



Title

**MEANING-MAKING IN PRESCHOOL ENGLISH LEARNING: SYSTEMATIZING A
PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE BASED ON INTENTIONAL INTERACTION AND
SEMIOTIC MEDIATION.**

Author

Erika Daniela Suárez Pabón

Suárez Pabón Erika Daniela

Universidad Santo Tomás

erika.suarez@usantotomas.edu.co



Resumen

Este working paper analiza cómo la interacción pedagógica intencional, mediada por recursos semióticos, posibilita la construcción de significado en el aprendizaje del inglés en niños de preescolar a través de la sistematización de una experiencia pedagógica desarrollada en un contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en educación preescolar. El trabajo surge de la necesidad de cuestionar las prácticas tradicionales de enseñanza centradas en la memorización de vocabulario aislado y el uso de la traducción a la lengua materna, las cuales pueden limitar la comprensión del lenguaje como un sistema de comunicación en uso.

En respuesta a esta problemática, la investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo basado en la sistematización de experiencias, entendida como un proceso reflexivo e interpretativo que permite la reconstrucción y el análisis crítico de la práctica pedagógica como fuente de conocimiento situado. La experiencia pedagógica se desarrolló con niños de grado transición en la Escuela Normal Superior de Piedecuesta, Santander, Colombia, donde el inglés fue presentado a través de expresiones completas apoyadas en gestos, imágenes, objetos, acciones e interacción contextualizada.

Los hallazgos indican que la construcción de significado emergió a través de la articulación entre interacción, contexto y mediación semiótica. Los estudiantes demostraron comprensión mediante respuestas basadas en la acción, la participación en situaciones comunicativas y la interpretación del lenguaje en relación con experiencias concretas, sin recurrir a la traducción a la lengua materna ni a explicaciones gramaticales explícitas. En este sentido, la interacción funcionó como el espacio en el que el lenguaje se volvió comprensible y significativo, mientras que los recursos semióticos operaron como mediadores esenciales que facilitaron la comprensión.



El estudio concluye que el aprendizaje del inglés en educación preescolar puede desarrollarse de manera significativa cuando el lenguaje se encuentra inmerso en una interacción intencional y apoyado por recursos semióticos. Estos hallazgos contribuyen a la reflexión pedagógica sobre la enseñanza del inglés en la primera infancia, destacando la necesidad de diseñar ambientes de aprendizaje que prioricen el uso contextualizado del lenguaje, la interacción y la construcción de significado por encima de la memorización y la traducción.

Palabras clave: Educación preescolar, Construcción de significado, Interacción social, Mediación semiótica.



Abstract

This working paper analyzes how intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enables meaning construction in English learning among preschool children through the systematization of a pedagogical experience developed in a preschool English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The paper emerges from the need to question traditional teaching practices centered on the memorization of isolated vocabulary and the use of translation into the mother tongue, which may limit the understanding of language as a system of communication in use.

In response to this issue, the research adopts a qualitative approach based on the systematization of experiences, understood as a reflective and interpretative process that allows the reconstruction and critical analysis of pedagogical practice as a source of situated knowledge. The pedagogical experience was developed with preschool children in transition grade at Escuela Normal Superior de Piedecuesta, Santander, Colombia, where English was presented through complete expressions supported by gestures, images, objects, actions, and contextualized interaction.

The findings indicate that meaning construction emerged through the articulation of interaction, context, and semiotic mediation. Students demonstrated comprehension through action-based responses, participation in communicative situations, and the interpretation of language in relation to concrete experience without relying on translation into the mother tongue or explicit grammatical explanation. In this sense, interaction functioned as the space in which language became comprehensible and meaningful, while semiotic resources operated as essential mediators that facilitated comprehension.



The study concludes that English learning in preschool education can develop meaningfully when language is embedded in intentional interaction and supported by semiotic resources. These findings contribute to pedagogical reflection on early childhood English teaching by highlighting the need to design learning environments that prioritize contextualized language use, interaction, and meaning construction over memorization and translation.

Keywords: Preschool education, Meaning-making, Social interaction, Semiotic mediation.



Introduction

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, the search for more relevant and effective pedagogical practices has gained increasing importance in recent years, particularly at the preschool level, where the foundations of linguistic and cognitive development are established. In this context, it becomes necessary to rethink traditional teaching approaches in order to promote proposals that acknowledge the specific characteristics of early childhood, fostering the use of language in meaningful situations. In line with this, the systematization of pedagogical experiences emerges as a fundamental research strategy, as it enables the recovery, analysis, and critical interpretation of educational practice through teacher reflection, thus generating situated and contextually grounded knowledge (Jara, 2018).

One of the main challenges in early childhood English teaching lies in the persistence of approaches centered on the memorization of isolated vocabulary and the use of translation into the mother tongue. Such practices may limit the understanding of language as a system of communication in use, thereby reducing children's opportunities to engage meaningfully with the language. In response, sociocultural perspectives emphasize that learning emerges through social interaction and meaningful experiences in which language is understood in relation to context and action, allowing children to construct meaning in contextualized situations (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983)

In this regard, it is essential to consider the characteristics of child development, particularly the brain plasticity inherent to early childhood. This stage represents a privileged period for foreign language learning, as children demonstrate a high capacity to establish neural connections and implicitly recognize linguistic patterns (Montessori, 1967). From this perspective, English learning is enhanced when children are exposed to comprehensible language



in meaningful contexts, enabling them to construct meaning without relying on metalinguistic explanations or translation processes (Krashen, 1982).

In coherence with the above, interaction in the classroom assumes a central role—not as an approach in itself, but as the medium through which language becomes comprehensible. In preschool settings, such interaction is mediated by semiotic resources such as gestures, images, objects, and actions, which allow children to establish connections between language and experience. From this standpoint, understanding English does not depend solely on the linguistic code, but rather on the articulation between what the child hears, observes, and performs in concrete situations. In this line of inquiry, studies such as those by Long (1996) and Gullberg (2006) demonstrate that interaction and gestures support meaning construction by enabling learners to interpret messages within contexts of use.

