



**UNIVERSIDAD
DE ANTIOQUIA**

Trabajo de investigación presentado como requisito parcial para optar al
título de:

Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras

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Universidad de Antioquia
Escuela de Idiomas
El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia
2023



Analyzing the Evolution of Teacher-Student Interactions: A BAK-to-BAK Pre-service
Teacher Autoethnography

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June 2023

Abstract

This action research aimed to an autoethnography narrative based on understanding and reflection on the changes of my pre-service teacher beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge (BAK) system and interaction experiences with two different 10th grades during a 1-year practicum stage. This project was conducted in a rural school in Rionegro, Antioquia with the second group of around 30 tenth graders from February until June 2023. This qualitative autoethnography action plan involves narrating the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge concerns my development in my teaching practices as a pre-service teacher, which involves describing my own cycle of preparation, during taking classroom, and after class reflection to appreciate my own professional development and appreciation of the students and cooperating teacher in the classroom. Data gathering instruments included were a pre-service teacher diary, students' interviews, and the cooperating teacher (CT) evaluation to my teaching practicum stage. Findings involved in this action research ethnography made reference to the beliefs, knowledge and assumptions system and my development in particular aspects: my teaching planning growth, my interactional transformations with the class, and my teaching practices beliefs as pre-service teacher.

Keywords: Autoethnography, BAK system, classroom interaction, teaching planning, Pre-service teaching practices.

Título en español : Análisis de la evolución en la interacción profesor a estudiantes: Una narrativa autoetnográfica del BAK y BAK de un profesor practicante.

Degree requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in foreign language education (English- French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

Acknowledgments

First, I want to express my thankfulness to my advisor, colleagues, cooperating teacher, and all the people who encouraged me and were involved in the development of this research.

First, I want to express my thankfulness to my advisor Cristian Londoño, who was constantly motivating, encouraging, and supporting me during the whole development of this research. And specifically, for his devotion and to help me to construct and create this whole narrative.

Second, I want to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their support and assistance in the different difficulties that emerged throughout this research project.

Finally, I want to thank the two students and the cooperating teacher, who participated in my whole practicum stages and for being part of this process that contributed to my personal and professional development as an EFL teacher.

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Preface

I am a student of one foreign languages teaching program from a public university in Antioquia, Colombia. I am a teacher interested in learning about self-reflection to improve professional development as a teacher. The desire for this research came from the willingness to improve my teaching practices by learning on and reinforcing beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge in me as a teacher in the class. This research study was carried out from October 2022 until May 2023. As a pre-service teacher, I conducted my action plan from March to May 2023 in a public school in Rionegro, Antioquia, in which I was the teacher of a group of 30 tenth graders. This research project is mainly addressed to pre-service teachers and educators who wonder about the forms and values of a EFL teacher practices, what teaching English means and what teaching planning is, also to encouraging them to narrate their own experiences and improving their classroom practices.

Jose David Plaza Olano

Rionegro, Antioquia, June 16th, 2022

Description of the Context

The institution where my action research was conducted was a rural public school with 506 students, located in the countryside of Rionegro, Antioquia, Colombia. The school's mission is to promote integral and inclusive education and the development of students by fostering values of social and ecological awareness, citizenship, and work competencies. The school's vision is to be recognized as an educational organization that promotes students' integral education in democracy, equity, justice, and cooperative relationships, which would benefit the educational community, as well as industrial and tourist development in the region. (Institución Educativa Antonio Donado Camacho, 2023).

My study unfolded in two different 10th grade classes in two distinct periods, the first one between August and November 2022, and the second between January and June 2023. In both, English lessons were three times per week with a total intensity of five weekly hours. The main guidelines for the development for teaching were related to *Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje* and *Estandares Básico de Competencia de Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*. According to my observations, the grammar translation approach was predominant in the class, with a focus on learning the language through the lexical and grammatical translation by using visual aids, images, audio, and explanation to illustrate the language rules and vocabulary.

Besides, the English textbook used is “English Please for 10th graders”, which includes several topic contents addressed to Colombians young students to developing writing, pronunciation and reading skills. The participants of this study were the 30 students of the second 10th grade and my cooperating teacher (CT); students were 13 girls and 17 boys, ranging between 14 and 18 years old. They mainly inhabit urban areas of Rionegro, with middle to low socio-economic status. They usually performed reading comprehension, vocabulary, and

grammar exercises in teams. Regarding my CT, she holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with Emphasis in English; she also pursues a master's degree in special education. She has around 30 years of teaching experience, five of them in the school (Personal communication, October 6th, 2022).

The major problem that I found during my teaching practices as pre-service teacher at the class was about struggling and difficult experiences in aspects such as: little understanding about lesson planning and preparation, lack of initiative and confidence in my interactions with students, and doubts about my teacher role in class. These aspects and experiences were related to my Beliefs-Assumptions-Knowledge (BAK) system about English teaching, in which after having some bad experiences in the class, I wanted to learn more about them to describe, reflect and narrate the changes during my 1-year practicum stage in my role as teacher in the class.

