



*Desafíos metodológicos para la enseñanza del inglés en octavo grado de la  
Unidad Educativa Zhidmad*

*Methodological Challenges to teaching English in eighth grade at Zhidmad High  
School*

*Desafios metodológicos para o ensino de inglês na oitava série da Unidade  
Educativa Zhidmad*

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## Resumen

El presente estudio de investigación identifica los desafíos metodológicos que enfrentan docentes y estudiantes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera; en el área rural existen desafíos en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés, especialmente en cuanto a su metodología. Esta investigación sigue un diseño descriptivo no experimental. Los participantes fueron 39 estudiantes de octavo grado y una docente del área de inglés perteneciente a la Unidad Educativa Zhidmad en una zona rural del Ecuador. El objetivo es conocer las cuestiones metodológicas a las que se enfrentan los participantes en clase. De acuerdo con las perspectivas de los participantes, los resultados mostraron asociaciones significativas entre las percepciones de estudiantes y docentes con respecto al uso de métodos de enseñanza. Los resultados indican que promover el aprendizaje colaborativo y creativo a través del método Total Physical Response mejora la confianza de los estudiantes. En este sentido, los hallazgos mostraron que es necesario mejorar la motivación y la metodología a través de una propuesta que incluya actividades del Método de Respuesta Física Total en las clases de inglés.

**Palabras clave:** método de enseñanza; motivación; lengua inglesa.

## Abstract

The present research study identifies the methodological challenges teachers and students face in the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language; in the rural area, there are challenges in the English teaching-learning process, especially regarding its methodology. This research follows a non-experimental descriptive design. The participants were 39-eighth-grade students and a teacher from the English area belonging to the Zhidmad Educational Unit in a rural area of Ecuador. The aim was to find out about the methodological issues the participants face in class. According to the participants' perspectives the results showed significant associations between student and teacher perceptions regarding the use of teaching methods. The results indicate that promoting collaborative and creative learning through the Total Physical Response method improves the students' confidence. In this vein, the findings showed that motivation and the methodology need to be improved through a proposal that includes Total Physical Response activities in English classes.

**Keywords:** teaching method; motivation; English language

## Resumo

Esta pesquisa identifica os desafios metodológicos enfrentados por professores e alunos no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de inglês como língua estrangeira; No meio rural existem desafios no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de inglês, principalmente em termos de sua metodologia. Esta pesquisa segue um desenho descritivo não experimental. Os participantes foram 39 alunos do oitavo ano e um professor da área de inglês pertencente à Unidade Educacional Zhidmad em uma zona rural do Equador. O objetivo é conhecer as questões metodológicas que os participantes enfrentam nas aulas. De acordo com as perspectivas dos participantes, os resultados mostraram associações significativas entre as percepções de alunos e professores quanto ao uso de métodos de ensino. Os resultados indicam que promover a aprendizagem colaborativa e criativa por meio do método de Resposta Física Total melhora a confiança dos alunos. Nesse sentido, os achados mostraram que é necessário melhorar a motivação e a metodologia por meio de uma proposta que inclua atividades do Método de Resposta Física Total nas aulas de inglês.

**Palavras-chave:** método de ensino; motivação; língua inglesa.

## Introducción

Education is a right of all people globally. Therefore, it constitutes that right without exception to the entire Ecuadorian population. It is necessary to identify the different urban and rural areas of Ecuador. According to Censo de Población y Vivienda, taking as a resource Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) 62.7%, equivalent to the urban population and 37,3% to the rural population (Scholz, et al., 2015). The present study develops in Zhidmad parish, whose population is 2192 with its predominant indigenous culture and illiteracy of 17.7%.

The rural environment generally has a low population density fewer goods and services than cities, or if they do have them, they are unacceptable conditions. The inhabitants of these areas value, maintain, and respect cultural relations. Therefore, a big question arises: And education for what? The same is related to educational policies, which is the interest of keeping the traditions intact of its inhabitants. Likewise, the few jobs offered, few educational opportunities that cause school dropout, especially the transition from primary school to high school, have generated a migration for education in the city, perceives the necessary way to achieve progress and economic development; causing young people to get a job and collaborate at home.

Based on the researcher's experience, eliminating educational barriers, increasing teachers, control, and investment in the current educational offer are challenges facing the rural population. There are also the challenges of matching the curricula; reducing the access and quality gap; implementing appropriate infrastructure and technologies; linking high school and higher education with the labor market; and finally, changing the look towards the rural since it relates as a space for productive-agricultural development without considering other potential professionals for these areas.

