knew their process, but that students could modify it.” (January 19<sup>th</sup>/2021).

Negotiation was a starting point to help the girls identify linguistic components; nevertheless, young learners could go beyond and design assessment criteria for the writing workshops. Although this step required more guidance and teamwork, it led me to understand that when students worked with a peer, they could make decisions that impacted their learning, and the negotiation process implied that students were able to be flexible and accept someone else’s opinions. The following excerpt exemplifies how this negotiation took place.

The idea was that students created a self-assessment; they wrote different aspects. Most of the ones they wrote the first time were related to partnership, participation, talking, and helping. There were others related to lexical and grammatical features. For example, Zamanta suggested one related to vocabulary. She said, “Vocabulary, I mean to write words well,” and María’s proposal was about punctuation. I said to the class, “Let’s leave these two aside because they are very interesting.” Following the process of depuration, I asked them which aspects they could combine because they sounded similar. Valeria said, “help others and work in groups.” Zamanta added, “Raise your hand to participate. Well... Actually, I don’t know” Valentina wrote what Zamanta said even if she was not sure. (Photo language, Laura, Valeria, and Zamanta, April 19th/2021)

## **Fairness.**

According to Suskie (2012), to be fair is a synonym of being democratic. Therefore, fairness is the basis to foster equity and respect among students. The implementation of the situation murals helped me scaffolded the process to include fairness in the self-assessment. In order to do that, students were asked to assess their classmates with a rubric that I had designed in a platform called Nearpod. There I could observe how they had graded each other, “I turned each girl a checklist in an application called Nearpod. The reason was to let students assess their classmates.” (Laura’s journal, October 14th/2020). This was a fair assignment because, as Shohamy (2001) pointed out, fairness includes ethical responsibility and involving students in a practice where they can check what others do. Not only this, but the multiple perspectives of students’ assessments were also favored (Shohamy, 1998).

Students had someone else’s perspectives on their work and they also had the opportunity to be able to construct their own self-assessment. This was another way to promote fairness in the classroom because, as I expressed it in my journal, “I consider relevant the fact that students can be empowered through assessment procedures, therefore, they can express what they think and make changes.” (Laura’s journal, January 19<sup>th</sup>/2021). Students’ appropriation of the self-assessment form gave them confidence as they relied on their classmates and released the frustration feelings I had identified when I decided to do research on assessment. In this way, I could facilitate students’ multiple perspectives of their work, including fair assessment practices in the classroom that led me to conclude that assessment is a process that involves a social activity in the same way that “learning is a highly socialized activity where learners are engaged in a negotiating process with themselves in terms of what they already know.” (Laura’s journal, August 18<sup>th</sup>/2020).

## **Students' Metacognitive Knowledge**

According to Pintrich (2002) and Wenden (1998), metacognitive knowledge is the knowledge of cognition; it involves planning, awareness, monitoring, self-assessment, self-correction, and revising. These features are interconnected because the first ones scaffold the following, they make part of a chain that contributes to build up students' metacognitive knowledge. Planning, awareness, and monitoring were less noticeable achievements in the research, but self-assessment, self-correction, and revising were more salient.

### **Planning.**

According to Briesmaster and Etchegaray (2017) and Restrepo (2014), planning is a strategy that helps to develop metacognitive knowledge. It helps learners to organize ideas before starting a task. In the work with the girls, planning was the first action identified when they were able to verbalize the next steps of what they were going to do. The following excerpt illustrates what Zamanta expressed during the patchwork quilt after finishing the second writing workshop. "With the sentences, I am going to repasate [review] my working [work], in the self-assessment, I am going to put the carita [face] with [and] I [will] put [color] good, regular [sometimes], or sad [never]." (Patchwork Quilt, Zamanta, May 4<sup>th</sup>/ 2021).

Zamanta's capacity to express further steps to move from the writing task to the assessment exemplifies a trait of metacognition related to monitoring and planning, which are both characteristics of metacognitive knowledge. Despite this gain, there were also insecurities, anxiety, and negative feelings that I noticed when students were dealing with the writing of sentences and were blocked with the words they did not know. As Cristina expressed it, "I feel nervous because I don't know how to write some words." (Photo language, April 19th/2021).

The implementation of the photo language helped the girls to remember the strategies they implemented in similar writing exercises. Collecting this information about students' previous experiences was fundamental to help the girls balance their negative feelings in writing tasks. Giving the girls the vocabulary and structures they will need to use in the writing practice and exposing them to use diverse writing practice, led them to be more confident of their knowledge.

In addition to how students planned to move from the assignment to the assessment task through verbalization, analyzing the data, I understood my role as the facilitator in students' elicitation of linguistic criteria to assess their work. When students were working on this, each pair had to write their ideas on a Jamboard, which resulted in 10 out of 12 proposals, for example,

Valeria said "ing." I responded, "Yes? Do you need to write -ing in these sentences? What do you think, Eliza, Paula, and Maria?" Maria answered, "prepositions" I replied, "So in the first part of the Padlet, you can write prepositions" Still, with the example that Maria gave, Paula said, "but I don't understand." I replied, "Paula, when you write a sentence, what do you have to take into account in the first part of the workshop?" Paula was thinking. I let her think. I gave an example "If I write this sentence: I am cooking a soup, do you think that sentence is okay in the first part one of the activity?" Paula did not answer, but Maria said, "I have other [another] thing, names" So, she wrote it on the Jamboard. "What do you need to write the names?" Maria answered: "capital [letters]" Eliza wanted to participate, so she added, "I have other [another one], final point [period]." (Photo language, Laura, Valeria, Maria and Paula, April 26th/2021).

These excerpts taken from the photo language show that it was easier for them to propose attitudinal rather than linguistic assessment criteria. This was an indicator of how I needed to



guide them towards the linguistic component. To do that, I asked them questions that help them pinpoint linguistic assessment criteria as well.

### **Awareness.**

Awareness is a characteristic that allows any person to be conscious of specific processes and how one thinks (Kallio *et al.*, 2018). According to these authors, awareness belongs to metacognitive knowledge and is divided into two components: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. According to these authors, it can be said that self-assessment can be a bridge for the development of both components. In my study, I found that young learners were aware of different processes, pronunciation rules and linguistic features like the period that are related to knowledge of cognition. Regarding the regulation of cognition, there were two relevant topics that are worth mentioning. On the one hand, the importance of scaffolding awareness development in young learners with the support of the teacher and the use of feedback through students' interactions in pair and group work. On the other hand, the importance of giving students time to develop awareness and how awareness is linked to self-assessment.

