



Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Language Teaching – English

Faculty of Education

Playful and Dynamic Strategies to Foster Oral Participation and Classroom Management in 5th Grade

English Classes with Limited Resources: A Systematization of Experiences

Working Paper

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RESUMEN

Este working paper sistematiza una experiencia pedagógica desarrollada durante la práctica docente en un grupo de 5.º grado de educación primaria, en el marco de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). La experiencia se enmarca en un contexto con múltiples limitaciones estructurales: grupos numerosos de más de treinta estudiantes, escasa disponibilidad de recursos tecnológicos y bajos niveles de participación oral. Ante este panorama, se implementaron de manera progresiva estrategias lúdicas y dinámicas, entre las que se destacan actividades con movimiento, juegos comunicativos, material visual elaborado artesanalmente y rutinas cortas de interacción oral. El eje de esta sistematización no es verificar que las estrategias "funcionaron", sino comprender por qué y cómo se transformó la participación oral y el manejo del grupo, y qué aprendizaje pedagógico produjo ese proceso para la docente en formación. Para sistematizar la experiencia, se adoptó el enfoque metodológico propuesto por Óscar Jara (2018), que articula cinco tiempos: el punto de partida, las preguntas iniciales, la recuperación del proceso vivido, las reflexiones de fondo y los puntos de llegada. Los resultados evidencian que la implementación de estas estrategias incidió positivamente en la participación oral de los estudiantes y contribuyó al mejoramiento del ambiente de aula. Estos hallazgos se sustentan en los documentos pedagógicos elaborados durante la práctica docente, entre ellos el análisis de necesidades, los planes de clase, los journals reflexivos de la práctica y los materiales didácticos diseñados para las clases. Estos documentos constituyeron las principales fuentes de información para la reconstrucción e interpretación crítica de la experiencia. Se concluye que las estrategias pedagógicas dinámicas y lúdicas constituyen una alternativa viable y pertinente para favorecer la participación oral y el manejo de grupo en contextos de enseñanza del inglés con recursos limitados, y que la sistematización de experiencias representa una herramienta valiosa para el desarrollo profesional reflexivo de los docentes de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: *sistematización de experiencias, estrategias lúdicas, participación oral, enseñanza del inglés, recursos limitados.*



ABSTRACT

This working paper systematizes a pedagogical experience developed during teaching practicum in a 5th-grade primary school group within the framework of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The experience took place in a context marked by significant structural constraints: large class sizes of over thirty to thirty-two students, limited access to technological resources, and low levels of oral participation. To address these challenges, dynamic and playful strategies were progressively introduced, including movement-based activities, communicative games, handmade visual materials, and short oral interaction routines. The axis of this systematization is not to confirm that the strategies "worked," but to understand why and how oral participation and classroom management were transformed, and what pedagogical knowledge this process produced for the student teacher. The experience was systematized following the methodological framework proposed by Óscar Jara (2018), which articulates five key stages: the starting point, the initial questions, the recovery of the lived process, the in-depth reflections, and the points of arrival. Findings indicate that the implementation of these strategies had a positive impact on students' oral participation and contributed to an improved classroom environment. These findings draw on the pedagogical documents produced during the teaching practicum, including the needs analysis, lesson plans, reflective practicum journals, and teaching materials designed for classroom activities. These documents served as the main sources of information for reconstructing and critically interpreting the experience. It is concluded that dynamic and playful teaching strategies represent a viable and relevant alternative for fostering oral participation and classroom management in resource-limited EFL contexts, and that experience systematization is a valuable tool for the reflective professional development of foreign language teachers.

Keywords: *experience systematization, playful strategies, oral participation, English language teaching, limited resources.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualization of the Topic

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Latin America, and particularly in Colombia, faces a series of structural challenges that go beyond the individual didactic decisions of the teacher. Among the most common are the overcrowding of school groups, the lack of updated materials and technological resources, the heterogeneity of linguistic competence levels within a single classroom, and the low motivation of students to actively participate in the learning process (Cárdenas, 2006; González, 2010). These factors are compounded at the primary education level, where English teaching has gained prominence as a result of policies such as the National Bilingualism Program and the National English Plan Colombia Very Well (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2014), without, in many cases, guaranteeing the pedagogical, material, and formative conditions necessary for their effective implementation.