English in Ecuador has become one of the foreign languages taught in schools. According to the national curriculum in 2016, the English subject has 3 hours per week from first to seventh grade and five hours per week since eighth grade (Mendoza, 2017). Teaching English is essential in countries where English is not their first language. Therefore, learning a foreign language is very difficult for learners because they cannot use English in real-life situations. They have to learn sentences from textbooks and not in real-life environments. Teaching is a multidimensional process, and teachers need to give full attention to all students' skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These skills are educated by teachers and learned by students; this article is about methodological challenges to teaching English in rural areas in eighth grade at Zhidmad High School. This study aims to identify the methodological challenges of the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language according to the perspectives of teachers and students, to recognize the appropriate methodologies for teaching English, and to focus on creating a lesson plan to improve these demands. Therefore, the perspectives of students and teachers in the teaching-learning process are valued. Manage a conceptual coverage of the approaches to teaching English, including its definition, especially the Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation methods, its importance, effectiveness, negative and positive and negative aspects. The author applies a survey among the qualitative methods maintaining a questionnaire with the participants who will expose the different challenges they perceive in the teaching-learning process. The research will also appreciate the teacher of the area who will help identify the main shortcomings of the students in the area, and his comments will help the realization of the lesson plan for teaching English to non-native English students. The collection enables non-numerical data collection and helps us explore how decisions and provide detailed information.

## Literature Review

The teaching of English throughout history has experienced different perspectives and teaching methodologies, some of which are more popular and effective than others. English is the dominant international language of the 21st century. About 1.75 billion people usefully speak the world's population as the language of communications, science, information technology, business, entertainment, and diplomacy become the operating system for global conversation (British Council, 2018). Additionally, English skills also offer opportunities for a person's options in emerging economies like Brazil and Mexico. (Hernández-Fernández & Baptista, 2018) English Language Teaching (E.L.T.) has changed over the past decades through the work of linguists, teachers, training methods, and innovative classroom approaches. First, the way refers to the process principles, the pedagogy, and the different strategies used for the proper development of classes within the classroom (Bashakara R. & Elizabeht M., 2007). Teachers choose the method based on the educational philosophy, the school environment, the various subjects of study, and the mission and vision of the educational institution. The main methods used for teaching English are the following:

**The direct approach** encourages students to learn the same way they did when learning the first language. All instruction provides in the target language, grammar inspirationally, speaking, and listening are the focus, and only simple language instructions. Grammar is teaching emotionally, and students have to try it out. Guess the rules thanks to the teacher's oral presentation.

**The Audio-lingual method** aims to improve students' speaking skills before reading and writing. The goal is to teach vocabulary and grammatical patterns through conversation so that students can respond quickly and accurately in spoken language. It does not allow the use of the native language of learners; as an alternative method of teaching, the process is an excellent way to be applied in the first-year students of senior high school to improve their ability in speaking (Rhalmi, 2009).

**The structural approach** means arranging words to form a suitable sentence pattern. Mastering sentence structure is more important than acquiring vocabulary and is based on behaviorism terrorism. To teach language through this approach, one needs to understand the pattern and design of the language (Sejuta, 2017). This method makes several choices to help achieve learning.

**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** focuses on helping students communicate correctly and effectively in real-life situations and use communication to learn and practice the target language by interactions with one another (Spada, 2007).

**The Silent Way** highlights the student's autonomy where the teacher acts as a facilitator encouraging students to be more active in the teaching-learning process and are the ones who have control of their own pace of study. This method looks after a study plan that includes grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in teaching language. The teacher evaluates his students through careful observation, encouraging them to correct their own mistakes (Yüksel & Caner, 2014)

Community learning is one of the methods of teaching English where the student feels safe as it emphasizes the relationship between the student and the teacher. This method involves a psychological aspect of the students who work together to develop the necessary skills to learn the language (Nurhasanah, 2015).

**The grammar-translation method** (G.T.M.) is an old method used to teach languages. The dead languages in the definition refer to Latin and Greek learned to uncover information and access the history of ancient civilizations (“Grammar Translation Method definition”, 2021).

Advantages and disadvantages of grammar-translation, this method is not applicable in the context of language teaching. However, hybrid forms of this method are in various places. Consequently, the advantages (for those who still apply G.T.M.) and disadvantages (those who reject G.T.M.) related to the translation method can be recognized. There are at least two main reasons why some language teachers still use the Grammatical Translation method, which is: associated with practice) and assessment process (reason for procedure). From the perspective of the pedagogical process, this method is still considered effective in teaching for three reasons:

- a. This is the easiest and shortest way to explain the meaning of words and phrases;
- b. This method requires little specialized skills on the part of the teacher.
- c. Students have some difficulty understanding the text because the medium of instruction is the student's native language to explain conceptual problems and discuss the use of grammatical structures. (Bachore, 2014)

Using the G.T.M. can bring benefits, such as:

- 1) Translation allows learners to practice the essential skills (grammar and vocabulary) for accurate, meaningful, and appropriate communication;
- 2) Teachers can use translation to promote interaction among their learners because learners involve negotiating particular possibilities of linguistic forms and meanings;
- 3) Translation activities can help learners interpret, negotiate and express meaning from different perspectives, depending on the context and diverse communities.