When I began the implementation of the study, I developed some strategies in the photo language that helped learners be more aware of their phonetic competence. For instance, when students wrote words as they heard them, we reviewed the pronunciation of some vowels and diphthongs that sounded different like /u/, /aɪ/, /ou/. After this, students re-wrote the mistakes they had at the beginning, expecting that this helped them to be aware of the spelling rules we had reviewed. As a result of this reflection and action process, Eliza commented in the photo language "I always try to write the words correctly with good spelling." (April 19th/2021).

Not only were students aware of pronunciation as a criterion to self-assess but they also focused their attention on other linguistic features like punctuation. The period or full stop is one of the punctuation marks that young learners used the most. The following dialogue revealed how the process of awareness came through a natural conversation and repetitive questions that allowed Valeria to realize something about her writing.

When we started correcting, Valeria said that she had forgotten to include the period, “I’ve already told you... ahhhh but I thought I had forgotten it in every sentence.” I said, “I want to highlight that it is very important that you immediately remember.” Paula interrupted me and said, “You told me to check, and I realized that I missed some periods in some sentences.” (Situations Mural, Laura, Paula and Valeria, April 27th/2021).

As it can be noticed in the previous excerpts, knowledge of cognition is mainly focused on identifying what students know. The findings clearly show what learners knew about pronunciation rules, how they used them to improve their writing, and their process of awareness to use the period at the end of each sentence.

Students’ awareness development is a process that needs to be scaffolded by the teacher. This scaffolding process helped students develop regulation of cognition when they were given the opportunity to define criteria that helped them monitor and take control of their knowledge (Kallio *et al.*, 2018). Marton and Blooth (2009, cited in Kallio, Virta & Kallio, 2018, p. 97) describe metacognitive awareness as “a phenomenon which is manifested in the variations of ways in which people experience situations and phenomena in their life and their worlds.” (p. 97). This definition of metacognitive awareness highlights the importance that young learners become part of a learning community in the classroom as they did with the negotiation of criteria to self-assess. As a matter of fact, in one of the classes, Maria referred to honesty, adding an

attitudinal criterion when she mentioned that “in a self-assessment, the person must be honest because if we are not honest, we cannot know what we do good and what we do not [do] good.” (Photo language, Maria, April 19th/2021).

Another event that happened during the situation murals that led students to develop language awareness occurred through the time the teacher gave students to answer questions related to the correct use of language to self-assess their work. No giving students the correct response immediately after their first attempt allowed them to think twice about their best language choices. The following excerpt exemplifies how this happened in the class.

Then, we continue with the second criteria of the first part, Paula read, “I write prepositions correctly.” I shared Pepita’s exam and Paula said, “we have to draw ‘always’ because she used the prepositions.” I did not say anything because it was an impulsive response. Minutes later, Paula and Valeria said no. María explained that in the last sentence, Pepita did not write the preposition ‘infrontof’ separated. Right there, Paula said that the face to color was sometimes. (Situations Mural, Interaction among peers, May 4th/2021).

### **Monitoring.**

Bloom (2013), Harris *et al.* (1994), and Kilbourne (1991) refer to monitoring as the personal supervision of internal actions like thoughts, opinions, and even behaviors. The data analysis of this study showed students’ capacity to monitor their classmates’ work regarding spelling, as it can be seen in the following excerpt.

Paula wrote “mai”. María said that “mai” was badly written, and she typed “may” in the chat. I said that it was the month of May. Cristina wrote it as Maria did. Paula wrote

again in the chat “my” and said, “look girls [it] is like this”, I replied “exactly.”

(Patchwork Quilt, María, Paula, Cristina and Laura, May 24th/2021)

As this evidence shows, as the teacher, I played a role in helping the girls to negotiate the meaning of the word they had misspelled and to guide the conversation towards choosing the correct spelling based on the meaning they wanted to convey. I avoided giving the straight answer and favored giving students the chance to supervise their own learning.

The following excerpt adds support to how students’ internal mental processes took place when I asked them questions instead of giving them the correct choice.

The prepositions Maria wrote were spelled correctly, but she realized that she did not use the prepositions to describe the robot's position in the picture. However, I asked if she knew what prepositions she should use and she said, “next to.” (Patchwork Quilt, María and Laura, May 24th/2021).

This is excerpt taken from the situations mural is an example of how asking Maria a question helped her to find the correct answer. Giving students the opportunity to identify their mistakes helped them to reflect and realize by themselves the correct language forms.

### **Self-assessment.**

Oxford (1990) explains how students are usually less asked to use metacognitive strategies than cognitive strategies, especially self-evaluation. Self-assessment was a data collection instrument through which students could reflect on their work, identify strengths and weaknesses, judge their results, and look for strategies to improve based on criteria previously defined (Kallio *et al.*, 2018; Restrepo, 2014; Sierra & Frodden, 2003; Tassinari, 2012; Yang &

Xu, 2008). The use of self-assessment helped second graders to develop metacognitive strategies that facilitated their writing skills (Oxford, 1990).

The construction of the self-assessment criteria was scaffolded throughout the whole study. It happened in two moments where students had to propose criteria to self-assess their work in two writing workshops. In the first moment, students explored and acknowledged what self-assessment was about, which led to conclude they were already familiar with it. Zamanta gave examples of what to bear in mind when doing a self-assessment, “listen better to the instructions, read more, and use capitalization.” (Photo language, Zamanta, April 19th /2021). Paula added “how the students behaved in class, if I let my classmates participate or not.” (Photo language, Paula, April 19th/2021). Both excerpts showed young learners’ previous level of familiarity with self-assessment.