Statement of the Problem

During my first practicum period, I observed student disconformities and questioning regarding my role as a pre-service teacher. I encountered several difficulties, particularly in establishing coherent goals and objectives that aligned with the students' needs.

During my first practicum period, my role in the classroom was like a "consultant" in which the students often look for resolving lexical, grammatical, and English culture questions, while I took notes about the class. I went confidently to make the lesson planning and being the "teacher" in my first implementation in October 2022. However, my class was horrible due to my lack of preparation, unclear class activities, insecurity, and low interaction with the students.

Because at that first lesson implementation, I faced interaction challenges with the students, my voice had a low tone, I felt insecure, and I struggled to pay attention to all the

students. These challenges highlighted a need for improvement in my understanding of my own teaching beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, to enhance students' learning and to advance my own professional development as a future teacher.

So, I engaged in conversations with some students, my CT, and my advisor to share thoughts about it. They were all attentive, understanding, and provided me with advice and words of support regarding my errors and mistakes, while encouraging me to become a better teacher. The advice was about my own preparation and imagining the class during planning, being more authoritative and expressive in my classes.

Consequently, the difficulties and the desire for self-improvement led me to conduct this action research project. The purpose of this was to examine my practices in depth, reflect upon my interactions with the students, and analyze my teaching planning. The main objective was to systematically analyze and narrate my changes in my beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge to bring a better understanding of my role as a future teacher. In conclusion, this opportunity to reflect, describe, and analyze the disconformities and insecurities in my teaching practices has provided me with valuable knowledge about my role as a teacher.

Theoretical Background

My theoretical background for that would be the core of the following action research would be: Autoethnographic, teacher BAK, and classroom interactions. With this theoretical framework concepts, there would be elaborate an autoethnographic narrative about the class context, interactions and learning for understanding better the beliefs, assumptions and knowledge system and the changes in my teaching role and in the diverse types of classroom interaction along my one year of teaching practices in the class.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is an approach to qualitative research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal life experiences to understand them (Ellis et al., 2011; Jones, 2005). It involves self- interrogation and the exploration of socio-cultural processes in identify construction and formation (Austin et al, 2007; Heider, 1975).

What differentiates autoethnography from ethnography is their research purposes, research focus, perspective about the field, data gathering, data analysis, reporting format and validity. According to Austin and Hickey (2007), ethnography focuses on the description and understanding of the “other”, by entering in the “other’s” cultural milieu, using some techniques such as participant observation, interview, focus group, documents analysis to get the verifiable information and understanding of the context. Meanwhile, autoethnography focuses on the self- interrogation and description of the socio-cultural processes of identity construction and formation, in which the field is the mundane internal of self-research. Its techniques include memory work, learning through conversation, and artifact re-construction.

Autoethnography serves several functions in teacher professional development and equips capabilities to bridge gaps between theory and practices through the narrative capacity of showing and telling (Ellis, 2011 et al.; Jones, 2007). Using autoethnography in teacher practices delves into a self-reflective ethnography, which has the capacity to connect the sociocultural involvement in context with the cognitive development of the teacher and how it is presented in segments such as planning, during and after classes (Wood, 1996).

Autoethnography in teacher professional development has several functions. First, it supports reflection and interpretation of a catastrophic moment, or an issue influenced by the belief and background knowledge that conducts action and decision of the teacher. Secondly,

autoethnography has an expressive and therapeutic function over stories' narrative praxis, which includes BAK of the teacher as active researcher of their own professional development (Ellis, 2011; Jones, 2007; Wood, 1996).

Autoethnography in teacher professional development has a set of five points of action:

1. Communicate experiences, meaning to express meaningful thought (Conquergood, 2000).
2. Show the importance of how the emotional experiences connect the ways of praxis, being, and action (Bochner, 2001; Ellis, 1997, 1995; Spry, 2001)
3. Appreciating the connection between body and voice with mind and thoughts (Alexander, 2000).
4. Create the dynamic to express self-investigation into the text, implicating personal narrative fear and experiences.
5. Struggle for words to describe the unspeakable.

Teacher Beliefs, Assumption and Knowledge

The teacher beliefs system is part of the construction of self-identity and formation in its role about the teaching practices. This construction is influenced by the teacher's cognitive and sociocultural understanding, thought processes, instructional practices, change, and teaching learnings (Pajares, 1992; Wood, 1996; Zheng, 2009).

Research about teacher beliefs system focuses on the improvement of teaching professional development, through analyzing and recollecting data about the pre-active and the active action of teaching. In EFL, those beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge (BAK) about teaching practices has been examined in the following five main areas in the teacher and pre-service's beliefs (Zheng, 2009):

1. The teacher's beliefs about the role.
2. The teacher's beliefs about the students.
3. The teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning.
4. The teacher's beliefs about the importance of English.
5. The teacher's beliefs about the school's institutional context.