We all have a mother tongue or a first language. It shapes how we think and uses a foreign language (pronunciation, word choice, tone, word order). Translation helps us better understand how one language affects another and correct mistakes that often go unnoticed, such as using words or structures (Kaharuddin, 2018).

**Total Physical Response** (T.P.R.) is a method of language instruction built around the coordination of speech and action; he tries to teach language through physical activity (Yulianjani, 2018).

Furthermore, the total physical response to foreign language learning has based on the first language learning model. The pattern has three essential aspects:

- a) An understanding of the spoken language before speaking
- b) Understanding is developed by body movement, and
- c) The stage of listening creates the ability to speak.

The T.P.R. method aims to produce learners with open communication that native speakers can understand that specific learning goals depend on the learners' particular needs.

### *1 Characteristics of T.P.R.*

- a) The target language should present in paragraphs, not just word by word.
- b) Students must understand the target language before speaking by moving their bodies.
- c) Students can learn by observing actions as well perforations on themselves.
- d) It is essential that students feel successful.
- e) Students should not be forced to memorize (Widodo, 2005).

### *2 Advantages*

- a) It is fun; students are happy in class.
- b) It is suitable for kinesthetic learners who need to operate in class
- c) It uses in large or small classes.

Physical actions effectively communicate meaning so that all students can understand and use the target language. The teaching and learning process is essential from the advantages of the total physical response method. It can reduce students' stress, and students will be happy and not easily bored ( Javed, 2021).

### *3 Disadvantages*

- a) Students who are not used to such things may feel embarrassed.
- b) It is only suitable for beginners.

c) Students, in general, are not allowed to express their thoughts brightly.

d) Teach everything with it, and if used a lot, it becomes repetitive.

From T.P.R.'s disadvantages, students lack creativity, teaching and learning become monotonous and only apply to beginners (Gulsanam & Farangiz, 2021).

Teaching methods are an essential aspect of teaching and learning: determining the activities of teachers and students, the quality of the teaching process, implicitly sending messages about what education is, how children learn, and knowledge.

Each teaching method may depend on each teacher and their students. Still, to choose the appropriate way, it is necessary to identify the level of study, be it primary, secondary, or higher education. The age must also be determined—gender, economic situation, social situation. Appropriate methods also depend on the objectives in the teaching process.

Being a teacher requires having knowledge about the subject and assisting and ensuring the needs of students by helping in the teaching process.

## **Methodology**

The present study is a non-experimental descriptive exploratory type, obtaining the data directly through the application of a questionnaire and subsequently analyzed. The results are limited to the sample participants in an educational establishment in the rural area, specifically the Zhidmad school. The frequently used instruments in the academic field are questionnaires and direct observation. The aim is to identify and analyze the challenges students and teachers face in the English as a foreign language teaching-learning process; the sampling generated is non-probabilistic at the author's convenience. The participants are 39 students in the eighth grade of Basic General Education, aged 12-13 years old; 59% of the participants are men, 41% are women, and one participant was a teacher who has been teaching English as a foreign language for at least a decade.

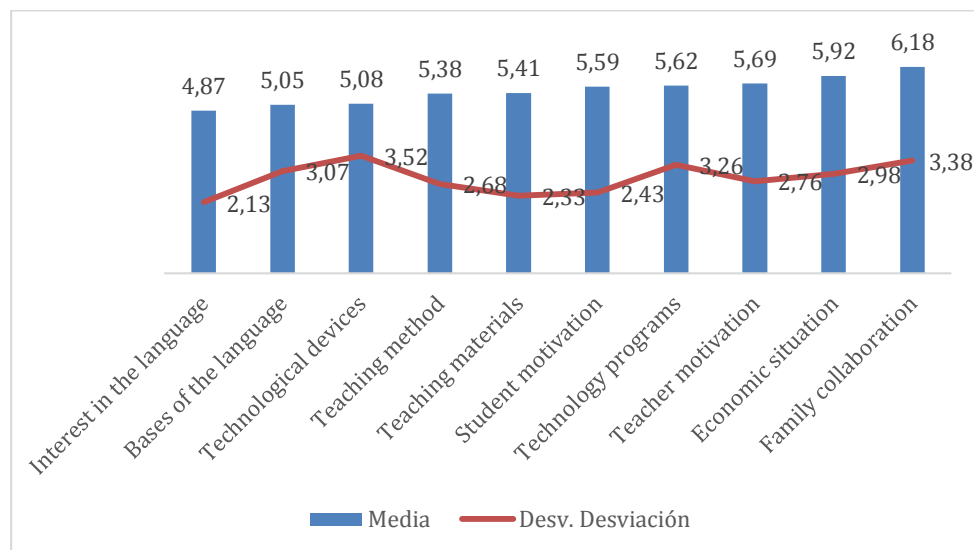
The author of this work has developed the instrument. In addition, approval for the research development obtains through direct dialogue with the institution's principal, with support throughout the process. The scale presented reliability evaluated with the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.945 in the 22 items applied to the students and teacher to know the expectations regarding using the total physical response method (T.P.R.) and the grammar-translation method (G.T.M.). The statistical description performs with the help of SPSS 25 software (Field, 2018). The