Even though students had used self-assessment in other subjects, the objective of doing self-assessment in this study was focus more on linguistic and attitudinal features and track their metacognitive knowledge development. Not only did the girls make suggestions to include criteria, but they also did exemplify the rating scales that could be used in the self-assessment, as this excerpt from Maria reveals, “If I could share ideas so I always share my ideas, I sometimes share my ideas, I never share my ideas.” (Photo language, April 19th/2021). Maria’s comment showed that she had an idea of what the rating scale for the self-assessment could be. It must be mentioned that exposing students to this exercise for the first time required planning from my part to help the girls negotiate and construct the self-assessment criteria and help them name some grammar structures as I did when I gave them an example where they had to identify what was missing.

After I explained for fifteen minutes, I decided to settle an example (without capitalization or period) the robot is driving a car, and I said, “let’s analyze this sentence”. Valeria says, “capital letter” and Cristina complements: “the period”. “Now, you say -ing, what is -ing?” Valeria says: “if you have go, you put -ing and you say going”, Zamanta raised her hand and said: “present progressive.” I explained “because present progressive is not only -ing it also has is, are, am or isn’t or aren’t.” (Photo language, Valeria, Cristina, Zamanta, and Laura, April 26th/2021).

Once the assessment criteria were elicited from students, the next step consisted of organizing their ideas in a form. In the second moment of the self-assessment implementation, students worked in pairs or groups of three to construct a second self-assessment for the second writing workshop. The workshop included three items 1) To write a recipe about how to make oatmeal, 2) To write sentences based on a picture using a tricky word and present progressive, and 3) To complete the sentences with the correct preposition according to the picture. This second construction of the second self-assessment was basically students’ own production. I did not have to change anything because the three groups had completed the format with similar linguistic features.

When I arrived at the first group, I read what they were writing. Valeria decided to read aloud “you have to write tricky words. For example, she is writing in the notebook. She es el [is the] example de [of] tricky words”. [...] When I went to the second group, Maria was writing “present progressive and an example: Maria is driving a car.” [...] In the third group they were not sharing screens, so I did not know what they were doing. I asked and Zamanta told me “Write correctly the prepositions.” (Patchwork Quilt, work in groups constructing second self-assessment, May 25th/2021).

The easiness with which students built their second self-assessment form shows that even little girls have the capacity to establish criteria to judge their work when they have the opportunity to do it and the teacher scaffolds the process.

### **Self-correction.**

Lynch (2001) researched students who paid attention to oral presentations and found out how they corrected their own mistakes and their partners'. He identified five categories: 1) grammatical corrections, 2) lexical corrections, 3) editing, 4) reformulation, and 5) mixed. In my study, grammatical corrections were predominant altogether with punctuation. The following quote, taken from the patchwork quilt gives an idea of Maria's metacognitive knowledge process regarding her own participation during the correction of a sentence.

María opened her microphone, closed it, and repeated this action until she said “I think what [that] I put ‘It *was*’ is missing the capital letter. I can [should] correct the spelling of a word.” I did not answer anything, and I gave her time to think, then she said to herself “oh no, it has the capital letter but not the period. I need to correct [it]. Now, I understand” (Patchwork Quilt, María, May 24th/2021).

Despite students showed samples of their awareness to self-correct, there were limitations in terms of what they considered they could do. They felt they were not ready to self-correct their work when I had seen they could do it. The following excerpt shows the transition when we were working together on the examples of how to make corrections using the self-assessment and when I said they should do it in individual virtual spaces.

I invited them to try by themselves; most of the girls were nervous and said they did not understand what to do. I knew they could do it because they had given clear

examples, rephrased the explanations, and answered all the questions (Laura's Journal, April 22nd/2021).

This excerpt demonstrates that even though little girls are prepared to perform a task by themselves, they still need emotional support. In this case, I used one of Oxford's strategies called positive statements which consisted of giving good comments to students' work that they could feel encouraged to do the activity without my help.

### **Revising.**

Although Briesmaster and Etcheagaray (2017) and Restrepo (2014) suggest that revising is the last step to develop metacognitive knowledge, in this study, revising was also part of the planning stage for self-assessment. Once the girls had suggested the criteria, I prepared a form and presented it to them, asking them if they agreed with it. At that moment, Zamanta showed her revision skills to comment "Before you send it, it is important to check that all the words are written correctly" (Situations Mural, April 27th/2021).

Revising in pairs can be easier than doing it individually, especially at early ages. Students are in a cognitive stage where revising their work makes part of their learning to learn ability (Oxford, 1990; Pintrich, 2002; Wenden, 1998). Learning to learn is what metacognition is about and it implies helping them to find out their own answers and providing them guidance. "I realized that Zamanta was correcting her work with her friends. At the same time, she was using the self-assessment to check if what they had done in the writing was ok." (Laura's journal, May 16th/2021).

Giving students the opportunity to work in pairs or groups and do self-assessment not only gave them the opportunity to reflect and correct their own mistakes but also to identify



those mistakes in their peer's work. For instance, when Zamanta was revising Paula's second writing workshop with the self-assessment, she commented: "Paulis, do a circle between 'am' and 'in' because it misses present progressive" (Patchwork Quilt, Zamanta, May 26th/2021).

Rephrasing was another characteristic I identified that helped students realize and understand what they had to do. I used rephrasing during the situations mural as a strategy to check that students were clear enough about the instruction and could accomplish the writing workshop.

"Does anyone want to tell me what we are going to do?" Paula raised her hand, "the teacher are [is] going to present and have [has] the images, and you need to choose an image, and in [based on] that image you need to write in the Padlet. I am going to choose the two [second], [it] is an example, and I do sentences with number two, and I can do sentences, a lot of sentences." (Situations Mural, Paula and Laura, May 24<sup>th</sup>/2021)

From my point of view, rephrasing was used as a teaching strategy to confirm students' understanding of instructions, but from students' point of view, it meant a way to revise what they had to do.

In this section of the findings, I described how students were encouraged to propose criteria to evaluate their work, how they used self-assessment, and how its implementation helped them to raise awareness on language structures. Some teaching strategies that were necessary to build on students' process of self-assessment included: giving them wait time and asking them questions to guide self-correction, exposing them to work in pairs and small group work, and checking their understanding of instructions. These components make part of the

scaffolding process that needs to be followed to develop students' assessment literacy that will be described in the next section.