Before moving out to how to recognize that in the interpretation and justification of the teaching beliefs systems, it would be necessary to define the subject categories in its components of the BAK system in the EFL teaching practices (Austin, J, & Hickey, A, 2007; Wood, 1996; Zheng, 2009). First, beliefs refer to the perception, premise and proposition about sociocultural factors and cognitive that felt to be true for their owner. Secondly, assumptions refer to how background knowledge permits to create expectations during the process of planning to anticipate events and circumstances that may occur in the classroom context. Thirdly, knowledge refers to the trustworthiness, post reflection and evaluation about the teaching practices, appreciating the connection between the achievement of goals and planning with the current development and decision making of the teacher in the field.

For the implementation of the BAK system to achieve the whole substructure of the teacher's beliefs, Sacerdoti (1977), cited by Wood (1996), has proposed a way of tracking those aspects from top to bottom and bottom to top, in moments such as planning, understanding, events and feedback in a cycle way. In this order, the beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about the teaching practices could be analyzed in moments of pre-active, active and post-active, these cycles generate the sense of plausibility about the effectiveness and feasibility of on moments such as planning, decision-making, and expertise of the teacher's development (Austin & Hickey, 2007; Woods, 1996; Zheng, 2009).

Classroom interaction

Classroom interaction involves sociocultural aspects between participants that could influence the dynamics, language instruction, learning and teaching ways in the classroom, in most of the classroom's interactions are mediated and monitored by the teacher (Domalewska, 2015; Thoms, 2012; Van Lier, 1996).

The study of this kind of interactions may involve the use of qualitative and quantitative methods to identify the pedagogical interactions in their pertinences on the context, effectiveness and patterns that would provide a learning and teaching development. (Domalewska, 2015; Thoms, 2012; Van Lier, 1996). The four kinds of pedagogical interaction identified in the classroom are:

1) Monological transmission: In this, the information is delivered by the knower to another or another, in a one way and monological format. This process of monological transmission is like the "banking model" described by Freire (2000).

2) IRF questioning: This interaction follows the sequence of Input-response and feedback, in which all the questions are asked by the knower, and all the answers are given by others. In these kinds of interaction, the students are conducted by the questions by the experts towards the articulation of their thoughts, background knowledge, and opinions (Domalewska, 2015; Thoms, 2012).

3) Transaction: The information is exchanged in a two-way process, where the direction of the discourse, and the relevance of contributions, turn taking are mediated in a symmetrical and conversation way by all the participants, even though there is usually an imposed structure and agenda to accomplish.

4) Transformation: The condition of the learning situations, role relationships, learning objectives and process are communicated and negotiated by all the participants, in this way there is an approach co-construction of all the participants.

The key to understanding this map of pedagogical interactions is to recognize that interaction is connected to the social interaction developed by Vygotsky, making it a representation of language and cognition as interdependent processes (Cameron, 2001; Domalewska, 2015; Thoms, 2012; Van Lier, 1996). This involves the following conditions and foci:

1. The pedagogical condition as classroom such externally controlled or self-determined behaviors.
2. The educational focus and measurements of outcomes in product-oriented factor or in a conversational and diversity of cultures and languages in a process-oriented classroom.
3. Conditions and sequences of interaction that can be monological, dialogic, conversational.
4. Each interaction has conditions of power relationships and social processes that can be derived in asymmetrical or symmetrical interactions.
5. The conditions provided by the roles hence by the teacher may varied in an authoritarian, authoritative and exploratory.
6. The focus is on the analysis of interpersonal and instructional language to purposely elicit information or give proleptic clues of information.
7. The non-contingent involves in task and pedagogical dynamic that do not the participants' experiential expectations or background knowledge. On the other hand,

the contingent aspect involves the interaction of performances, proficiency and background knowledge for expropriation and construction of the knowledge.

Research Question

How to foster professional development in my own pre-service EFL teaching practices using autoethnography, with a focus on pedagogical interaction?

General Objective

Examine changes of my pre-service teacher BAK system and interaction experiences with 10 graders during a 1-year practicum stage.

Specific Objectives

1. Systematize my preservice teaching self-narrative to identify changes in pre-active, active and post-active practices.
2. Identify changes in my pedagogical interaction sequences in favor of EFL teaching development.
3. Describe reflectively changes in my BAK system, pre-active, active and post active teaching practices, and my self-pedagogical interaction sequences.

Action Plan

To find out the changes and developments in my teaching practices, I conducted an action research cycle (Richards, 2003). The first cycle went from September to November 2022, in which I had an immersion to the context, identified areas of interest, collected, and interpreted

contextual data. Then, I designed an action plan (AP) to be implemented between March and May 2023.

My AP focused on designing lessons in accordance with the school's standards, language objectives, and students' needs. Then, I implemented my AP, in which my action research would develop examining aspects such as planning, teacher-student interaction, and teaching practices evolution. After each lesson, I reflected upon the strengths, weaknesses, and improvement possibilities for a more conscientious teaching practice in each upcoming class.

Data collection instruments were a pre-service teacher diary, student interviews, before and during the AP, and my CT's evaluation. The pre-service diary aimed at writing my experiences, BAK system before, during, and after each lesson to systematically trace the changes in my teaching practices. Three student interviews were conducted, one before and two after the implementation of my AP, to learn their appreciation about my teaching practices and pre-service teacher role. My CT's evaluation involved one questionnaire in two moments: one in the middle of the action plan, and one at the end. The questionnaire aimed to collect data from my CT's appreciations and feedback on my process, changes, and improvements regarding my teaching practices.