The experience systematized in this working paper unfolded within this broader panorama at the **Colegio Técnico Comercial Sagrado Corazón de Jesús**, a public educational institution located in Chiquinquirá, Boyacá, over the course of one academic semester, in a 5th-grade group of approximately thirty to thirty-two students aged ten to twelve. From the earliest sessions, the distance between the real conditions of the classroom large class size, scarce technological and material resources, and limited oral participation and the methodological postulates prevalent in foreign language teacher education programs became evident. Given the ethical commitment to confidentiality of the participants (see section 3.6), no further identifying details are provided; however, these conditions situate the experience within a context that is common, though not universal, to public primary education in Colombia.

In this context, critical reflection on teaching practice becomes an ethical and pedagogical imperative. Systematizing what occurs in the classroom is not simply recording events: it is constructing knowledge from experience, understanding the reasons behind lived processes, and extracting transferable learning for future practice (Jara, 2018). From this perspective, the present working paper assumes the systematization of experiences not as a retrospective and neutral exercise, but as a critical practice that articulates the lived with the theoretical, with the purpose of improving educational action.



1.2 Research Question

The tension described above between the real conditions of the classroom and the methodological postulates prevalent in teacher education programs formed the starting point for formulating the following guiding question, reformulated here in an interpretive key consistent with Jara's (2018) systematization approach:

What did the student teacher learn about her own pedagogical practice through the critical reconstruction of implementing dynamic and playful strategies for oral participation and classroom management in a 5th-grade English class with limited resources, and what lessons can this reconstruction offer to teachers working in similar contexts?

This question guides the critical analysis of the lived experience and allows it to be articulated with theoretical frameworks from the field of foreign language didactics. This reformulation shifts the focus from verifying that the strategies "worked" toward understanding the process of change and the pedagogical knowledge it produced.

1.3 Methodological Approach

To address the formulated question, the experience systematization approach was adopted following the framework proposed by Óscar Jara (2018). This approach, rooted in the tradition of Latin American popular education, proposes a reflexive and critical process articulated around five stages: the starting point (the lived experience), the initial questions (the purpose and object of systematization), the recovery of the lived process (descriptive reconstruction), the in-depth reflections (analysis and interpretation), and the points of arrival (conclusions and new learning). The interdisciplinary nature of the approach allows for the integration of theories of English as a foreign language teaching, constructivist pedagogy and learner-centered teaching strategies.

To avoid conflating concepts that Jara (2018) treats as distinct, three foundational elements of this systematization are specified here: the object of systematization is the lived experience itself — the progressive introduction of dynamic and playful strategies in a 5th-grade EFL class over one academic semester; the axis of systematization is the specific analytical thread chosen to interrogate that broader object — namely, how and why these strategies transformed oral participation and classroom management, rather than, for instance, their effect on grammar accuracy or literacy; and the purpose of systematization is to produce transferable pedagogical knowledge for teachers facing similar structural conditions, not merely to document that the experience took place.



1.4 Originality and Contribution

The methodological novelty of this work lies in the articulation of two fields that rarely engage in dialogue in the specialized literature: the systematization of experiences in the sense proposed by Jara (2018) with its five-stage logic, its emphasis on the critical recovery of the lived process, and its vocation to construct situated knowledge from practice and the teaching of English as a foreign language in public primary school contexts with limited resources. While there is abundant academic production on playful and learner-centered teaching strategies in EFL, works that explicitly adopt Jara's Latin American systematization framework to analyze pedagogical experiences in this field are scarce. This articulation constitutes, in itself, a methodological contribution: it demonstrates that Jara's reflexive and critical approach can be transferred with rigor and relevance to the analysis of foreign language teaching practice, generating a type of pedagogical knowledge that conventional action research approaches do not always produce.

1.5 Importance and Contribution to the Field

The value of this work projects in two complementary directions. At the level of initial teacher education, the results offer concrete inputs for English Language Teaching degree programs (*Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés*), particularly for the design and accompaniment of teaching practicums: experience systematization emerges here not as a terminal activity, but as a reflexive tool that can be integrated continuously into the formative process of the future English teacher. At the level of educational policy, the work provides situated evidence on the viability of playful and learner-centered teaching strategies in contexts with insufficient resources a condition documented in many, though not all, Colombian public school contexts (Cárdenas, 2006; González, 2010) directly challenging the assumptions upon which programs such as Colombia Very Well (MEN, 2014) are built, as these rarely contemplate the real structural conditions of the classrooms where their guidelines are expected to be implemented.