### **Students' Assessment Literacy Development**

According to Butler *et al.* (2021) and Chan and Luo (2021), assessment literacy is the level of knowledge a person has about assessment. In this case, the skill and attribution a person obtains when s/he is familiar with his/her own assessment. The following are the four dimensions that are related to the development of Student Assessment Literacy (SAL): Knowledge, Attitude, Action, Critique (Chan & Luo, 2021). Knowledge refers to when students are expected to know why they are being assessed and how they are assessed; attitude when students are motivated to be assessed; action when students' uptake of assessment and feedback to improve their own learning becomes crucial; and critique when students are expected to understand and be aware of the holistic assessment competency, which is often institutionally constructed. Based on the data analysis, I found that throughout this study students developed the four components of assessment literacy. Their knowledge increased because by the end of the study, they were more aware of what and why they were assessed on, their improvement in attitude could be seen through what I call meta-dialogue that helped the girls to assess; action was noticed through the partnership they developed to improve their learning, and critique when students showed their development of their assessment competency through their involvement negotiating and constructing in it.

#### **Meta-dialogue for assessment literacy development.**

Meta-dialogue comes from a holistic competency that Chan and Luo (2021) explained as an umbrella term for competencies applicable to any social context. The authors named these

skills holistic due to the rapid change the world suffers every moment and where students need to learn about assessment and be responsible for it. Meta-dialogue is a process that supports students in the process of getting to know what and how to assess. In Chan and Luo's (2021) words, "Capable students are often proactive in dealing with assessment and feedback by reflecting on themselves, seeking further suggestions from peers and teachers, or engaging in a dialogue with them." (p. 453). The girls of this study got to know what and how to assess every time they reflected on the use they were making of language and got engaged in dialogue with the teacher and their classmates.

Seeing that students were able to correct their classmates' mistakes showed that they were also able to identify those mistakes in them and this gave them language awareness that was mediated by the dialogue with their classmates and the teacher. My role as the teacher consisted basically of giving them time to think, verbalize, and give examples; with this, I scaffolded their reflection process based on the linguistic components they needed self-assess their work. The following excerpt taken from the photo language is an example of how the girls negotiated meaning to agree on the assessment criteria. Maria said "Vocabulary is like the same of [as] punctuation" Zamanta replied: "Vocabulary is for example: if I write this sentence: my dad is drinking water. I use a good vocabulary here, but if I write it like this: mai dad is drinkin uarer, I am using the vocabulary, but I am not writing it correctly. So, what do you think that we put?" Everybody agrees, but Maria was having some doubts because she was insisting that vocabulary and punctuation are very similar. I said to her: "Vocabulary is the use of correct words in a specific situation", I continued "but I think that what you want to say is spelling that is when you write the words correctly. Is that okay if I put-write correctly the sentence with good spelling-, yes?" Maria and the rest agree. Valeria added, "Can we put punctuation like period,

comma, question marks or exclamation mark? because what María says it is important” I said, “sure.” (Situations Mural, Valeria, Maria, Zamanta, and Laura, April 27th/2021)

This excerpt clearly shows the meta-dialogue that occurred among three students who participated and helped each other to suggest self-assessment criteria on lexical and punctuation features. Meta-dialogue then supports what Smith *et al.* (2013) mentioned in regard to the importance of helping students to develop their ability to express ideas about what they will be assessed on.

Meta-dialogue worked for students in the negotiation of self-assessment criteria but also in bridging the gap to name language features in English. During the photo language students showed they were aware of many aspects they needed to use features like punctuation, tricky words, prepositions, or present progressive; sometimes they used synonyms, examples, or the equivalent in Spanish to make their point. The following excerpt shows a student’s understanding of the word spelling, “I asked again: What name can we put to that so the teacher knows “da” is not correct but “the” is correct? Zamanta raised her hand and answered, “*ortografía* [spelling]” (Photo language, Laura and Zamanta, April 26th/2021).

Despite students struggled to name some language features, this was not an obstacle to understand their meaning and convey their ideas. To achieve this, working with a peer facilitated the negotiation of meaning as they could both use simple and more appropriate language to their age. The following excerpt exemplifies how students supported each other and made use of exemplification when they were working together in the negotiation of criteria to self-assess the writing workshop, “Zamanta asked Cristina what else she could write. She said, “you need to write in, on, under.” Zamanta claimed “*esas son las preposiciones* [those are the prepositions].” (Patchwork Quilt, Zamanta, and Cristina, May 25th, 2021). The excerpt clearly shows how

Zamanta was trying to elicit more ideas from Cristina and how she was able to name under prepositions the examples Cristina had given.

### **Partnership to scaffold assessment literacy.**

Meta-dialogue involves partnering students with their peers and teacher involvement in the discussions to support the process of understanding what they will be assessed on and how. These conversations lead to helping students to be responsible for their own learning and contribute to their assessment literacy development. Partnership is important because the explanations given by the teacher may not be as meaningful as the ones that come from their peers. In one of the tensest moments of the research, there was a girl who was visiting the class for two days and was not familiar with the meta-language the girls were already familiar with to name some language aspects such as tricky words, that stood for words in English that were pronounced different from Spanish. This excerpt illustrates how students helped the visiting girl when she asked for the meaning of tricky words.

During the activity, the visiting girl asked a question, “¿*Qué significa* [What’s the meaning of] tricky words?” Maria wanted to explain: “tricky words are words that you don’t write like [as] you pronounce for example the, like”. While María was explaining, Paula wrote in the chat the list with all the tricky words that I had given to them in the first day. (Situations Mural, Paula, Maria, and the visiting girl, April 27th/2021).

The use of meta-language the girls were already familiar with became more evident when the visiting girl was in the class. It also showed how the use of meta-language helped the girls to mediate in the definition of self-assessment criteria. Meta-language was connected to assessment literacy when it helped students to convey meaning on what and how to asses. By using meta-

language students could analyze the language in microstructures like punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, prepositions, and grammar. The following excerpt taken from the situations mural shows how this happened.

“Zamanta needed help understanding the instructions of what to do, Valeria took the shift and said, “Zamy you need to open the writing activity but [do] not write in there, just talk with me if you agree with the criteria we say [proposed]” (Situations mural, Valeria, and Zamanta, May 4th/2021).