Development of Actions

The research actions on the basis of the AP were conducted during the first semester of 2023 with a group of thirty 10th grade students. In the first two weeks of May, I explored the student's interactions, needs and context to design my lesson plans, with coherent goals and objectives. Then, I conducted one student interview to gather retrospective data on my classroom interaction and perceived changes during my first practicum period. The participant of this

interview was a student from my practicum one stage in 2022, who manifested interest in my professional development.

After immersing myself into the context, its needs, and situation, I found students' confidence regarding writing and reading skills. Subsequently, I started teaching my AP lessons. I paid attention to my interaction with the students, their reaction towards the activity, and my reaction and feeling about my own classroom interaction with all the students and with each student in the classroom. And with that information, I was modifying and making adaptations about my teaching planning and teaching practices. Then during the month of May, I conducted an interview with the student before the AP, to have a representative impression about me during that phase on the practicum. In the months of April and March I conducted two interviews with the current students of the AP, to show my appreciation about my role as a pre-service teacher in the school. And also, in the month of April, in the middle of the action plan, there was given an evaluation to my CT, the second evaluation was not conducted at the end of the AP, but there was a personal communication about it at the end of the AP on March 2023.

Data Analysis

I examined my pre-service diary to code my reflections on planning and lesson implementations. Student interviews were fully transcribed and coded. My CT's evaluation provided data on changes and evolution in my practices. Once I gathered the data, I decided to use the steps proposed by Altrichter et al. (2008) to conduct the data analysis. The proposed analytic process of these authors is composed of four stages: presenting data, selecting data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions.

Data was categorized using the BAK system proposed by Zheng (2009) and Wood (1996). In which their codes were Pre-service change (PT), PT interaction with student and students, PT role in the class, PT improvement and difficulties in class, PT planning, decision-making in class. After having codified all this information, I started to apply the first practicum before the action plan and my action plan notes in order to trace the progressions and changes in my own autoethnography narrative about my change in my teaching planning and practices, and my role as a teacher in the class.

In the following table 1, there is the model that I adopted from Zheng (2009) for collecting and analyzing meaningful and important moments of evolution about my teaching practices. I divided it into the following chapter or teaching planning, classroom interaction, and being a teacher in the classroom to provide continuity involvement about my professional development in each of those aspects during the whole practicum stage before, during and after the AP. Each chapter is the structure of belief that I had before the AP, and then the unfold and learning about what I learned from each aspect at the end of the AP.

Table 1 *Beliefs Before the AP, and Experiences and Knowledge During and After the AP*

Beliefs before action plan	Experiences and knowledge during and after AP
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What were my beliefs about teacher planning?

How did teacher planning unfold?

What did I learn about planning?

What were my beliefs about teacher-student interaction?	How did teacher-student interactions occur?	What did I learn about teacher-student interactions?
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What were my beliefs about the teaching practices of a pre-service teacher?	How did my teaching practices unfold?	What did I learn thanks to my teaching practices?
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Findings and Interpretations

My objective in this study was to examine the changes of my pre-service teacher BAK system and interaction experiences with tenth graders during a 1-year practicum stage. I took the decision of analyzing and identifying my reflection in my BAK system and self-pedagogical interaction sequences that you reinforce my EFL teaching development in chapter that emerged from the recollections of data before, during and after the action plan. As fan of videogames and narrative, I personally found interesting to name the progression of each chapter of my teaching planning, teaching practices on interaction, and reflections about being a teacher. The chapters would be the following:

- Chapter 1 Leveling up: From the planning of lessons to teaching planning.
- Chapter 2 Leveling up: From monological transmission to transactional classroom interaction with the students.
- Chapter 3 Leveling up: My value as teacher.

Chapter 1 Leveling up: From the planning of lessons to the teaching planning.

In discussions with my peers and other pre-service teachers in my career, we had believed that good classes come after good planning. In my case, I used to believe that my knowledge about teaching approach, activities design, and language goals was enough for my teaching planning. But I found that my own knowledge to connect my lesson with the students' features and my teaching preparation was very poor when I landed in the classroom.

During my studies, I usually planned with colleagues in different contexts using aspects related to age, grade, and time available for the lesson. We usually designed activities, approaches, and goals looking at how we could use the space in our favor for a good class, which meant fostering students' participation and learning. These beliefs and actions were challenged in my practicum.

My practicum started in September 2022, and I was confidently seeking and asking my CT about the school's perspectives, goals, and material used for the English course. I thought that I was capable of learning any lesson with my expertise for identifying students' needs and the best didactic proposal. I began discovering that my planning in writing was disconnected with the reality of a class.

My first two-hour class in October 2022 was about 'culture'. I looked for many foreign cultural foods to connect with several activities. My vision was to improve the writing and reading skills of my students: find words in context, fill the gaps, read comprehension questions, and organize images and texts.