Based on these theoretical foundations, the present paper is oriented towards the systematization of a pedagogical experience in preschool education, focusing on meaning construction in English learning through intentional pedagogical interaction mediated by semiotic resources. In this study, intentional pedagogical interaction is understood as the planned and purposeful organization of classroom interaction in which the teacher deliberately uses language, gestures, objects, actions, and contextual support to facilitate children's comprehension and meaning construction in English without relying on translation or explicit grammatical explanation. Within this framework, the emphasis is not placed on the teaching of isolated vocabulary, but rather on the comprehension of language in use through meaningful expressions that allow children to interpret and act upon communicative messages.

Accordingly, the guiding research question of this study is: How does intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enable the construction of meaning in



English learning among preschool children? This question seeks to understand how classroom interactions, articulated through elements such as gestures, objects, and images, support language comprehension processes in meaningful contexts without resorting to translation.

To address this question, a qualitative methodological approach based on the systematization of experiences is adopted, in line with the perspectives of Creswell (2014) and Jara (2018). This approach allows for the recovery, organization, and critical interpretation of the pedagogical practice, with the aim of understanding how meaning construction processes are configured in the classroom. In this sense, systematization goes beyond mere description; it involves analyzing the experience from its internal logic, identifying relationships, decisions, and meanings that emerge throughout the development of the practice.

The originality of this study lies in its potential to understand how meaning construction in English learning emerges in practice as a process mediated by intentional pedagogical interaction and the purposeful use of semiotic resources. In this regard, the study seeks to make visible how elements such as gesture, pointing, objects, and actions not only accompany language but also make its comprehension possible in real classroom contexts. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on vocabulary acquisition or methodological interventions, this study contributes a situated understanding of how meaning-making emerges through intentional pedagogical interaction and semiotic mediation in preschool EFL classrooms. Although previous research has addressed language learning in childhood and the role of interaction (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1996), there remains a limited body of research that integrates semiotic mediation as a central mechanism in meaning construction (Gullberg, 2006; Baquero Castiblanco, 2015).

In terms of contribution, this study offers valuable insights for pedagogical reflection on English teaching in preschool education by highlighting the need to design learning experiences



that respond to the characteristics of child development and promote language comprehension in use. Furthermore, it contributes to the consolidation of approaches that move beyond repetition and memorization, fostering practices in which children actively participate and construct meaning within meaningful contexts.

Finally, the structure of this working paper follows the stages of systematization proposed by Jara (2018). First, a review of the literature supporting the study is presented; second, the methodological approach is described; third, the analysis of the systematized experience is developed; and finally, the conclusions and future projections derived from the research process are outlined.

General Objective

To analyze how intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enables the construction of meaning in English learning among preschool children, based on the systematization of a pedagogical experience.



State of the Art

The present study arises from the need to critically examine traditional practices in the teaching of English at the preschool level, particularly those centered on the memorization of isolated vocabulary and the direct translation into the mother tongue. These practices, still prevalent in various educational contexts, may constrain the understanding of language as a system of communication in use and overlook the developmental capacities inherent to early childhood. In this regard, it is often assumed that children require translation to comprehend English; however, from an early age, they possess the neurological conditions necessary to construct meaning directly from experience. From the standpoint of this study, such an assumption is problematic, as it reduces learning to a mechanical process and disregards the child's ability to interpret language within meaningful contexts.

In contrast, a growing body of research has shown that, during early childhood, English learning can develop in meaningful ways, as children exhibit a high degree of brain plasticity that enables them to establish connections between what they hear and what they experience (Julián de la Fuente, 2025; Meneses, 2025; Cajas & Molina, 2025). Within this framework, meaning is not linearly transmitted but actively constructed through interaction with the environment, thereby positioning the child as an agent capable of interpreting language based on lived experience. This shift is particularly relevant, as it moves English teaching away from memorization and toward processes of meaning-making, opening the possibility of transforming pedagogical practices in the classroom.



Along these lines, it is recognized that such processes are enhanced in contexts where language is used in authentic situations of interaction, mediated by semiotic resources such as gestures, images, and concrete objects. These elements do not merely accompany language; rather, they play a constitutive role in facilitating the construction of meaning by enabling children to establish relationships between what they hear, observe, and do. Consequently, English learning in preschool settings is oriented toward meaningful experiences in which children actively participate and construct understanding within contexts of use.

Within this framework, the present state of the art is organized around three interrelated thematic axes: (1) brain plasticity in early childhood as a favorable condition for English learning, (2) interaction as the medium for meaning construction in the classroom, and (3) semiotic resources as mediators in language comprehension. This review is deliberately delimited to early childhood education. Although research exists across different educational levels, the focus of this study lies in preschool education, as it remains a field that, despite prior exploration, still offers significant opportunities for further inquiry. Moreover, priority is given to studies that conceptualize pedagogical practice as an experience open to analysis and systematization, in alignment with the approach adopted in this working paper.

Regarding the first axis, several studies (Julián de la Fuente, 2025; Meneses, 2025; Cajas & Molina, 2025) converge in highlighting that brain plasticity in early childhood supports English language learning by enabling the brain to adapt to environmental stimuli and form neural connections associated with language. However, these contributions also suggest that such a capacity does not operate automatically; rather, it requires pedagogical experiences that actively stimulate it. Thus, brain plasticity should not be understood as a guarantee of learning, but as a condition that, when mediated by appropriate practices, enables the construction of



meaning. This perspective calls into question pedagogical approaches that assume mere exposure to the language is sufficient, without considering the quality and intentionality of learning experiences.

Based on this, it becomes necessary to examine the role of interaction, as it is within interactional contexts that language acquires meaning. In line with this, several studies (Paz, 2025; Reyes Murillo, 2024; Hernández Forero & Forero Fontecha, 2025) indicate that English comprehension is strengthened when language is presented in connection with actions, gestures, and participatory dynamics. These studies demonstrate that children are able to interpret and respond to messages without resorting to translation, thereby suggesting that meaning is constructed through experience.