I did not ask Valeria to assume that role, but she took the initiative to do it, to help and guide Zamanta. As the girls were working together, I could also devote time to observe their interactions, which led me to notice the importance of having the girls working with their peers. Students from all levels can feel more comfortable working with a peer than being guided by the teacher. The interactions between Eliza and Maria exemplify how students supported each other when they were working together, “Eli, I am looking at the word “*harina*” in English. Look I write it in the chat.” (Patchwork Quilt, María, May 26th/2021).

Not only the girls helped each other to search vocabulary but they also corrected their partner’s work as I could see when “María was making corrections to Eliza, and she circled all the mistakes.” (Laura’s journal, May 26th/2021). Students were so engaged in this task that they continued making the corrections out of the virtual space when we had run out of time in class. The connection of partnership with students’ assessment literacy is evident due to the participation of a peer to correct her classmate’s work. They found a system to show the other what mistakes she got by using the circle and most of the corrections pointed to linguistic, spelling, and grammar.

To sum up, my research came up with three themes and each of them was divided into subthemes. The first one on democratic assessment set the floor for the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria and allowed to fairer assessment practices in the classroom. The second theme is what best illustrates what happens with the students' metacognitive knowledge in the study; this was shown through the planning, awareness, monitoring, self-correction, self-assessment, and revision the girls used. The third theme was students' assessment literacy development that could be identified in their active participation in the assessment process through meta-dialogue and partnership. Findings of this study remark a connection between the democratic approach followed in the study to guide the girls in the negotiation and construction of the self-assessment criteria and develop their metacognitive knowledge. At the same time, these two components were what they led students to develop their assessment literacy.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how second graders' participation in the construction of assessment criteria can contribute to their metacognitive knowledge development. Findings of this study went beyond the scope of the research question because active involvement of students in the negotiation of assessment criteria contributed to having more democratic classroom practices and to their development of their language assessment literacy. Negotiation and fairness were concepts that supported the entire study due to the space students had to raise their voices during the assessment practices. Planning, being aware, self-assessing, monitoring, self-correcting, and revising were remarkable trends in their metacognitive knowledge development. Lastly, meta-language and partnership supported students' language assessment literacy development.

Following an action research method to answer my research question was accurate because of the opportunities I had to reflect on what happened in my classroom regarding second graders' participation in the construction of assessment criteria. The construction of assessment criteria helped students to be clearer of what to expect in the evaluation and to understand their achievements and aspects to improve. The data techniques allowed me to realize that my role as the teacher was fundamental to understand that students required wait time for the elicitation of assessment criteria. The symbolic interactionism from patchwork quilt promoted the interactions among students which led to become more responsible of their learning and helped me see metacognitive knowledge development as a sociocultural component.

In the following paragraphs, I present some plausible interpretations of these results. I first focus on how democracy developed in the classroom when students were able to construct and how fairness was the backbone of new classroom dynamics. Secondly, I discuss how the



construction of criteria for self-assessment facilitated students' metacognitive knowledge development. Then, I consider the features that determine the first steps for students' development of their assessment literacy. Finally, I present some contributions of the study for the field of knowledge and schools, for teachers' professional development, and teacher education programs, the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research.

### **How democracy was the basis for the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria**

Negotiation and fairness were the pillars that facilitated democracy in the classroom. As Shohamy (2001) states, one of the objectives to develop democracy in education is to keep humans respectful, offering them dignity and opportunities to agree or disagree with what is done in the classroom. Before I started this research, there were few democratic spaces because students were able to participate and give opinions when the teacher gave them the opportunity to do it. However, their conversations did not generate changes in the teaching practices (Del Campo *et al.*, 2010). The previous authors consider that democracy is only related to listening to students but it goes further in the following three steps that Suskie proposes (2002) and that I implemented in my research: having clear outcomes, showing students how to do the task, and using different assessment instruments. They are the same principles of assessment for learning that Chappuis *et al.* (2012) and Lamb (2010) propose.

Having a journal as one of the data collections instruments in this study helped me to unveil teaching actions that affected the research. One of them was the perpetuation of the status quo of in the classroom and teacher's responsibility to change it. Another action was the detachment of control and power in the classroom. This behavior was influenced by the power

that has traditionally been entitled to teachers, for instance when Black and Wiliam (1998, p. 140) mentioned that “teachers need to know about their pupils' progress and difficulties with learning so that they can adapt their own work to meet pupils' needs”. Claims like this may give the idea that teachers are the only ones in charge of classroom decisions regarding teaching and learning. However, this study adds to this point by showing that is possible to include students' voices in the classroom and to construct self-assessment criteria even when they are young learners.

Fairness goes hand in hand with negotiation as Shohamy (2001) suggested in the following democratic principles to improve assessment practices to:

- Avoid the implementation of tasks that benefit teachers' knowledge,
- Examine the reason of specific activities,
- Challenge the overcoming assumptions and the consequences,
- Conduct and administer the assessment in collaboration,
- Give responsibility to learners,
- Include knowledge from teachers and students, and
- Protect students' rights.

These principles were evident in the study when students participated in the construction of assessment instruments, which included and benefited learners' knowledge more than teachers. The inclusion of Shohamy's principles in the study developed fairness and contributed to protect learners' rights. I overcame the challenges of language, and abstract concepts taught in class by using metacognitive strategies like revising and correcting. The collaboration in the assessment procedures was addressed through the negotiation of self-assessment criteria. The

implementation of self-assessment for students' metacognitive knowledge development gave them more responsibility to be in charge of their own learning process, which helped students become active agents of their learning process. This finding remarks the importance of doing research in education, especially in elementary schools where young learners are usually seen as subjects who need to learn contents and learn to behave, leaving aside the importance of including their voices in the decisions made in the classroom as a component that contributes to both, their learning of contents and their autonomous learning.

The negotiation and construction of self-assessment empower students to make their voices heard as they participate in the decisions made. At the same time, this helps them to be better prepared when they understand what they will be assessed on, how they need to do it, and the criteria that will be used to assess their performance. It can be said then that negotiation correlates with fairness in the facilitation of a democratic classroom environment. Democracy is considered the backbone of my study, because if I had maintained the traditional teacher's position of power, I would not have been to discover the benefits that sharing the power in the classroom brings to students' learning.