1.6 Structure of the Working Paper

The document is organized into six sections. Following this introduction, the state of the art is presented, situating the work within the framework of prior research on learner-centered teaching strategies, oral participation, and English language teaching in resource-limited contexts. The methodology section then describes the systematization process adopted. In the results and discussion section, the classroom experience is recovered and analyzed. The conclusions articulate the learning obtained with projections for practice and research, and finally the bibliographic references are presented.



1.7 Objective

To critically systematize the pedagogical experience developed in 5th grade, in order to recover, critically interpret, and derive transferable lessons from the process through which dynamic and playful strategies contributed to oral participation and group management in English classes with limited resources.

2. STATE OF THE ART

2.1 Learner-Centered and Playful Teaching Strategies in English Language Teaching

Research in foreign language didactics has extensively documented the benefits of learner-centered teaching approaches as an alternative to transmissive teaching. The communicative approach, whose development was consolidated from the work of Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980), postulated that the central objective of language teaching is the development of communicative competence, which implies not only knowledge of the linguistic system, but the ability to use it appropriately in real contexts of interaction. From this perspective, activities that promote the meaningful use of spoken language role plays, collaborative tasks, interaction dynamics occupy a central place in curricular design.

It is important to clarify the terminology used throughout this working paper. The term *playful and interactive teaching strategies* refers to the pedagogical resources implemented during the intervention to foster students' oral participation and classroom management. These strategies included Total Physical Response (TPR), communicative games, movement-based activities, handmade visual materials, and collaborative interaction routines. Although these strategies are consistent with learner-centered teaching principles, the focus of this systematization is on understanding how these pedagogical resources contributed to students' participation and the student teacher's professional learning.

More recently, game-based learning has gained relevance as a strategy to increase intrinsic motivation and active student participation in the process of foreign language acquisition. Mayer (2019) notes that playful learning environments favor deep cognitive processing because they reduce error-related anxiety and generate favorable affective conditions for language acquisition. Studies such as that of Hung et al. (2018) confirmed that the systematic use of communicative games in English classes significantly increases the frequency and quality of students' oral contributions. More recently still, Bai et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis found that gamified approaches improve learning outcomes but with considerable variation across studies, cautioning against treating "playfulness" as a guaranteed solution rather than a strategy whose effectiveness depends heavily on implementation quality a tension directly relevant to the present



systematization, where the same strategies produced uneven results across activity types.

In the Colombian context, González (2010) and Cárdenas (2006) have noted that the implementation of learner-centered approaches faces significant structural resistance, including overcrowded groups and scarce materials. However, both authors agree that these limitations do not invalidate the relevance of such approaches, but rather demand greater creativity and methodological adaptability from the teacher. This is precisely the tension that motivates the present systematization: rather than testing whether these teaching strategies work in the abstract, this working paper documents how one student teacher navigated that demand for creativity and adaptability in a concrete, resource-limited classroom.

2.2 Oral Participation in Resource-Limited Contexts

Oral participation represents one of the most valued and at the same time most difficult skills to develop in English as a foreign language teaching. One of the main factors inhibiting oral participation is linguistic anxiety, which Krashen (1982) integrates into his affective filter hypothesis: a high level of anxiety blocks language acquisition by preventing comprehensible input from reaching the student's acquisition system. In large groups, this phenomenon intensifies because students perceive a greater risk of exposure to error before their peers.

Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) propose that motivation and participation in a foreign language are closely linked to the student's perception of competence and the emotional climate of the classroom. Activities involving physical movement, work in small groups, and attractive visual materials contribute to creating an environment of reduced threat and greater communicative willingness. Studies conducted in Latin American contexts with large groups and scarce resources such as those of Ordoñez (2011) in Colombia and Torres and Ríos (2019) in Mexico have documented sustained improvements in oral participation when playful and physically active strategies are consistently introduced. Unlike these two studies, however, neither offers a first-person, reflexive account of the teacher's own decision-making process; both report outcomes at the level of the student group. This is the specific gap the present systematization addresses: it documents not only that participation changed, but the pedagogical reasoning behind each adjustment the student teacher made along the way.