Nevertheless, interaction should not be reduced to a purely verbal exchange. Rather, it constitutes an integral process involving the body, action, and social engagement. In this sense, interaction configures the space in which language becomes comprehensible, as it enables the articulation of experience and meaning. From this perspective, reducing English teaching to the repetition of structures limits children's opportunities to construct meaning, reinforcing the need for more participatory and context-sensitive pedagogical practices.

At this point, it is pertinent to further examine the role of semiotic resources as mediators of learning. Indeed, the relationship between language and experience is mediated by such resources, which play a fundamental role in comprehension. From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) posits that learning occurs through processes of mediation, in which language and other symbolic systems function as tools that enable meaning construction. In this regard, several studies (Baquero, 2015; García-Gómez & Macizo, 2023; Riyanti, 2026) concur that gestures, images, and concrete objects facilitate vocabulary comprehension by allowing learners



to establish associations between words and their referents without the need for translation.

However, these studies also emphasize that the effectiveness of such resources depends on their coherence with meaning, implying that their use must be intentional and pedagogically grounded.

From this standpoint, semiotic resources should not be viewed as auxiliary elements but as essential mediators that make language comprehension possible in contexts where proficiency is still developing. This implies recognizing that meaning does not reside solely in the linguistic code but emerges from the articulation between language, action, and contextual elements—an aspect that is particularly relevant in preschool education.

From a methodological perspective, these considerations align with qualitative research approaches aimed at understanding the meanings constructed by individuals within specific contexts. In this regard, Creswell (2014) argues that qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of experiences and on understanding how individuals construct meaning in relation to their reality. In coherence with this view, the systematization of experiences, as proposed by Jara (2018), goes beyond mere description and constitutes a process of critical and transformative knowledge production grounded in practice. This involves analyzing the experience from its internal logic, reconstructing its stages, and identifying the tensions, decisions, and relationships that shape it, in order to achieve a deeper understanding and generate insights that enrich both theory and pedagogical practice. Thus, the aim is not simply to recount what occurs in the classroom, but to interpret how such experiences enable the construction of meaning from a situated, reflective, and contextualized perspective.

Based on the review conducted, it becomes evident that, although there is a substantial body of research on English learning in early childhood, significant gaps remain regarding the



systematization of pedagogical experiences that allow for an in-depth understanding of classroom practices. Furthermore, a tendency persists in some studies to prioritize approaches focused on vocabulary acquisition or traditional methodologies, thereby limiting the understanding of learning as a situated and meaningful process. In this regard, the limited articulation between theory and practice in certain studies highlights the need for research grounded in pedagogical experience.

In response to these gaps, the present working paper is oriented towards the systematization of a pedagogical experience in preschool education, with the aim of analyzing how intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enables the construction of meaning in English learning. In doing so, it seeks to provide a contextualized perspective that not only describes practice but also interprets it critically, thereby contributing to the strengthening of foreign language didactics within early childhood education.



Conceptual framework

The present study is grounded in a set of conceptual frameworks that allow for an understanding of English learning in preschool education as a process of meaning construction mediated by interaction, context, and the use of semiotic resources. In this sense, the conceptual framework is structured progressively, beginning with the nature of learning in early childhood, then addressing meaning construction, the role of interaction, and finally, semiotic mediation as a key element in language comprehension.

First, it is essential to recognize that learning a foreign language in early childhood is characterized by its predominantly implicit nature. Unlike later stages, children do not require formal explanations of language structure; rather, they understand the language through its use in meaningful contexts. In this regard, Krashen (1982) argues that language learning is enhanced when learners are exposed to comprehensible input—that is, messages they are able to interpret through context, even if they do not understand every individual word. This perspective suggests that English learning in preschool does not depend on translation, but rather on the opportunity to engage with language in situations that are meaningful to the child, thereby fostering processes of implicit comprehension.

This perspective is further supported by Montessori (1967), who highlights the existence of sensitive periods in childhood during which children exhibit a particular propensity for language learning. During these stages of development, learning occurs in a natural, intuitive, and progressive manner, enabling children to establish connections between language and their environment without the need for explicit grammatical explanation or translation. Consequently, English teaching at this stage should focus on creating meaning-rich environments in which language is experienced rather than explicitly explained.



From this standpoint, the concept of meaning construction becomes central. Language cannot be understood as a mere accumulation of isolated words; rather, it is a system of signification constructed through use. From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning emerges through social interaction, while Bruner (1983) emphasizes that children construct meaning through interaction and participation in contextualized experiences. In this process, children establish relationships between the signifier (the linguistic form) and the signified (the mental representation) based on their interaction with the environment. Therefore, learning English involves the learner's ability to interpret the meaning of messages in relation to the context in which they occur, thereby directly challenging practices centered on literal translation.

In line with the above, interaction in the classroom is understood as the moment in which the exchange of messages between teacher and student takes place, through which language acquires meaning. In these contexts, children do not merely listen to the language; they interpret it in relation to actions, gestures, and concrete situations. According to Long (1996), interaction supports language learning insofar as it enables message interpretation, feedback, and active learner participation. However, within preschool education, interaction is understood primarily as the medium through which language becomes comprehensible in relation to experience.

In preschool settings, these interactions take on particular characteristics, as they are not limited to verbal language but are mediated by various elements present in the environment. At this point, semiotic mediation becomes a key concept for understanding how children interpret language. Gestures, images, objects, and actions do not merely accompany speech; they actively contribute to the construction of meaning.



In this regard, Gullberg (2006) argues that gestures play a fundamental role in the construction of semantic representations, as they complement verbal information and facilitate message comprehension. This is especially relevant in preschool classrooms, where teacher discourse is typically accompanied by concrete actions—such as pointing, showing, imitating, or manipulating objects—which enable children to interpret meaning without resorting to translation.

In this way, teacher discourse functions as a mediating element in the learning process, as it articulates verbal language with semiotic resources that make comprehension possible. For instance, when the teacher points to an image and says “this is a chicken,” the child is able to establish a connection between the word and its referent through the act of pointing. This demonstrates that comprehension does not rely solely on the linguistic code, but rather on the articulation between language, action, and context.