When I showed up in the classroom with my expectations and activities, my heart stopped, interrupted, and discouraged by reality. Did I really connect the objectives with each

activity? What is enough for a large number of activities to teach in a large class? What if my plan was not real?

I found out that my first lesson plan was incomplete, and it was a bad class. I started to reflect on how I establish feasible objectives and activities to be achieved in my class. So, with the help of my advisor, we found several points of improvement: My activities were poorly connected with the objectives and time involved.

- My activities were poorly connected with the objectives and time involved.
- Instructions to activities were ambiguous or difficult to understand.
- My planning missed proper moments of participation between me and my students.
- My eyes opened. I began to search for ideas for future lesson plans. My class was monological and transmissionist. - *Do I want this for my classes in the future?* -

As I was working on my second lesson plan, instead of starting by planning different activities, I started to think about a way of articulating the sociocultural particularities of my 34 students and my teacher role with the lesson plan. So, I took the class objective of reinforcing spelling, and I started my main activity of “broken telephone” and other activities such as exploiting interactions for spelling in English. During the planning, I envisioned my interaction with my students in the classroom. I set times and formulated possible questions and concrete instructions for each activity. I even thought of wondering how to monitor students and provide them with more IRF sequences.

Lesson 2 came over me, I felt more ready than the first time. My first class was the product of lesson planning; my second class was more about teaching planning, more about me and my students. My confidence grew; it was getting real and resolving difficulties during students’ learning processes. At the end of the class my CT approached me and recognized a

more organized class, with better instructions than the previous class. Students mentioned that the class was interesting, and they could review much about how to spell. Teaching planning beyond lesson planning drew better results.

So, I continued trying to incorporate my teaching planning into each lesson plan. I tried to visualize myself in the classroom doing the activities with my students, interact with them, give explanations and move confidently through activities. I now wanted to create teaching planning, in which pedagogical interactions of transaction and transformation of a more “secure” teacher would lead the class toward the objectives. To achieve that, I used one of the planning suggestions from Wood (1996): *Start by the general objective and the context, to and then create instructions and steps for achieving the objectives with a connected set of activities that would support each step.*

At the end of the practicum one, the CT gave out a positive evaluation about my teaching planning. My changes towards a more conscious teaching planning resulted in improvements in materials design, classroom management, directed work of students (individually and in group), and activities directly related with the objectives of the lessons, and interactions to raise students’ engagement in class.

At the start of the second practicum stage in 2023, I had time to prepare different lessons that I would like to apply along the way. I was informed in December 2022 that my class would continue to be a tenth grade. I decided to apply my teaching planning knowledge and skills.

For example, on the preparation of my second class in April, I devised IRF questions to raise pedagogical quality and conversations, teach modal verbs, and connect with my students’ life experiences. My class was grateful. Objectives for each activity were achieved and led my students to learn what they expected to learn. Furthermore, my interaction focused on solving

doubts and initiate conversations between students to respond to help them exchange English knowledge between them and with me.

JM, one of my students, said the following in an interview:

I find it interesting, and I like the way in which we have been working, because there are some pre-service teachers, or teachers, that mislead the activities and teach things that are not pertinent for our grade. [...] Furthermore, I learned about the theme in class such as modal verbs, also we worked about some unknown vocabulary and the formation of phrases using those verbs. In moments such as reading the word, the vocabulary that you put (on the board), that you invite us to the board; so, you are very didactic, because you make us write those words, and also investigate them. (Student interview, April 17th, 2023).

In another class in May 2023, I felt a great sense of pride because I successfully managed an unpleasant situation by pre-visualizing the class. My CT advised me to adapt the topic and activities of my class to a textbook that focused on teaching the usage of past simple tense and the pronunciation of regular verbs in past form, along with reading comprehension exercises. Surprisingly, I had chosen the same reading material as the CT the day before, which left me speechless because of the parity. However, during the lesson planning, I had a feeling: What might happen if the students completed that activity quickly? With that pre-visualization in mind, I prepared one online activity based on booklet, one about reading comprehension questions. I used the classroom's resources, TV and internet connection, to do a wrap up of their English knowledge. When that situation occurred, I felt confident and went ahead. One of my students was interviewed, Vid, and said the following:

Jose tries to teach in a didactic way, and it is different each class, using worksheets, presentations, videos for teaching us English in different ways. [The activities] Are super and the majority of students participated with the videos, documents and the questions that you asked us. And we felt more love for the language. (Student interview, May 3rd, 2023).

In the end, I learned that teaching planning goes beyond lesson planning. Teaching planning, in my role as a pre-service teacher, can be conducted in different ways. It is about going from the general top of content and learning objectives to describing the steps and activities purposefully for achieving the goals. Furthermore, using a variety of different exercises opened my possibilities of moving from a merely monological transmission of knowledge into richer class interactions with IRF questions, language transactions, and transformations of my conversational sequences with students. Finally, pre-visualization played a key role in my decision-making; it allowed me to establish a path for action in the classroom and navigate options for backing up activities and materials with my language knowledge and my teaching expectations.