2.3 Management of Large Groups in EFL

The management of large groups in foreign language classes constitutes one of the least addressed pedagogical challenges in initial teacher education. Hedge (2000) notes that classes with more than thirty



to Reflective practicum journals-two students, generate specific conditions that affect both participation dynamics and the possibilities for individual feedback. Among the most effective strategies for this type of context, the author highlights flexible space organization, the use of pair and small group activities, and the introduction of predictable classroom routines that reduce management time and increase exposure time to the language.

Ur (2012) complements this perspective by emphasizing that visual material posters, cards, low-cost images can function as collective scaffolding in large groups, as it provides shared references that guide interaction and reduce dependence on the teacher as the sole source of linguistic input. This perspective is particularly relevant for school contexts where technological availability is limited or nonexistent. Both Hedge (2000) and Ur (2012) write from a prescriptive, "best practices" standpoint, describing what tends to work rather than accounting for the friction such strategies generate in practice for instance, resistance from cooperating teachers or students accustomed to a quieter, more expository classroom. This working paper takes up that friction directly, treating it as data rather than as a deviation from the expected result.

2.4 Experience Systematization in EFL: A Gap in the Literature

Despite the breadth and quality of research on EFL in primary education, works that explicitly apply experience systematization in the methodological sense proposed by Jara (2018) as a strategy for building pedagogical knowledge from foreign language teaching practice are scarce. Systematization, rooted in the tradition of Latin American popular education, differs from action research and program evaluation in that its emphasis is not on testing hypotheses or measuring results, but on critically recovering the lived process in order to understand its internal logics and generate situated learning (Jara, 2018; Torres Carrillo, 2010).

Cendales and Torres (2006) argue that systematization enables teacher candidates to develop a more conscious epistemological stance regarding their own process of learning to teach, which is particularly valuable when the practicum experience occurs in conditions of high contextual complexity, such as those that characterize English teaching in public schools with limited resources. Virviescas-Molina (2023), in a recent Colombian study of pre-service teachers' pedagogical practice, confirms that this articulation between systematization and initial teacher training remains underexplored, even as the number of practicum-based degree requirements grows. This gap the articulation between experience systematization and EFL pedagogical practice is precisely the space this working paper seeks to explore.



2.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The analysis of the systematized experience draws on three complementary conceptual frameworks.

First, Vygotskian social constructivism postulates that learning is constructed through social interaction and through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). In this systematization, playful activities carried out in pairs or small groups are read through this lens as generating scaffolding conditions: peers and handmade visual materials functioned as intermediate supports that allowed students to attempt oral production they could not yet sustain independently.

Second, the communicative approach (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 2004) orients activity design toward the functional and meaningful use of English in real or simulated communication situations. This framework grounds the decision to prioritize communicative games and information-gap activities over grammar-translation exercises, on the premise that oral participation grows when language use has a genuine communicative purpose rather than serving only as a display of accuracy.

Third, critical pedagogy, in the line of Freire (2005) and its influence on Jara's systematization (2018), provides the reflexive and transformative perspective that enables the teacher not only to describe what occurs in the classroom, but to interrogate its conditions, tensions, and possibilities for change. This is the framework most directly responsible for treating the tensions encountered during implementation resistance from students, concerns from the cooperating teacher as sources of pedagogical knowledge rather than as incidental obstacles to be smoothed over in the final account.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Starting Point: The Experience

The experience that gives rise to this working paper was developed during the teaching practicum of the Bachelor's Degree in English as a Foreign Language in a 5th-grade primary school group at Colegio Técnico Comercial Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, a public educational institution located in Chiquinquirá, Boyacá, Colombia. The group consisted of 30 students, aged between ten and twelve years, with heterogeneous levels of English proficiency and, for most of them, very limited prior exposure to English. The classroom context presented several challenges, including the large class size, the lack of technological resources for regular classroom instruction, and the limited availability of teaching materials. Students mainly relied on a single English textbook and the teacher's explanations to complete classroom activities,



which limited opportunities for interaction and made it necessary to design additional low-cost visual and playful materials to support learning and encourage oral participation.