Finally, the systematization of pedagogical experiences is adopted as the methodological approach that allows for the understanding of these processes in context. According to Jara (2018), systematization involves reconstructing, interpreting, and critically analyzing educational practice in order to generate knowledge from experience. In coherence with this, Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research seeks to understand the meanings individuals construct within specific contexts. In this study, both approaches enable an analysis of how English learning in preschool is configured, in practice, as a process of meaning construction mediated by interaction and the intentional use of semiotic resources.

Taken together, these conceptual foundations support the claim that English learning in preschool education can develop meaningfully without relying on translation, provided that environments are created that promote interaction, contextualized language use, and semiotic



mediation. From this perspective, meaning construction emerges through the interrelationship between comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983), interactional participation (Long, 1996), and semiotic mediation (Gullberg, 2006), all of which contribute to making language comprehensible in context. In this way, language ceases to be an isolated object of study and instead becomes a communicative tool that acquires meaning through experience and engagement with the surrounding environment.



Methodological Route

The present study was framed within a qualitative research approach and was developed through the systematization of a pedagogical experience, understood as a reflective process that enabled the reconstruction, analysis, and interpretation of teaching practice in order to generate situated knowledge (Jara, 2018). Within this qualitative paradigm, systematization was adopted not only as a research strategy but also as the methodological approach that guided the study, as it allowed for the interpretation of pedagogical experience as a source of knowledge grounded in practice.

From this perspective, the focus was not on the measurement of variables or the generalization of results, but rather on an in-depth understanding of the processes that shaped English learning in authentic classroom contexts, in coherence with the interpretative orientation of qualitative research proposed by Creswell (2014).

In this sense, systematization made it possible to construct meaning from pedagogical experience, moving beyond the description of what occurred toward its critical interpretation in light of theoretical frameworks. Thus, teaching practice was configured as both an object of analysis and a source of knowledge production.

6.1. Starting Point: The Experience

The starting point corresponded to a pedagogical experience developed in the context of teaching English as a foreign language to preschool children in transition A grade at Escuela Normal Superior de Piedecuesta, Santander, Colombia. This experience was characterized by the use of language in meaningful communicative situations, in which English was presented through complete expressions supported by gestures, images, objects, and actions.



This proposal emerged in response to the need to question traditional practices centered on the memorization of isolated vocabulary and direct translation into the mother tongue, which tended to limit the understanding of language as a system of communication in use.

In contrast, the experience was configured as a space of interaction in which the exchange of messages between teacher and students took place, allowing children to interpret language in relation to context without resorting to translation.

Based on this experience, the following guiding research question was formulated:

How does intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enable the construction of meaning in English learning among preschool children?

6.2. Systematization Plan

The systematization process was developed following the proposal of Jara (2018), through a structured plan that guided the reconstruction, organization, and interpretation of the experience.

In terms of scope, the study focused on the analysis of classroom practices in preschool education, particularly in relation to:

- the use of language in meaningful contexts
- teacher–student interaction
- the mediation of semiotic resources in comprehension

Regarding the sources of information, pedagogical sequences were employed as the primary analytical material. Within the framework of systematization, these sequences were not conceived as conventional data collection instruments, but as reconstructed representations of pedagogical practice that made it possible to access the internal logic of the experience.



These sequences integrated three key dimensions:

- lesson planning
- classroom implementation
- pedagogical reflection

This structure enabled a comprehensive reconstruction of the experience by articulating what was planned, what was enacted in the classroom, and how it was subsequently interpreted from a reflective standpoint.

The documents were organized in the annexes as follows:

- **Appendix A:** Pedagogical Sequence 1
- **Appendix B:** Pedagogical Sequence 2
- **Appendix C:** Pedagogical Sequence 3

6.3. Analysis Strategy: Coding and Categorization Process

The analysis of the information was conducted through an interpretative process grounded in qualitative data analysis procedures, particularly those related to coding and categorization, as outlined by Creswell (2014).

In the first phase, a comprehensive and interpretative reading of the pedagogical sequences was carried out in order to identify relevant fragments of the experience. These fragments were treated as units of meaning, understood as actions, interactions, or situations that provided evidence of learning processes in the classroom.

Subsequently, a coding process was conducted, in which these units were organized according to elements such as:

- forms of teacher–student interaction



- students' responses to language use
- the use of semiotic resources (gestures, images, objects, and actions)
- modes of message comprehension

In the second phase, the identified elements were grouped into patterns or regularities through the recognition of recurring features within the pedagogical practice. This process made it possible to establish relationships across different moments of the experience and to identify tendencies in how students construct meaning.

Finally, in a third phase, these patterns gave rise to the construction of analytical categories, which were not imposed a priori but emerged from the dialogue between empirical evidence and the theoretical framework.

The categories defined were:

1. Classroom Interaction

This category analyzed the exchange of messages between teacher and students, considering participation, responses to instructions, and the co-construction of meaning in communicative situations.

2. Meaning Construction

This category examined how students understand language through context, establishing relationships between what they hear, observe, and do, without resorting to translation.

3. Semiotic Mediation

This category analyzed the role of non-verbal resources (gestures, images, objects, and actions) as elements that facilitate comprehension and enable the construction of meaning.



This analytical process allowed English learning to be understood as a dynamic, contextualized phenomenon mediated by interaction.

6.4. Theoretical Foundation of the Analysis

The interpretation of the experience was grounded in theoretical contributions from the field of English as a foreign language teaching.

First, the contributions of Krashen (1982) were considered, particularly regarding the importance of comprehensible input in language learning. Likewise, the work of Long (1996) was incorporated, highlighting the role of interaction as the context in which learners interpret and respond to language. In addition, the sociocultural perspective of Vygotsky (1978) and the contributions of Bruner (1983) were considered in order to understand interaction as a condition for meaning construction in contextualized experiences.

Furthermore, the contributions of Gullberg (2006) were integrated to explain the role of gestures in meaning construction, as well as the methodological perspective of Jara (2018), which frames systematization as a process of knowledge production grounded in practice.

In coherence with the above, the analysis was carried out by articulating empirical findings with these theoretical frameworks, allowing for a situated and in-depth interpretation of the pedagogical experience.