Chapter 2 Leveling up: From monological transmission to transactional classroom interaction with the students.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted my transformative transition from monological transmission to transactional and more dialogical interaction with students. Pre-service teachers usually think that mastery of the subject is enough for effective teaching and classroom interaction. In my case, I used to think that subject mastery and knowledge about how to ask, answer, and give feedback of students' questions were enough for effective teacher-student

interaction. Besides that, I found that effective teaching results from a dynamic relationship with each student; this creates nurturing relationships and richer learning environments.

My practicum started in September 2022 with participant observation. In those days, my role was just a “consultant”, feeling confident in using my subject knowledge and mastery with my class to answer their questions, explain grammar, translate words, and give them relevant information about English culture. I felt this knowledge was the core of effective teaching and dynamic interaction. Confidently, I planned my first class, assuming that language knowledge would be enough. But the reality hit me right in my face when implementing my class in October 2022.

When my role changed to that of “teacher”, students were surprisingly uninterested in my explanations, activities, or examples. They would not ask questions anymore. Their attention was disbanded. They were using their cellphone, talked with their pairs, and ignored me all the time. I was lost: Did I really pay attention to classroom interaction during my observations for my later classes? Was subject knowledge enough for effective teaching and dynamic interaction? What is teaching really about?

In the class, I felt nervous and overwhelmed by the large thirty-four student’s class. My body was frozen; my hands were in my pockets; I gazed at one corner of the classroom, not even looking at my students in their eyes. My voice was low, and I stuttered. My mind conflicted with my tongue. I looked at those who answered my questions only. My interaction was poor and limited to just answering questions.

After that horrible class, I started to reflect on my interaction with students for getting a better teaching. Then, I began to observe my CT more closely: her voice, body language, and clarity in instructions. In my personal communication with students in 2022, students said that

my CT had an authoritative role, a direct and clear manner of communicating with all students, both as a group and individually. Her body language was strict: arms crossed in serious moments and permanent eye contact when addressing students. Despite her serious posture, she was also talkative and used part of the class time to have conversations about the well-being and interests of the students; things that I never thought of before.

I worked up my design of activity instructions, in which a “broken telephone” was the central activity. My CT and my advisor helped me write concise and direct instructions in my lesson plan. My mind started to memorize all the students’ names in one week. I began to practice my high voice pitch facing the mirror. Then, this happened after my second implementation. One of my students before AP, said the following in an interview:

“I remember [last year], during the activity of broken telephone, wherein you organized the students into three lines. It was a big step, because you went from being shy with a low tone of voice to confidently managing all the students in a game.” (Student interview, March 23rd, 2023).

My instructions on paper were clear; in class, they were a bit confusing. But as the students started playing, they got into the rhythm. I felt confident at that moment; I made a point and raised my voice during the class. The same student said in an interview:

“Little by little, you were gaining confidence and the ability to use your tone of voice and clarity in your instructions. You said to the class: -This is something that I may say and do, so please do me the favor of listening to me-. (Student interview, March 23rd, 2023).

After that grateful class, I spent the rest of the year practicing and reinforcing my role of “teacher” in the classroom, not limited to the role of “pre-service teacher”. I started to practice

my pitch, my body language, how to write on the whiteboard, and how to provide opportunities for asking and talking with the students. Indeed, I learned that I needed to connect my knowledge about the subject with an expressive interaction and authoritative presence in order to provide purposeful transactional interactions.

During my second practicum stage with a different group of thirty students in a 10th grade, I started observing who each of my students was, their peer interaction patterns, their interaction with the CT, and their interaction with me as a pre-service teacher. I planned my first-class implementation with the objective of acting as the CT in her class, but with my own posture, high pitch, and confident tone of voice for addressing questions and having conversations with them as a *teacher*.

The class started; I acted calm and with more confidence in my pitch despite the large number of students. I was afraid no more. My body was straighter, had direct eye contact with the students. I stuttered on some occasions, but I was an expressive teacher using a formal tone of voice, a set of intentional hand gestures, a purposeful code-switching of English and Spanish to ask and explain, and opportunities for each student to talk and be heard. I noticed that the class was grateful and that my teaching was interactional, rather than monological or transmissionist.

Students interviewed agreed on the fact that although the class was disorderly and disruptive, I acted calmly and expressively. I was paying attention to peer interaction, the language knowledge and student's needs. Although *Students also recognized me as their teacher* and learning and participating even more during the class with the activities and sharing opinions. They were getting used to the way in which I conducted the activities and how to ask

the questions towards all the students. Furthermore, they were motivated to voluntarily participate in the classroom and cooperate with peers after I helped them.

And at the end of each class, I went home feeling more like a teacher. Students' and my CT's feedback about my interactions had positive effects upon my teaching. Another grateful experience for my class on April 17th. Back then, the main activity was focused on an oral presentation about teenager problems. I encouraged the students in their presentations, asking them questions and inviting them to listen and share their points of view. And there was moment in which I was monitoring turn-taking, generating questions about knowledge of the topic, eliciting their experiences, and inquiring them for actions to face the teenage problems. With the response of the students' interactions, I was able to use the whiteboard, elaborate bodily and spoken expressions, and invite to take notes on new lexical and grammar uses.