From the first weeks of the practicum, it became evident that students showed very low levels of oral participation. Most responded with one-word answers when asked questions, avoided eye contact with the student teacher, and demonstrated noticeable anxiety when speaking English in front of their classmates. In addition, classroom management represented a constant challenge due to frequent off-task conversations, difficulties maintaining students' attention, and the large number of students in the class. These contextual conditions motivated the implementation of playful and interactive teaching strategies aimed at fostering oral participation while improving classroom management.

3.2 Formulation of the Systematization Plan

Following the methodological framework of Jara (2018), a systematization plan was formulated guided by the following question: what did the student teacher learn about her own pedagogical practice through the critical reconstruction of implementing dynamic and playful strategies for oral participation and classroom management in a 5th-grade English class with limited resources, and what lessons can this reconstruction offer to teachers working in similar contexts? The objective of the systematization was not only to describe the transformation of participation conditions and classroom climate, but to critically understand why and how that transformation occurred, and to make the resulting pedagogical knowledge transferable to other teachers in similar contexts.

The systematization process covered the complete period of the teaching practicum, equivalent to one academic semester. The object of systematization was delimited to the English classes with the aforementioned group, with particular attention to episodes of spontaneous and guided oral participation, and to the changes observed in the general dynamics of the group.

3.3 Methodological Design and Approach

The approach adopted is qualitative and reflexive, consistent with the nature of experience systematization. Statistical generalization is not pursued; rather, the goal is deep understanding of a particular experience and the construction of situated knowledge from it. The methodological process articulates the five stages proposed by Jara (2018):

First stage – The starting point: the lived experience in the classroom, described in the previous section.

Second stage – The initial questions: the guiding question and the objectives of the systematization process,



already formulated.

Third stage – Recovery of the lived process: chronological reconstruction of the experience based on available records.

Fourth stage – In-depth reflections: critical analysis and interpretation of the factors explaining the changes observed, linking them to the selected theoretical frameworks.

Fifth stage – Points of arrival: conclusions and learning derived from the process, with projections for practice.

Concretely, the application of the dynamic and playful strategies followed a consistent procedure across sessions: each class opened with a brief routine of movement-based or greeting activities, followed by the introduction or practice of a communicative structure through a game, information-gap activity, or use of handmade visual material, and closed with a short reflective question directed at students about what was practiced. This sequencing routine, communicative practice, closure was maintained throughout the semester and adjusted in response to the tensions and reactions documented in section 4, rather than applied rigidly.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

The main sources used to document the experience were the following:

Needs Analysis: conducted at the beginning of the teaching practicum to identify students' characteristics, learning needs, and the contextual conditions of the classroom. This document served as the basis for planning the pedagogical intervention.

Lesson plans: designed and implemented throughout the practicum, documenting the learning objectives, classroom procedures, teaching strategies, materials, and pedagogical adjustments made during the implementation of each lesson.

Reflective practicum journals: prepared during the practicum process to critically analyze the planning, implementation, challenges, and pedagogical decisions made throughout the teaching experience. This document supported the interpretation of the learning derived from the experience.

Teaching materials: including flashcards, handmade visual resources, worksheets, classroom presentations, and other low-cost materials designed to support oral participation and classroom management.



Taken together, these documents provided complementary sources of evidence that allowed the chronological reconstruction of the pedagogical experience, the critical interpretation of the pedagogical decisions made throughout the practicum, and the identification of the main lessons learned, following the principles of experience systematization proposed by Jara (2018).

3.5 Integration of Theoretical References

The interpretation of the experience drew on the conceptual frameworks described in the state of the art: social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), the communicative approach (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 2004), the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), and the principles of experience systematization (Jara, 2018). These references were not applied deductively, but rather emerged as interpretive tools in dialogue with the concrete experience.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The systematization process was carried out within the framework of the institutional teaching practicum, with the knowledge and accompaniment of the group's cooperating teacher and the practicum advisor. The experience records are of a pedagogical-reflexive nature and do not involve the collection of students' personal data. In accordance with the ethical principles of educational research, the confidentiality of the cooperating teacher and the participating students is preserved.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section organizes the findings of the systematization process around the last three stages proposed by Jara (2018): the recovery of the lived process, the in-depth reflections, and the points of arrival. The first moment chronologically reconstructs the trajectory of the pedagogical experience. The second critically identifies and analyzes three explanatory factors for the change observed in the classroom: the reduction of the affective filter, visual scaffolding as a compensatory resource, and the consolidation of predictable routines as a management mechanism. The third moment formulates the findings and proposals emerging from the systematized process.