6.5. Ethical Considerations

The systematization of this pedagogical experience was conducted in accordance with ethical principles applicable to educational research involving children. The analysis focused on pedagogical interactions and classroom practices rather than on the identification of individual



participants. Therefore, no personal information was collected or disclosed during the systematization process.

To protect participants' privacy, students are not identified by name, and all evidence presented in the pedagogical sequences is used exclusively for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, the reconstruction and interpretation of the experience were carried out with respect for the educational context and with the aim of contributing to pedagogical reflection and knowledge generation in early childhood English education.



Results and Discussion

1. Reconstruction of the Pedagogical Experience

The systematized pedagogical experience was developed in a preschool English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and was structured through a set of pedagogical sequences designed to promote language comprehension through meaningful interaction. These sequences were organized around the use of complete linguistic expressions and the intentional mediation of semiotic resources such as gestures, images, objects, and bodily actions.

From an analytical perspective, the reconstruction of the experience—based on the pedagogical sequences included in the appendices—made it possible to identify recurring interactional patterns in the classroom. These patterns were not approached as isolated events but as part of a coherent pedagogical logic oriented toward meaning-making.

Across the sequences, language was consistently introduced in relation to concrete situations. Rather than being presented as an abstract system, English emerged as a tool for interpreting and acting within the classroom environment. In this sense, the experience was characterized by a progressive transition from guided exposure to more active forms of student participation.

Initially, students engaged in processes of observation and imitation, responding to teacher input supported by gestures and contextual cues. Gradually, their participation evolved toward more autonomous responses, including verbal attempts and action-based interpretations of instructions and questions.



This progression reflects a shift from recognition to active meaning construction, in which students increasingly engaged with language as a meaningful resource rather than as an object of memorization.

2. Category-Based Analysis

Based on the coding and categorization process, three analytical categories emerged from the pedagogical experience: Classroom Interaction, Meaning Construction, and Semiotic Mediation. These categories were identified through the analysis of recurring patterns observed across the pedagogical sequences and allowed for an in-depth interpretation of how children constructed meaning in English learning. The following sections present each category, supported by excerpts from the pedagogical sequences and discussed in relation to the theoretical foundations of the study.

2.1 Classroom Interaction as a Condition for Meaning Construction

The analysis reveals that classroom interaction constitutes the central mechanism through which meaning is constructed in early English learning. This is because interaction provides children with opportunities to connect linguistic input to actions, gestures, objects, and contextual cues. Through participation in communicative situations, learners do not receive language as isolated information; instead, they interpret meaning by relating what they hear to what they observe and do. Consequently, interaction functions as the environment in which language becomes comprehensible and meaningful for young learners.

Interaction was not limited to verbal exchange; rather, it involved a multimodal configuration in which gestures, actions, and environmental elements played a fundamental role. Within this dynamic, the teacher functioned as a mediator who structured communicative situations that enabled students to interpret language in context.



Evidence from the pedagogical sequences showed that students consistently responded to teacher prompts through both verbal and non-verbal means. For instance, in Appendix A, the teacher instructed: “Show me the red apple,” after which “Two students correctly point to the apple.” Similarly, in Appendix B (p. 38), students responded to the instruction “Point to the dog under the table,” and “The students respond correctly to each instruction.” These interactions demonstrated that students constructed comprehension through actions such as pointing, selecting, and manipulating objects in response to communicative demands.

These responses indicate that interaction operates as a space for meaning negotiation, even in the absence of fully developed verbal production. In line with Long (1996), the findings suggest that participation in interactional contexts enables learners to interpret and respond to language, thereby facilitating comprehension.

Furthermore, interaction was characterized by a progressive increase in student engagement. Additional evidence of classroom interaction can be observed in Appendix C, where the teacher instructed, “Raise your hands,” and “The students observe and begin to raise their hands.” Later, students were able to follow a sequence of commands such as “Raise your hands,” “Touch your eyes,” and “Close your mouth,” responding physically to each instruction. These interactional exchanges demonstrate that students actively participated in communicative situations and constructed meaning through engagement with teacher prompts.

While initial participation was largely imitative, subsequent stages revealed greater initiative, including spontaneous responses and attempts to produce language. The students’ ability to respond to increasingly complex sequences of instructions suggests a gradual movement from observation and imitation toward more active participation in classroom interaction.



This evolution suggests that interaction not only supports comprehension but also creates conditions for emerging language use, reinforcing its role as a foundational element in early language learning.

2.2 Meaning Construction Without Translation

One of the most significant findings of the study is that students were able to construct meaning in English without relying on translation into their mother tongue. This finding is significant because students demonstrated comprehension through actions, responses, and participation in communicative situations rather than through translated explanations. Their ability to identify objects, follow instructions, and respond appropriately to classroom tasks suggests that meaning emerged from the relationship between language, context, and experience. Therefore, comprehension was constructed directly through interaction with the environment rather than through equivalences in the mother tongue.

Across all pedagogical sequences, comprehension emerged through the relationship between language, context, and action. Students interpreted expressions such as “This is a red apple,” “The dog is under the table,” or “Touch your eyes” by associating linguistic input with visual, spatial, or bodily cues.

This process reflects a form of implicit learning in which meaning is not explained but inferred through experience. As proposed by Krashen (1982), the availability of comprehensible input, supported by contextual elements, enables learners to understand language without requiring explicit linguistic analysis.

Importantly, comprehension was evidenced not only through repetition but through appropriate responses to communicative demands. For example, in Appendix B, after the teacher



asked, “Where is the dog?”, “One student points to the top,” demonstrating understanding of the spatial relation expressed in English. Likewise, in Appendix C, the teacher gave the instruction “Close your mouth” without accompanying gestures, and “Most students respond correctly, evidencing comprehension without immediate visual support.” These situations showed that students were able to identify objects, locate items in space, and execute instructions accurately even when they did not produce complete verbal responses. Additional evidence of meaning construction without translation can be observed in Appendix A. When the teacher instructed, “Show me the red apple,” “Two students correctly point to the apple.” Although no translation was provided, students were able to identify the correct object by associating the linguistic expression with visual and contextual information. This response further illustrates that comprehension emerged through the relationship between language, context, and experience rather than through the use of the mother tongue.