### **How the Negotiation of Criteria to Self-assess Helped the Girls Develop their Metacognitive Knowledge**

The results of this study show that giving young learners the opportunity to create assessment criteria contributed to their development of metacognitive knowledge. As a result of this, students improved their planning skills, become aware of linguistic features, monitored and corrected their classmates' work , and revised their own writing performance. However, it must be said that, based on what Pintrich (2002) claims, what could have helped the girls to develop

these characteristics of metacognitive knowledge were the social interactions. From a psychological perspective, metacognition has a strong cognitive component because through it, students become aware of their own knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Nevertheless, metacognition also has a social component because the cognitive and information processes that take place in students' learning do not only go through Piaget's cognitive stages but also through Vygotsky's cultural and situated learning model (Pintrich, 2002). What this finding shows is a tight connection between cognition, metacognition, and the social component of learning. It can be said then that, social interactions set the floor for students' negotiation of assessment criteria to develop their metacognitive knowledge.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have asserted that in order for students to develop metacognitive processes planning and monitoring should be considered. Planning is when learners establish the goals, strategies, and actions they will use to perform a task successfully; and monitoring is when students apply actions from the planning stage of the task. The actions taken in this study helped learners to plan their assessment when they organized their ideas and I guided their work asking them questions that helped them to verbalize their ideas. Furthermore, through the conversations we engaged in, students increased their capacity to monitor their classmates' work regarding spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

Planning and monitoring were fundamental stages in the process to scaffold students' metacognitive knowledge. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) state that planning and monitoring are interdependent and Oxford (1990) explains that metacognitive knowledge can be achieved through metacognitive strategies that are divided into three: centering students' learning, arranging and planning students' learning, and evaluating students' learning. Metacognitive strategies were necessary for metacognitive knowledge development because as Oxford (1990)

mentions young learners lost their focus easily. Therefore, I had to use familiar strategies like paying attention, overviewing familiar vocabulary, and repeating many actions through the data collection to center students' attention, asking for rephrasing, repeating the instructions, or calling their names when they were distracted. To arrange and plan students' learning, students had an organization and structure of the class. First, they read aloud the objective, then they read the agenda aloud, and they shared what we had seen last class. For planning and monitoring, I combined O'Malley and Chamot (1990) ideas with Oxford's (1990) in the description of the task that students could determine the criteria to do each task checking the linguistic resources and functions. Finally, for evaluating students used self-assessment and peers to revise their workshops.

The strategies I applied in my study were: finding what learners knew about language, organizing and planning a language task. In the first one, I found that in the beginning, young learners were able to identify and mention attitudinal criteria, which confirms what Kallio *et al.* (2018) claim that learners mainly focus on what they are more familiar with. In this study, the organization and planning of the language task, consisted of the construction of assessment criteria where pupils identified the language features, they needed to develop the writing workshop.

Kallio *et al.* (2008) state that to develop metacognitive knowledge, declarative knowledge starts with the identification of learning content. In this study young learners could identify how language worked in a sentence and connect it to the assessment criteria. The definition of writing assessment criteria allowed students to develop declarative knowledge when they negotiated attitudinal and linguistic parameters for the self-assessment.

Self-assessment is considered a formative tool (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Restrepo, 2014; Yang & Xu, 2008) that provides students a way to understand their learning in terms of achievements and improvements. However, teachers are still skeptical about its use because in most of the teachers' discourse, self-assessment is just a mandatory tool to use in the assessment system as affirmed Arias and Maturana (2005). These authors evidenced that teachers do it as a requirement and not because they really believe in its benefits. In my case, I truly believed on the advantages of self-assessment and I did not use it as a requirement as it was not something mandatory in my school. I implemented it with the intention of helping students to know what and how they could self-assess their work and identify their achievements.

In addition to this, I could notice how self-assessment facilitated young learners' ability to self-correct and revise their work, especially when they received support from their classmates and the teacher. These results are aligned with Briesmaster and Etchegaray's (2017) findings that show that classmates' support made the process of revision and correction easier. Nonetheless, young learners may still need help to improve their individual revision and correction skills. Briesmaster and Etchegaray's study show that investing in evaluation requires time, due in part to the slight improvements students make after individual corrections; however, students can develop planning, monitoring, and evaluation skills. In this study, young learners' improvement of their planning skills was visible when they verbalized the next steps of what they were going to do. Their monitoring skills were noticeable when they negotiated the meaning of the word they had misspelled and when I guided the conversation towards choosing the correct spelling based on the meaning they wanted to convey. Regarding evaluation skills, this was evident when they shared and commented on their classmates' work. In addition to this, they improved their

attitudes towards evaluation because in the beginning they did not feel comfortable revising and correcting their work.

The negotiation of assessment criteria implies collaboration among teacher and students (Areiza, 2013; Rust *et al.*, 2003) as well as metacognitive knowledge development because when students are aware of their process is easier to understand the objectives of the assessment (Picón-Jácome, 2021). Moreover, students' responsibility during learning increases due to their commitment to create assessment criteria in groups. As Benson (2010, cited in Picón-Jácome, 2012, p. 148) the more developed the metacognitive knowledge, the more independent the student will be. These results are consistent with the work of Picón-Jácome (2012), who stated that "students showed that they had gained ownership by expressing or showing independence, showing commitment and responsibility to do the learning activities proposed, participating in decision making" (p. 151). What happened in this study of assessment was a transformation from a traditional perspective to a more democratic one thanks to the active involvement of young learners in the negotiation of assessment criteria for the writing workshops. As a result, young learners gained ownership when they expressed their opinions, formulated the assessment criteria, and became responsible of a part of their learning.

### **What Happens with Students' Metacognitive Knowledge When There is Negotiation and Construction of Self-Assessment Criteria?**

The findings of this study showed an unexpected result that went beyond the research question and that is related to the development of students' assessment literacy. The meta-dialogue and partnership facilitated in this research determined the first steps for this development. According to Smith *et al.* (2013), assessment literacy is defined as students'

capacity to develop three aspects of assessment: understanding the purpose, being aware of the assessment processes, and judging their own responses. Young learners' involvement in the assessment procedures proposed in this study targeted these three goals. Students understood the purpose of assessment because they recognized that assessment is part of the learning process in order to identify what I have learned, and it does not have to be a stressful part. Students became aware of the assessment process because they were involved in the negotiation and construction of the self-assessment criteria, what it meant that students were able to identify what the aspects to assess were in the workshop. That identification of features gave students clear objectives to judge their own responses. The last stage was more successful in peers because they felt more comfortable and were able to identify easier than in their own responses if they were correct or not, and why. These results are aligned with what Smith *et al.* (2013) found that young learners can judge their work better when they worked in pairs. Working in pairs is related to assessment literacy development because it is the first step to foster this skill.