4.1 Recovery of the Lived Process

The first four weeks of practicum were marked by the diagnosis of the group's situation. English sessions were conducted in a predominantly expository format: the student teacher presented vocabulary or grammatical structures, students copied them into their notebooks, and answered direct questions aloud. This format generated participation only when the teacher pointed to a specific student, and responses were



almost always monosyllabic or very short phrases. Background noise was constant, and a significant percentage of the group disconnected from the activity within the first ten minutes of class.

Beginning in the fifth week, the decision was made to systematically incorporate dynamic and playful strategies, adapted to the conditions of the classroom. The first intervention consisted of introducing short English greeting routines with body movement, in line with the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach proposed by Asher (1969): students responded to physical instructions in English (*stand up, touch your head, clap your hands*) as a group, which temporarily eliminated individual error risk and created an atmosphere of greater ease. The group's response was immediately positive: attention levels increased and several students began anticipating instructions without being asked.

Weeks later, communicative games in pairs and trios were incorporated: information gap activities, guessing games with handmade cards, and question-and-answer dynamics with visual materials prepared by the student teacher. These materials posters with thematic vocabulary images, colored cards with words and simple illustrations replaced the dependence on the board and written text as the only classroom supports. The spatial organization of the group was also progressively modified: from fixed rows to U-shaped configurations or small groups, which facilitated peer interaction.

By the eighth week of the practicum, the reflective practicum journals and the lesson plans documented a sustained qualitative change: several students who had previously not participated began to intervene spontaneously, without needing to be called upon. Group management also improved noticeably: beginning and closing class routines consolidated, transition times between activities decreased, and disorder episodes diminished in frequency and intensity.

Table 1 synthesizes this trajectory, making explicit the situation observed, the strategy implemented, students' reaction, the evidence registered, and the pedagogical decision taken at each stage of the process.

Stage	Situation observed	Strategy implemented	Students' reaction	Evidence registered	Pedagogical decision
Weeks 1–4	Expository format; monosyllabic answers only when directly asked; constant background noise; disengagement	None yet — diagnostic observation	Low participation, high anxiety, avoidance of eye contact	Needs Analysis and lesson plans	Decision to shift progressively toward dynamic, playful strategies



	within 10 minutes					
Week 5	Need to lower individual exposure/error risk	TPR-based greeting routines with group physical response (Asher, 1969)	Increased attention; students began anticipating instructions	Lesson plans and teaching materials	Decision to extend movement-based routines to every session opening	
Following weeks	Lack of technology; overreliance on the board and written text	Communicative games in pairs/trios; handmade visual materials; U-shaped seating	Initial resistance from some students (play associated with "not learning") and concern from the cooperating teacher about noise	Reflective practicum journals, lesson plans, and teaching materials	Decision to make each game's linguistic purpose explicit and to negotiate noise levels with the cooperating teacher	
Week 8	Consolidation phase	Sustained routines; peer-interaction seating maintained	Spontaneous, unprompted participation from previously silent students; fewer disorder episodes	Reflective practicum journals and lesson plans	Decision to consolidate the strategies as permanent practice rather than a temporary intervention	

4.2 In-Depth Reflections: Critical Interpretation of the Experience

Analysis of the process records allows the identification of at least three explanatory factors for the observed change.

First, the reduction of the affective filter. In line with Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, playful and movement-based activities created conditions of reduced anxiety that allowed students to take communicative risks that the expository format had blocked. When error is part of the game rather than an evaluated exposure before the group, willingness to participate increases considerably. This result is consistent with the arguments of Mercer and Dörnyei (2020), who maintain that motivation and participation in a foreign language are closely linked to the emotional climate of the classroom and to students' perception of competence: insofar as the playful strategies constructed an environment of reduced threat and greater acceptance of error, students found the necessary affective conditions to intervene with greater frequency and initiative. This factor was particularly evident in the guessing games and in the TPR activities, where all students participated simultaneously and individual error was diluted in the collective



dynamic.

Second, visual scaffolding as a compensatory resource. In the absence of technology, handcrafted visual materials fulfilled a scaffolding function (Vygotsky, 1978) that allowed students to access linguistic content through multiple perceptual channels. The posters and cards functioned as shared referents that supported oral interaction without requiring students to have previously mastered the structures in order to participate. This collective scaffolding function is consistent with what Ur (2012) notes regarding the use of visual material in large groups.