These findings challenge traditional assumptions that young learners require translation to understand a foreign language. Across Appendices A, B, and C, students consistently demonstrated comprehension through actions, responses, and participation in contextualized communicative situations. Rather than relying on translation, they constructed meaning directly through interaction with the environment, provided that language was presented in meaningful and contextually supported ways.

2.3 Semiotic Mediation as a Mechanism for Comprehension

The analysis highlights the central role of semiotic resources in facilitating language comprehension. This central role can be explained by the fact that semiotic resources provide learners with concrete references that support the interpretation of linguistic input. Gestures,



images, objects, and bodily actions make abstract language visible and accessible, allowing children to establish connections between words, actions, and meanings. In the pedagogical experience, these resources functioned as mediators that enabled students to establish connections between linguistic forms and their referents. Rather than merely accompanying language, they became constitutive elements of the meaning-making process, facilitating comprehension in contexts where verbal language alone may not have been sufficient.

For instance, in Appendix A, the teacher “points to the fruit with her index finger” while saying “This is an apple,” allowing students to associate the word with its referent. Likewise, in Appendix B, the teacher “places the dog inside the box” while saying “The dog is in the box,” enabling students to interpret spatial relations through action and observation. Similarly, in Appendix C, the instruction “Raise your hands” was accompanied by the teacher physically raising both arms, after which “The students observe and begin to raise their hands.” These examples illustrate how gestures, objects, and bodily actions provided immediate and embodied access to meaning.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate how different semiotic resources supported comprehension throughout the pedagogical experience. In Appendix A, pointing facilitated the association between the linguistic form and its referent. In Appendix B, object manipulation enabled students to interpret spatial relations through observation and action. In Appendix C, bodily movements provided direct access to the meaning of classroom instructions. These resources consistently connected language to experience, allowing students to construct meaning without relying on translation or explicit grammatical explanations.



In line with Gullberg (2006), these findings suggest that gestures and other semiotic resources support the construction of semantic representations by complementing and reinforcing verbal input. In preschool English learning contexts, children rely not only on verbal language but also on visual, bodily, and contextual cues that help them interpret meaning during interaction. For this reason, gestures, objects, images, and actions become essential elements that facilitate comprehension and enable children to establish relationships between language and experience. Moreover, the effectiveness of these resources depended on their intentional and coherent use within the pedagogical interaction, since meaning was constructed through the articulation between language, action, and context. The teacher's ability to align verbal input with gestures and concrete situations was therefore a key factor in ensuring that language remained comprehensible for students. This confirms that semiotic mediation is not an auxiliary strategy but a fundamental mechanism through which language becomes accessible in early childhood education.

3. Integrated Discussion

Taken together, the findings provide an answer to the guiding research question: *How does intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enable the construction of meaning in English learning among preschool children?* The integrated analysis of the three categories, Classroom Interaction, Meaning Construction Without Translation, and Semiotic Mediation as a Mechanism for Comprehension, reveals that these dimensions operated in a complementary and interconnected manner throughout the pedagogical experience. Classroom interaction created opportunities for participation and engagement, semiotic resources supported the interpretation of linguistic input, and together these processes enabled children to



construct meaning in English without relying on translation. Therefore, the categories should not be understood as isolated elements but as interdependent dimensions of the meaning-making process.

The results indicate that meaning construction emerged when language was intentionally embedded in classroom interaction and supported by semiotic resources that enabled children to interpret messages in relation to context and experience. Therefore, English learning in preschool education can be understood as a dynamic process of meaning construction mediated by interaction and semiotic resources.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results align with Krashen's (1982) concept of comprehensible input, as well as Long's (1996) emphasis on interaction as a condition for language learning. Additionally, they reinforce Gullberg's argument regarding the role of gestures in meaning-making.

However, beyond confirming existing theories, this study contributes to the field by demonstrating how these elements operate concretely within classroom practice. It shows that:

- Interaction is not merely a pedagogical strategy but the space in which language becomes meaningful,
- Semiotic resources are essential mediators that enable comprehension,
- Meaning construction can occur without translation when language is embedded in context.

This finding is particularly significant because it demonstrates that children were able to understand and respond to English without relying on translation, suggesting that meaning was constructed directly through participation in contextualized communicative situations.



At the pedagogical level, the findings challenge traditional approaches centered on memorization and translation, highlighting the need to design learning environments that prioritize meaningful language use.

At the same time, certain tensions were identified. Some students exhibited hesitation in more autonomous production tasks, suggesting that while comprehension can develop through interaction, additional scaffolding may be required to support oral production.

4. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the analysis, several implications for English teaching in preschool education can be identified:

- Language should be presented through complete expressions in meaningful contexts rather than isolated vocabulary.
- Classroom interaction should be intentionally structured to promote student participation and meaning negotiation.
- Semiotic resources must be systematically integrated as part of the teaching process, not as supplementary elements.
- Learning environments should encourage action-based responses as valid indicators of comprehension.
- Pedagogical practice should incorporate continuous reflection in order to align teaching strategies with processes of meaning construction.



5. Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the systematization of this pedagogical experience demonstrates that English learning in early childhood can develop as a meaningful, contextualized, and interaction-driven process.

The results confirm that children can interpret and respond to language without translation when it is presented through intentional interaction and supported by semiotic mediation. In this sense, learning is not reduced to the acquisition of linguistic forms but is understood as the construction of meaning through experience.

This perspective not only redefines how English should be taught in preschool education but also underscores the importance of grounding pedagogical practice in reflective and context-sensitive approaches.



Conclusions

The present study was set out to analyze how intentional pedagogical interaction, mediated by semiotic resources, enables meaning construction in English learning among preschool children through the systematization of a pedagogical experience. Based on the findings obtained, it is possible to conclude that English learning at this stage can be effectively configured as a process of meaning-making grounded in interaction, context, and action, rather than in translation or memorization.