During the interview with the students, they said that my role as an interactive teacher invited them to become more interested in learning English, learn pronunciation, practice spelling, and raise vocabulary thanks to the interaction with me and the activities. I think that was possible because in my classroom, I always seek for teaching my knowledge of mastery and interacting several times with the students, such as during the explanations, monitoring their turn of talking and their individual and group work.

Considering the BAK model proposed by Zheng (2009), I learned that moving away from a consultive monological teaching transmission position requires more involvement of the teaching practices during the class. My diary and my post-action reflections upon each class helped me to improve my dialogical and conversational capacities, as well as my behaviors for conducting and being an "authoritatively expressive" figure, which negotiates students' learning

experiences to create opportunities for the right questions in a transactional classroom interaction.

To sum up, I learned that moving from “consultant” to “teacher” may take effort in paying attention to the group’s interaction dynamics. It also requires being more expressive and interactive with the students and taking a step forward to invite them to participate. And the way that I learned for achieving all this was through preparation on my pitch, body language, and the learning of how students interact between them and with me before and during the class. I am glad to return home exhausted from each lesson, but grateful for my process and my students’.

Chapter 3 Leveling up: My value as teacher.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted my actions and interaction for moving from monological transmission to transactional classroom interaction with the students. Pre-service teachers usually wonder about their expectations about what being a teacher is, the importance of English knowledge, and the importance of teaching. In my case, I personally considered that teaching has great value because it connects the knowledge of the teacher with that of the students in order to create nurturing relationships and learning environments. During my studies, I taught some English lessons in the role of “consultant”, holding short implementations and courses. I often did mini-lesson planning, answered, and responded to questions from a few students, and observed the context of the class.

In my first class in October 2022, facing 34 students the “teacher”, my expectation fell down against the reality of my class. I assumed I had the role of “teacher”, but students paid little attention to me and did not recognize me as their teacher. They were continually talking between them and interrupting me. My expectations of having a disciplined and organized class, in which

I could conduct the class and students' interaction, were gone. I could not "find myself" in the classroom: What is my value as teacher? What should I do to be the teacher in my classroom?

How can I capture more attention from the students?

I felt limited and shrunk, despite my 1.80m of height, by students' indifference. I did not feel as good as I had been by being just a "consultant" during my participant-observation moments. I felt that being a "teacher" was more that I could do. The students needed my instructions, and I needed their attention and presence, but I could not find anywhere the attitudes and actions to do that. In fact, I was a very shy and nervous teacher. One of my students, said the following in an interview:

You [Jose] just sat in the chair on the left, next to the CT, a "consultant". And when she left, you were in charge. And in your first days [of teaching], you were very shy and nervous, and it was frustrating to have a big responsibility of putting in order in a class where students would not listen, and there was a lot of disorder. (Student interview, March 23rd, 2023)

After having that horrible first experience, I started to reflect on the impact of my role as a teacher in the classroom. In one personal conversation with my CT, I asked her about how she perceived her teaching and her beliefs about teaching English. She told me that being a teacher needs to have two roles an "authoritative" one and "talkative" one. She added that the classroom had to have conversations and reflections about the well-being of students. She went on to say that when the class needs to be focused, she would call the attention and maintain the discipline of the students during the activities. I got inspired by her words, because I want to be a more "authoritative" teacher, one who would provide dialogue, conversations, conditions, and sequences of interaction to promote the sharing of students' perspectives to enjoy the class.

So, at the end of that first implementation, I went home with the idea of bettering and gaining more confidence and self-identity about my teaching role. I hit the books to find about the “value of being a teacher” and its influences and actions that could provide me with a better learning for my students. I read about actions such as teaching planning, teaching organization, and class preparation. I found value in remembering the names of and having conversation with each student; I found also value in the importance of having pragmatic skills such as a good posture and pitch control, clarity in instructions, and doing praxis upon my teaching and students’ performance. One of my students, said the following in an interview:

I remember that you were changing little bit little about mentality, and you were getting used to the uncontrol of the class and you were improving as teacher moment by moment. And you were establishing conversations (with the students), and when I had a question, you told me: ‘It’s alright, look it works like this and try to look it in this way.’. [You were] Expressing and making your explanation clear and useful. (Student interview, March 23rd, 2023).

My second practicum started in February 2023. In conversation with my CT about the students, materials and objectives, I proudly commented that I felt that being a teacher is a huge responsibility in the classroom, because through one’s actions could promote and engaging the students to learning and share a friendly class environment. A clear teacher role and a correct use of pragmatic language have an influence in the English teaching and treatment. For that reason, I believe that a teacher is someone whose communication opportunities persistently seeks the well-being of students.