Third, the consolidation of predictable routines as a management factor. The establishment of beginning and closing routines English greetings, questions about the weather or the date, physical instructions reduced time spent on group management and created a shared frame of reference that students began to anticipate and value. This result is consistent with Hedge's (2000) arguments about the importance of predictable structure in large groups.

However, the process was not without tensions. The preparation of handcrafted visual materials demanded an investment of time and energy from the student teacher that was not always sustainable. Likewise, the transition from an expository to a playful dynamic generated initial resistance from some students who associated play-based activities with non-learning moments, and from the cooperating teacher, who on several occasions expressed concern about noise levels during dynamic activities.

Following Jara's (2018) insistence that systematization must go beyond confirming that a strategy worked and instead interrogate its contradictions and limits, these tensions deserve closer examination than a simple mention.

Regarding the sustainability of handmade materials: the time and energy invested in preparing posters and cards revealed a structural limit of relying on handcrafted resources as a long-term substitute for technology. The strategy proved pedagogically effective, but it is not easily scalable without some form of institutional support a limitation worth naming explicitly rather than glossing over, since it qualifies the practical transferability of the proposal to other resource-limited classrooms.

Regarding the resistance from students who associated play with "not learning": this reaction is not a marginal anecdote but a finding in itself. It exposes how deeply an expository model of what counts as legitimate classroom work had already been internalized by ten- and eleven-year-old students after only a few years of schooling. Overcoming this resistance did not happen automatically; it required the student teacher to consistently connect each game explicitly to a stated linguistic objective naming which structure



or vocabulary a guessing game was practicing so that play became legible to students as purposeful work, not merely as a break from it. This suggests that the pedagogical value of playful strategies in similar contexts depends less on the strategies themselves than on how deliberately their instructional purpose is made visible to learners.

Regarding the cooperating teacher's concern about noise levels: this reveals a real tension between two legitimate readings of classroom order. For the cooperating teacher, sustained quiet indexed control and learning; for the student teacher, the noise of communicative games indexed engagement. Resolving this tension in practice required a deliberate pedagogical decision rather than an intuitive one: rather than abandoning playful strategies or ignoring the concern, the student teacher narrowed the physical space and shortened the duration of the noisiest activities, and made the purpose of each dynamic explicit to the cooperating teacher beforehand. This adjustment illustrates a first-order pedagogical learning: that learner-centered teaching strategies in large, resource-limited groups are not simply adopted, but continuously negotiated against institutional expectations of order.

4.3 Points of Arri record-keeping field journalval: Findings and Proposal

The systematization of this experience allows the formulation of the following findings:

Dynamic and playful strategies, implemented progressively and coherently with the context, generated a sustained increase in students' oral participation, both in terms of frequency and spontaneous initiative. This change was especially notable among students with the highest levels of linguistic anxiety.

Handcrafted visual materials constituted an effective pedagogical resource in the absence of technology, functioning as collective scaffolding for oral interaction and reducing exclusive dependence on written text as classroom support.

The establishment of predictable classroom routines contributed significantly to the improvement of the climate and group management, creating a shared framework that students progressively internalized and respected.

Experience systematization as a reflexive methodology enabled the student teacher not only to document what occurred, but to understand its causes and extract learning that would otherwise have remained implicit in everyday experience, confirming the formative value that Jara (2018) and Cendales and Torres (2006) attribute to this process.

Proposals for Teaching Practice



Beyond the findings above, this systematization allows the formulation of concrete proposals for teachers facing similar conditions:

(a) A low-cost visual-materials bank — flashcards, posters, and picture cards organized by communicative function rather than by grammatical topic, so they can be reused across units;

(b) A short protocol of oral routines for the opening and closing of class (greetings, weather/date questions, physical instructions), sequenced from fully choral to individually initiated responses, to progressively reduce the affective filter;

(c) A practical guide for organizing large groups into pairs, trios, and small clusters within limited physical space, including seating configurations that support peer interaction without requiring additional furniture;

(d) Explicit criteria for using play without losing classroom management: stating the linguistic objective of each game aloud before it begins, setting a visible time limit, and pre-agreeing an acceptable noise threshold with the cooperating or lead teacher; and

(e) A brief set of recommendations for pre-service teachers beginning similar practicums: start with low-risk, whole-group activities before introducing pair work, document the teaching process, including not only what was done but also what was uncertain or difficult but what was uncertain or difficult, and treat resistance — from students or from cooperating teachers — as data to be analyzed rather than an obstacle to be avoided.