First, the study demonstrates that **classroom interaction constitutes the central condition for language comprehension**. The findings reveal that learning does not occur through the passive reception of linguistic input, but through active participation in communicative situations where students interpret and respond to meaning. In this sense, interaction functions not merely as a pedagogical strategy but as the space in which language becomes intelligible. The progressive evolution observed, from imitative responses to more autonomous participation, confirms that interaction fosters both comprehension and emerging language use.

Second, it is concluded that **meaning construction in English can occur without reliance on translation into the mother tongue**. The analysis shows that students are able to interpret linguistic expressions by establishing relationships between language, context, and experience. Comprehension is evidenced through actions such as pointing, selecting, or executing instructions, which indicates that understanding is constructed through use rather than through explicit explanation. This finding challenges traditional assumptions about early foreign language learning and supports the viability of approaches centered on contextualized and meaningful input.



Third, the study highlights that **semiotic mediation plays a fundamental role in making language comprehensible**. Resources such as gestures, objects, images, and bodily actions function as essential mediators that enable students to connect linguistic forms with their referents. These elements are not supplementary but constitutive of the learning process, as they allow meaning to emerge through the articulation of multiple modes of representation. Consequently, the effectiveness of language teaching in early childhood depends significantly on the intentional and coherent integration of these resources within classroom interaction.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce and operationalize key principles related to English learning and meaning construction. The results align with the notion of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), the role of interaction in meaning negotiation (Long, 1996), and the contribution of gestures to semantic processing (Gullberg, 2006). However, this study extends these perspectives by demonstrating how such principles materialize in situated pedagogical practice, particularly within preschool contexts.

Unlike studies that focus primarily on vocabulary acquisition or methodological interventions, this study contributes a situated understanding of how meaning construction emerges through intentional pedagogical interaction and semiotic mediation in preschool EFL classrooms. In this way, it provides empirical evidence of how children construct meaning through participation in contextualized communicative experiences rather than through translation or isolated language practice.

At the pedagogical level, the study underscores the need to **reorient English teaching practices in early childhood education**. Specifically, it becomes evident that effective learning environments should:

- Prioritize the use of complete expressions in meaningful contexts,



- Promote interaction as a central component of the learning process,
- Integrate semiotic resources in a systematic and intentional manner,
- Recognize action-based responses as valid indicators of comprehension.

These elements contribute to shifting teaching practices away from traditional models based on repetition and translation, toward approaches that acknowledge children as active constructors of meaning.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies certain challenges. Some students exhibited hesitation in tasks requiring more autonomous oral production, suggesting that while comprehension can develop through interaction, additional pedagogical scaffolding is necessary to support the transition toward productive language use. This highlights the importance of designing gradual learning sequences that balance comprehension and production.

In terms of methodological contribution, the study confirms the value of **the systematization of pedagogical experiences as a research approach**. By reconstructing and critically analyzing classroom practice, systematization enables the generation of situated knowledge that bridges the gap between theory and practice. In this case, the use of pedagogical sequences as analytical material proved effective in capturing the internal logic of the teaching–learning process and in supporting the identification of patterns, codes, and categories.

Finally, this study opens avenues for future research. Further studies could explore the longitudinal development of language production in similar contexts, the role of different types of semiotic resources in specific learning processes, or the application of this approach in diverse educational settings. Expanding research in this direction would contribute to consolidating pedagogical models that are more responsive to the characteristics of early childhood and more aligned with meaning-based approaches to language learning.



In conclusion, the systematization carried out demonstrates that English learning in preschool education can be meaningfully developed when language is embedded in interaction and mediated by semiotic resources. Under these conditions, children do not merely learn words; they learn to interpret, act, and construct meaning in a new language, thereby redefining the foundations of early foreign language education. Consequently, English teaching in preschool should prioritize interaction, contextualized language use, and semiotic mediation as central conditions for meaningful learning.



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Appendices

Appendix A: Pedagogical Sequence 1

1. *Contextualization of the Experience*

Level: Preschool education (ages 4–5)

Topic: Fruits, colors, and the demonstrative adjective *this*

Objective: To foster comprehension of expressions such as “*this is a red apple*” through the use of concrete objects, colors, and gestures, without resorting to translation.

Pedagogical intent: To promote meaning-making by articulating language, visual perception (color), and direct experience with real objects.

2. *Sequence Development (Reconstruction of Interaction)*

The teacher begins the lesson by showing a real apple. She holds it in front of the group and slightly raises it to focus attention.

The teacher says: “*This is an apple.*”

As she speaks, she points to the fruit with her index finger.

The students observe attentively. Some repeat “*apple.*”

The teacher brings the apple closer to the students and repeats: “*Apple.*”

She then points to the color and says: “*Red.*”

Simultaneously, she emphasizes visually by bringing the fruit closer.

The teacher combines both expressions and says: “*This is a red apple.*”

She points to the fruit and then makes a circular hand gesture, as if integrating the idea.

Some students attempt to repeat: “*red apple.*”



Subsequently, the teacher shows a banana and says: *"This is a banana."*

She then points and says: *"Yellow."*

Finally, she integrates: *"This is a yellow banana."*

One student says *"banana"* while pointing.

The teacher places both fruits on the table and then says: *"Show me the red apple."*

Two students correctly point to the apple.

She then instructs: *"Show me the yellow banana."*

The students respond by pointing to the banana.

Next, the teacher picks up the apple and asks: *"What is this?"*

She points to the fruit.

Several students respond *"apple."* One says *"red apple."*

The teacher nods and repeats: *"Yes, this is a red apple."*

She then repeats the same dynamic with the banana.

Throughout the activity, the teacher does not translate. Comprehension is constructed through the relationship between the real object, color, and language.

3. Pedagogical Reflection

The sequence demonstrates that students are able to comprehend complete expressions in English through the relationship between language and direct sensory experience. The use of real objects facilitates the association between the word and its referent, while color introduces a descriptive dimension that enriches comprehension.



Clear moments of interaction are identified when students respond to instructions such as “*show me...*” and when they attempt to produce words or combinations (“*red apple*”), indicating an ongoing process of meaning construction.