Meta-dialogue was one of the tools that facilitated students' involvement in the assessment process. Chan and Luo (2021) state that the objective of using meta-dialogue is to foster capable students who can be proactive to face assessment. Meta-dialogue in this study came from asking questions to students, giving them wait time, exemplifying linguistic components during the construction of self-assessment criteria, and having students rephrasing. As Smith *et al.* (2013) express it, the importance of meta-dialogue lies on the natural interventions of students to judge others' work when students-teacher, teacher-student, or student-student interactions are facilitated in the classroom. Each of these interactions contributed to develop students' assessment literacy because meta-language worked as a bridge between the analysis of language functions and the construction of self-assessment criteria.



There are few studies in the literature that report young learners' assessment literacy development. Smith *et al.* (2013) and Chan and Luo (2021) wrote about undergraduate students' assessment literacy. The first authors found that helping students to develop their ability to judge their own and others' work will likely enhance their learning outcomes. While the second one, highlighted students' critical engagement with assessment and understands learners as active agents who exercise discretion in holistic competency assessment. Butler *et al.* (2021) did research with six graders and found that the assessment practices changed due to children's possibilities to express their perceptions achieving fairness in the assessment and their feedback could be based on young learners' experiences. Students obtained deep knowledge and experience with English-language assessments and could articulate their views (both critical and constructive) about the current English-language assessment practices with which they were familiar.

I found that second graders were developing their initial steps towards assessment literacy when they recognized how to name language structures in English, identified complete or incomplete sentences, knew how to write words correctly, identified tricky words, prepositions, and present progressive. Moreover, when they showed empathy to share their knowledge with their classmates' completing and correcting their workshops. This finding leads to conclude that is possible to facilitate 8-year-old students' assessment literacy through the metacognitive knowledge young learners develop when self-assessment is enhanced and the negotiation of self-assessment criteria is encouraged. This result may indicate that to address students' assessment literacy development is necessary to work through their metacognitive knowledge development. Consequently, there are implications for classroom teachers and teacher educators.

Partnership in the assessment process is another characteristic associated to students' assessment literacy development. Davari Torshizi and Bahraman (2019) believe that students should be the center of the assessment process through a partnership between teachers and students. For them, partnership is a process, in which students and teacher learn together to foster authentic assessment. They used partnership as a procedure to facilitate students' understanding of assessment criteria and instruments.

In this study, I used partnership as a process that could support students' negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria. In the beginning the partnership was established between the teacher and students, but it then evolved into student-student partnership, which made the conversations more meaningful. Davari Torshizi and Bahraman (2019) and Picón-Jácome (2012) consider partnership a process that the teacher should initiate. What I found in this study was that student-student partnership was more successful because students shared the same level of cognition. Students could usually paraphrase with simpler words what I sometimes explained in a language that could appear complex for young learners.

The discussion of the findings of this study have mainly revolved around the democratic approach fostered in the classroom, students' metacognitive knowledge, and young learners' assessment literacy development. Assessment in the classroom suffered a transformation from a traditional to a more democratic approach. The transformative power of negotiation, fairness, and democracy that took place for students, also transformed the concept I had of democracy when I detached from the control and power I had. Including students' voices in the decisions made in the classroom was possible through the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria. This was an effective strategy to give them power to become active participants in the classroom even when they were young learners.

Self-assessment was an effective tool to visualize what learners achieved in terms of metacognitive knowledge. By writing assessment criteria students developed declarative knowledge, which was the result of correlating O'Malley and Chamot's planning and monitoring and Oxford's metacognitive strategies. Students also developed their metacognitive knowledge through revising and correcting their classmates' work, which may be an indicator of how a sociocultural approach to assessment contributes to scaffold the assessment literacy. The sociocultural component of metacognitive knowledge adds to the field of how students reach cognition.

Regarding students' first steps for their development of assessment literacy, I could say that by relying on the meta-dialogue that students did in pairs, they gained understanding and awareness of the assessment process. Findings of this study add to the little research on children's metacognitive knowledge and contribute to filling the existing gap on young learners' assessment literacy development. Furthermore, student-student partnership is more successful than teacher-student partnership because the same level of cognition they share facilitates the rephrasing of explanations in simpler words.

A consequence of this finding may imply that teacher education programs need to expand on the idea that to become an assessment literate teacher is necessary to become a reflective practitioner. The implementation of classroom assessment procedures such as self- and peer assessment are tools to proceed for fairer and more democratic practices in the classroom. These practices, at the same time, need to be scaffolded and seem to have an impact on students' metacognitive knowledge development, their autonomous learning, and their assessment literacy.

One of the limitations of this study was the challenge that working on students' metacognitive knowledge development in virtual environments during the pandemic implied.

Not only having students connected through their own devices from home, made inevitable that they get distracted and disperse, but also the training they required on the use of technological tools was not considered in the class instruction time and data collection planning. Students needed explanations about where to find the class resources or help to be familiar with new platforms.

A suggestion for further research is to monitor more systematically the connection between students' metacognitive knowledge development and their development of autonomy for language learning, especially because they are young learners (Little, 1995). Autonomy is the consequence of assuming as own the learning (Benson, 2007; Holec, 1979; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). Although in this study there were traits of independence that can be an indicator of autonomous learning, this was just an initial step to autonomy. Despite second graders did not have the entire capacity to perform a task without any help, they could develop it with guidance of the teacher and teamwork. When a student asked for help during writing, it showed the use of a learning strategy that scaffolded and fostered autonomy. Hence, they still need help finding accurate strategies to become more autonomous. It made sense that students may still need support to develop their autonomy and this was noticed when they were correcting and revising their and needed the support of their peers and teacher. According to Holec (2011), autonomy is being in charge of “determining the objectives, defining the contents and progression, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure and evaluating what has been acquired” (p. 3). Thus, the challenge for a further study is to determine how can young learners' autonomy be fostered.