5. CONCLUSIONS

This working paper systematized a pedagogical experience developed during the teaching practicum in a 5th-grade primary school group, with the objective of critically reconstructing how dynamic and playful strategies contributed to oral participation and group management in English classes with limited resources, and of identifying the pedagogical knowledge this process produced for the student teacher. The conclusions derived from the process are presented below.

5.1 Alignment with the Objective

The systematization process allowed for a response to the guiding question of the work. The evidence gathered throughout the weeks of practicum shows that the dynamic and playful strategies movement-based activities, communicative games, handcrafted visual materials, and oral interaction routines had a positive impact on students' oral participation and on the general classroom climate. The transformation was neither immediate nor linear, but sustained and documented.

Beyond this result at the level of the students, answering the guiding question required the student teacher to trace her own trajectory as a decision-maker: diagnosing why the expository format was failing, choosing to introduce TPR routines to lower risk before attempting pair work, negotiating noise concerns with the cooperating teacher instead of abandoning playful strategies, and learning to make the instructional purpose of each game explicit so that students would not read play as the opposite of learning. This trajectory of decisions, more than the improvement in participation itself, constitutes the pedagogical knowledge this systematization produces.

5.2 Contribution to the Field of English Language Teaching

Rather than restating the result already established in 5.1, this section turns to what the systematization contributed as a way of knowing. This work provides situated evidence on the viability and relevance of playful and learner-centered teaching strategies in resource-limited English language teaching contexts in Colombia. Contrary to the idea that playful strategies are a privilege of well-equipped classrooms, the experience demonstrates that pedagogical creativity and critical reflection on practice can generate significant transformations even in structurally unfavorable conditions.

Experience systematization also showed its value as a formative tool for the student teacher, not only as an instrument of knowledge production. Jara (2018) warns that educators accumulate valuable learning in their daily practice, but frequently fail to recognize it because they "fall into activism and lose the possibility of stopping for a moment to gather, collect, and reflect on all that learning" (p. 18). The



experience documented in this working paper illustrates precisely the reverse movement: the systematic exercise of observation, record-keeping, and critical interpretation proposed by Jara enabled the student teacher to convert what was lived in the classroom into explicit and transferable pedagogical knowledge, thus closing the circle between concrete experience and the theoretical framework that guided the entire process.

Concretely, what changed in the student teacher's own pedagogical outlook was the understanding that a strategy's value cannot be judged by whether it "worked" in isolation, but by how deliberately it is adjusted in response to the specific frictions it generates institutional, material, and attitudinal. This shift, from evaluating outcomes to interrogating process, is itself a transferable disposition: a teacher who has learned to treat resistance and noise as diagnostic information, rather than as failure, is better equipped to sustain dynamic and playful teaching strategies in any resource-limited context, not only the one described here.

5.3 Practical Implications

For teacher candidates and practicing teachers, this work suggests that the gradual incorporation of playful and physically active activities in English classes with large groups is not only methodologically justified, but can represent an effective classroom management strategy. The development of low-cost visual materials emerges as a real and pedagogically valid alternative to the absence of technological resources.

For foreign language teacher education programs, the results underscore the importance of preparing future teachers for the reality of Colombian classrooms, where resource scarcity is the norm rather than the exception. The systematization of practicum experiences should occupy a central place in training plans, not as a terminal activity, but as a continuous reflexive practice.

5.4 Limitations and Future Directions

The main limitations of this work are its situated scope one experience, one group, one specific context and the impossibility of establishing causal relationships between the strategies implemented and the changes observed, given the qualitative and reflexive nature of the approach adopted. However, these limitations are inherent to the nature of experience systematization and do not invalidate the validity of the knowledge constructed.

As future lines of research and systematization, the following are proposed: the impact of playful strategies on students' listening comprehension and written production; the institutional conditions that



facilitate or hinder the sustained implementation of learner-centered teaching strategies in English teaching; and the possibilities of collaborative systematization among student teachers in similar contexts.



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