Semiotic resources, particularly concrete objects and pointing—function as mediators that render language comprehensible. The structure “*this is...*” is not explicitly explained but rather interpreted in context, evidencing implicit, use-based learning.

Overall, the experience shows that students do not merely memorize isolated words; instead, they begin to understand broader units of meaning in relation to context.



Appendix B: Pedagogical Sequence 2

1. Contextualization of the Experience

Level: Preschool education (ages 4–5)

Topic: Animals, prepositions of place (*in, on, under*), and the question “*Where is...?*”

Objective: To foster comprehension of structures such as “*The dog is in the box*” through the use of objects, movement, and questioning, without resorting to translation.

Pedagogical intent: To promote meaning construction through the relationship between language, space, and action.

2. Sequence Development (*Reconstruction of Interaction*)

The teacher presents a box and a toy dog, placing both on the table.

She shows the dog and says: “*This is a dog.*”

The students observe, and some repeat “*dog.*”

The teacher takes the dog and places it inside the box. While performing the action, she says: “*The dog is in the box.*”

She emphasizes the word “*in*” as she inserts the object.

The students watch attentively.

The teacher repeats the action: she removes the dog and places it inside again, saying once more: “*The dog is in the box.*”

She then asks: “*Where is the dog?*”

She points to the box.

One student responds by pointing at the box; another says “*box.*”

The teacher replies: “*Yes, the dog is in the box.*”



Subsequently, she places the dog on top of the box and says: *“The dog is on the box.”*

She accompanies this with a flat-hand gesture indicating a surface.

The students observe. Some say *“dog.”*

The teacher asks: *“Where is the dog?”*

One student points to the top.

The teacher responds: *“On the box.”*

She then places the dog under the table and says: *“The dog is under the table.”*

She crouches to emphasize the position.

The students react by looking downward. One attempts to imitate the gesture.

The teacher repeats: *“Where is the dog?”*

The students look under the table and point.

Finally, the teacher conducts a physical response activity:

“Point to the dog in the box.”

“Point to the dog on the box.”

“Point to the dog under the table.”

The students respond correctly to each instruction.

Throughout the activity, no translation is used. Comprehension emerges from the relationship between action, space, and language.

3. Pedagogical Reflection

The sequence shows that students are able to comprehend spatial relations in English through the observation of concrete actions. Prepositions are not explained abstractly but are instead interpreted through direct experience.



The question “*Where is the dog?*” functions as an interactional trigger, prompting students to observe, interpret, and respond according to context. Responses are not always verbal, yet they clearly demonstrate understanding through action (pointing, looking, locating).

Semiotic resources—primarily movement, object manipulation, and spatial organization—enable meaning construction without recourse to the mother tongue. Repetition of actions supports pattern recognition.

Furthermore, language acquires meaning insofar as it is linked to action. Expressions such as “*in the box,*” “*on the box,*” and “*under the table*” are understood because students can see and experience them.

Overall, the experience confirms that English comprehension in preschool education is configured as a process mediated by interaction and environmental resources rather than by explicit explanation or translation.



Appendix C: Pedagogical Sequence 3

1. Contextualization of the Experience

Level: Preschool education (ages 4–5)

Topic: Parts of the body and classroom commands

Structures: Imperatives (*raise, touch, close*) + possessive adjective *your*

Objective: To foster comprehension of English instructions related to the body through physical actions that allow interpretation without translation.

Pedagogical intent: To promote meaning construction through the relationship between language, the body, and action in contexts of direct interaction.

2. Sequence Development (*Reconstruction of Interaction*)

The teacher begins the lesson standing in front of the students. She slowly raises both hands.

She says: “*Raise your hands.*”

As she speaks, she keeps her arms raised.

The students observe and begin to raise their hands. Some do so immediately; others imitate their peers.

The teacher repeats: “*Raise your hands.*”

She lowers her arms and raises them again.

The students repeat the action more quickly.

Next, the teacher touches her eyes with her fingertips and says: “*Touch your eyes.*”

The students observe and bring their hands to their eyes.

One student hesitates, looks at classmates, and then imitates the gesture.



The teacher approaches that student, repeats the gesture, and says again: *"Touch your eyes."*

The student responds correctly.

Subsequently, the teacher points to her mouth and says: *"Close your mouth."*

At the same time, she closes her mouth in an exaggerated manner.

The students react by closing their mouths. Some smile.

The teacher repeats the instruction without gesture: *"Close your mouth."*

Most students respond correctly, evidencing comprehension without immediate visual support.

Next, the teacher combines instructions:

"Raise your hands."

"Touch your head."

"Close your eyes."

The students follow the instructions in sequence.

At one point, the teacher introduces an intentional variation: she says *"Touch your nose"* without performing the gesture.

Some students hesitate, but several correctly touch their noses.

The teacher validates: *"Yes, nose."*

Finally, she organizes a dynamic activity:

"Listen and do."

She then gives continuous instructions:

"Raise your hands."

"Touch your eyes."

"Close your mouth."



The students respond physically to each instruction.

Throughout the activity, no translation is used. Comprehension is constructed through the relationship between language, the body, and action.

3. Pedagogical Reflection

The sequence demonstrates that students comprehend English instructions through the direct relationship between language and bodily movement. Expressions are not explained but interpreted in the moment of action.

Multiple instances of interaction are observed, in which students respond to commands, adjust their behavior, and anticipate actions. These responses constitute clear evidence of comprehension, particularly when instructions are executed without gestural support.

The use of the body as a semiotic resource is fundamental, as it establishes an immediate connection between meaning and action. In this context, the body not only responds to language but also represents it.

From a grammatical standpoint, students are exposed to imperative structures (*“raise,” “touch,” “close”*) and the possessive *“your”* without explicit explanation. These structures acquire meaning through use in action-based contexts.

Moreover, repetition and variation of instructions facilitate pattern recognition, contributing to the consolidation of comprehension.

Overall, the experience confirms that English learning in preschool education can develop meaningfully when language is linked to action and embedded in contexts of direct interaction.