## Conclusions

This study has moved a step forward to illuminating teachers interested in engaging elementary school learners in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria in the English class. Having explored one way that helps children develop metacognitive knowledge provides teachers with ideas about (1) the democratic approach to assessment, (2) the impact on students' metacognitive knowledge development through their participation in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria, (3) the way in which the implementation of self-assessment contributes to students' metacognitive knowledge development, and (4) the role that teachers and peers play to scaffold students' assessment literacy.

The current action research study inquired about how second graders developed metacognitive knowledge through the negotiation and construction of criteria to self-assess their work in the English class. Negotiating the criteria and implementing self-assessment helped students to discover the great power they have when their voices are heard and included as part of the assessment process. Moreover, social interactions set the floor for students to negotiate and construct self-assessment criteria and develop metacognitive knowledge. Data analysis validated findings from previous research that showed that young learners can construct criteria to self-assess their work but that they require preparation and guidance from the teacher. The inclusion of students in the self-assessment process fosters responsibility in their learning, which refers to autonomy (Becerra, 2006; Del Campo *et al.*, 2010; Little, 1995).

The results show that students developed their metacognitive knowledge when they implemented planning, monitoring, correction, and revision skills; at the same time, the opportunities they had to participate in the negotiation and construction of self-assessment criteria fostered their language awareness. Self-assessment became a familiar procedure for

students; thus, they could clearly visualize what and how they were assessed. Although little girls could have an idea of what self-assessment implied, they were not ready to build the criteria by themselves. To achieve this, working with their peers and receiving guidance from the teacher to scaffolded the self-assessment process was of paramount importance.

Negotiating and constructing self-assessment with students provided me with important information to make changes in my teaching practices. In this study, the journal helped me reflect on the way I was assessing students and how it changed to become more democratic and flexible listening to students' voices. Helping students to be familiar with self-assessment was relevant to help them have more control of their learning process. Based on this experience, I would recommend other teachers to use self-assessment as a formative evaluation tool, especially at the elementary school level because it fosters young learners' reflection on their own learning and it helps them have a clear understanding of the learning goals. Offering young learners' opportunities to be part of the assessment process (Lynch, 2001; Ruscoe *et al.*, 2018) and providing them with time to negotiate and construct self-assessment criteria, developed students' metacognitive knowledge and contributed to students' assessment literacy and traits of autonomy that they showed in the classroom.

Some of the recommendations from this study for classroom practitioners are: (1) advocate for democratic assessment practices that give students opportunities to make decisions that affect their learning, (2) select assessment procedures that students are familiar with; and (3) become an assessment literate teacher, being familiar with assessment qualities such as construct validity and fairness (Giraldo, 2018, 2020).

In addition to the accomplishments of the study, there is something that was both a limitation and an achievement and that was related to the use of technological tools. On the one

hand, despite the fact that the girls were accustomed to using computers every day, they still needed a lot of time during classes to find online resources and be familiar with different platforms. On the other hand, the girls could somehow easily accommodate to teaching and learning remotely, considering especially the girls' ages and the short spans of concentration they have at that age.

Despite the participants of this study developed metacognitive knowledge through the planning, awareness, monitoring, correction, and revision strategies they implemented, it would be interesting to find out what can work to promote young learners' autonomous language learning. Therefore, a recommendation for further research is the consideration of a study that examines the relationship between metacognitive knowledge development and autonomy in young learners.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### CONSENT FORM FROM PARENTS' PARTICIPATION

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JJaIRfTO85oxUJL0BYitxxCj-TQGo6rk/edit>

## **APPENDIX B**

### ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e9DIE-yO6JsxuHZhPLIjLM7gN2c1I\\_3E/edit#heading=h.uth6292fg9s1](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e9DIE-yO6JsxuHZhPLIjLM7gN2c1I_3E/edit#heading=h.uth6292fg9s1)



# APPENDIX C



dreamstime.com ID 150742281 © DimgaPhoto


















alamy stock photo FT103M www.alamy.com



## APPENDIX D

### Self-assessment form

Name: _____	Date: _____
<p>_____</p> <p><b>In groups, write the aspect your self-assessment <u>need</u> to have. Be prepared to share them with the class.</b></p>	

	Aspects to consider in a self-assessment			
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

## APPENDIX E

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_

Period: 3 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Bilingual Project- Writing

I. Write about the position of the robots. There is one example. (0.5 each sentence)



1.

2.

3.

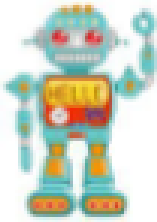
4.

5.

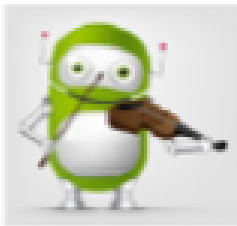
6.

II. Look at the pictures and write sentences using present progressive. (0.5 each)

Example:



(say): The robot is saying hello to me.



1. (play violin)

---



2. (study)

3. (write)





4.

(go)



5.

(drive)

II. R

and write it. Write the

correct words next to numbers 1–5. There is one example. (0.2 each one)

are	the	like
my	we	



(1) \_\_\_\_\_ class is going to the cinema. We (2) \_\_\_\_\_ ing to see a movie that tells a story about the importance of electricity in our life. We (3) \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ watch movies together. (4) \_\_\_\_\_ nds are not going because they are sick. My teacher **said** (5) \_\_\_\_\_ can bring them popcorn, so they don't feel sad. We can wait for our field trip!



**PART II**

Look at the pictures, write a sentence including one of the tricky words from the chart and present progressive. (1 point each)

She	They	We
He	I	

1.



---

2.



---

3.



---

4.



5.



**PART III**



1. Look at the picture. Complete the sentences with the correct preposition.  
(0.5 points each)

1. The mouse is on the sofa.

2. The fridge is \_\_\_\_\_ the table. 

3. The T.V is \_\_\_\_\_ the bookcase. 

4. The ball is \_\_\_\_\_ the sofa. 

5. The bookcase is \_\_\_\_\_ the bike and the T.V. 