During and after my action plan’s implementation, I conducted an interview with two students, one in March and the second one in April 2023. It was about gathering their

appreciation of my changes in the teaching role. Both students agreed that, at the beginning, I was calm, generous, and with an attitude of managing situations. As the time went by, students and I were getting to know more about each other. I was feeling more comfortable in providing intentional IRF sequences, transactional ways of providing interaction. Students received my greeting, not activity instruction. I asked students how they were and how they felt before explaining class topics. When the students were working in groups, I devoted time to asking and providing help to each group of students; no student was left behind.

To me, the value of a teacher is related to capitalizing the option of being “authoritatively expressive” to provide better teaching opportunities and build nurturing relationships with my class. The value of a teacher is having the opportunity to give students moments of sharing experiences and knowledge about the context and their subject knowledge. And at the end of the day, the value of teaching is about going back home after happily enjoying my class and learning through the process.

Conclusions and Implications

As a conclusion of this research about my teaching practices, pedagogical interactions, and my value as a teacher, I have gained valuable insights into my reflections, experiences, and knowledge. Throughout this journey, I encountered numerous challenges and meaningful changes that have helped me improve in the following aspects:

- Teaching planning goes beyond lesson planning: Teaching planning can be conducted in and constructed in different ways. My own way of teaching planning is going from the top of content and learning objectives to describing the steps and activities for achieving the goals. Also, I found it important to have different exercise

opportunities to moving to monological transmission of knowledge into richer classroom interactions, and ultimately to pre-visualization of my role as teacher for proper decision-making. This was valuable to establish a path for action in the classroom and navigate options for backing up activities and materials with a balance between subject knowledge and teaching expectations.

- Teaching interactions: I learned moving to be teacher may take effort in paying attention to the group's interaction dynamics. And being the teacher requires being expressive and interactive with the students and constantly taking steps forward to invite them to participate. And the way in which I learned for achieving from a monological transmission to transactional classroom interaction was through preparation on my pitch, body language, and learning how the students interact between them and me.
- My perception about being a teacher: the value of a teacher is related to taking advantages the options of being "authoritatively expressive" to provide better teaching opportunities and build nurturing relationships with my class. Opportunities as moment of sharing experiences and knowledge about the context and their subject knowledge.

In this study, I embarked on an exploration of autoethnography, allowing me to narrate my concerns, insecurities, and the challenges I encountered throughout my practicum process. The results revealed significant growth in my professional development as a teacher through learning and reflection on my BAK system, as well as my interactions with the students. Through careful analysis and documentation of meaningful experiences, interactions, and interview with the

students. At the end, I found satisfaction in feeling both exhausted and fulfilled as I returned home after a rewarding day of teaching.

This study has implications in two significant areas within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT): the professional development of future teachers, and the impact of the autoethnography on self-teaching development. I particularly recommend further exploration in these two areas due to the limited amount of national and international literature available on the integration of teaching practices and professional development for pre-service teachers, as well as the investigation about the self-reflection literature on teaching practices among pre-service teacher in class.

Concerning the limitations encountered in the study, there are two constraints that must be mentioned. On the one hand, the scope of the study was restricted by time constraints for data analysis, in the sense that part of the moments of learning about interaction or planning would be hard to manage for application in a subsequent class. In the other hand, some data collection instruments, such as the evaluation of the cooperative and the first interview, entailed some difficulties for interpretation due to one's lack of expertise using and managing the instrument in the interviews and the CT's evaluation checklist format.

For future studies, it is advisable to incorporate additional data collection instruments. One suggestion is to utilize questionnaires that can be distributed to students randomly after each class to gather information about the students' perspectives and learning during the process. The second suggestion is to employ pictures and video recording as a multimodal technique for collecting and analyzing the role and interactions of the pre-service teacher and students' reactions to the evolution in planning and implementation. Additionally, it is important to approach interviews with a clear mind and employ follow-up questions to delve deeper into

participants' experiences. The main purpose of suggesting these instruments is to offer more opportunities for the pre-service teacher to better understand the participants' responses and opinions in their own interpretations of the evolutions or drawbacks.

Another implication refers to the management of the action plan. Instead of considering that an action plan is solid and unchangeable, it is important to know how to change and arrange it accordingly with regard to the uncontrollable series of events that may occur during the implementation of the action plan.

Reflection

From my readers, all the pre-service teachers usually bear different expectations and beliefs that collide with many factors in the practicum school's context. Some of them are reflected on the curricular ideologies, available materials, students' behaviors, cooperating teacher or even their own self-perception of teaching. My intention with this study is to share emotions and struggles within me with other pre-service teachers, as we navigate the various ways how university education collides with the realities of becoming future teachers in the field. As a future teacher, I felt glad to open myself up to you and offer hope on the fact that we can learn from each other's BAK, BAK to BAK, in the educational field.

Personally, I found this chapter to be a big challenge to write, mainly because I had to name and make visible my worries, discomforts, and insecurities about English teaching practices and classroom interactions. I also had to admit that I was shy and occasionally ignored the presence of some students at the school. When I started to think about how all of this is part of my personal life, I discovered struggles, limitations, and barriers that I had around myself.

Reflecting on and writing about these experiences brought and will bring for me the opportunity to investigate, talk with colleagues, and find ways to manage those insecurities.

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