results are presented by averages accompanied by the standard deviation measure of variability. This last measure allows us to know how well the mean or average represents since if it is vast, it means that the students and teacher would not agree very much on the answers, while if it is low, they present a higher level of agreement. First of all, the objective was to obtain the perspectives of both teachers and students about the challenges they have in teaching-learning English as a foreign language. Secondly, a questionnaire was applied in which the participants had to select the priorities based on T.P.R. and G.T.M.; it consisted of 26 questions.

## Results

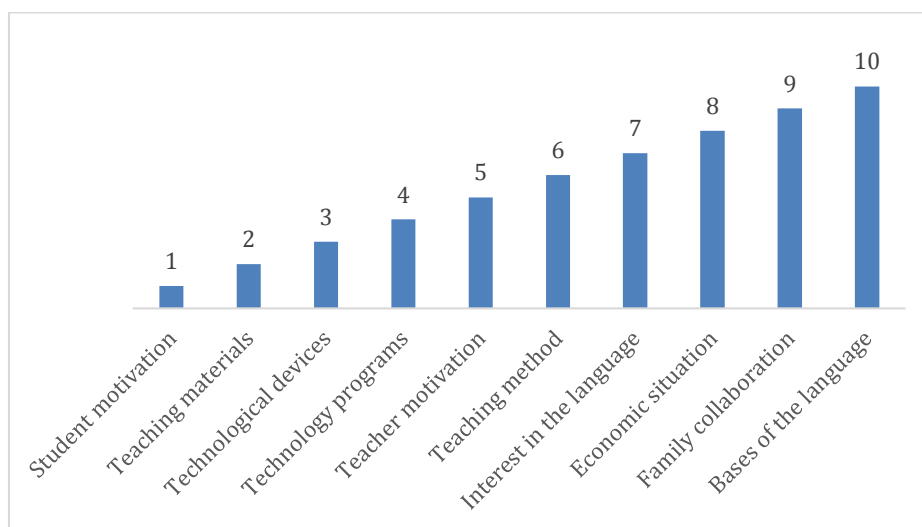
The study sample consisted of 39 students and one teacher from Zhidmad High school. The questionnaire aims to identify the challenges in the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language. Obtaining the following results is demonstrated in the following graphs and tables. The most important is number 1, and the least important is number 10.



**Figure 1** Challenges of teaching and learning English according to students  
**Source:** Elaborated by the author

The averaged results, shown in Figure 1, illustrate minor differences between one and another alternative that, judging by the standard deviation, is between 2 and 3.5 points. On average, students face the most significant challenges, in the first place, the interest in the language (4.87), which is

the part of the lowest standard deviation, and, secondly, the bases in the language (5.05). The third aspect of great importance for students is the technological devices within their reach (5.08); however, in this case, little agreement is noted as it presents a significant standard deviation. Of lesser importance are teaching methods and teaching materials. Lastly, there are aspects related to the internal situation in students' families, such as the economic aspect (5.92) or the collaboration of the family (6.18). In this sense, any proposal should be interesting for students and can use technological devices within an appropriate teaching method.



**Figure 2** Challenges of teaching and learning English according to the teacher  
**Source:** Elaborated by the author

In the same way, the teacher orders the most significant challenge in the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language, considering that the most important is number 1 and the least important is number 10. The ordered priorities in Figure 2; show a different opinion regarding the students. In the teacher's view, the priority aspect is the students' motivation and didactic elements such as teaching materials, technological devices for teaching, and the specialized programs or applications used in the class. Only in fifth place does the teacher identify the teacher's motivation as part of the challenges to be solved. From the teacher's perspective, work should be done fundamentally on didactic aspects to strengthen teaching and learning.

### Appropriate Methodologies

The most appropriate methodology to foster student interest is a questionnaire in which physical answers and grammatical translation are submitted on a Likert scale from 1=Never to 5=Always. These two questionnaires are present in temperature tables, according to which cold colors represent the highest averages and warm colors the lowest averages. (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1** Student and teacher's opinion about the total physical response method

	Mean	Stand. Dev.
Acting out vocabulary words would help me learn the meaning of the word.	4,05	1,04
Repeating vocabulary words would help me learn the meaning of the words and the pronunciation.	4,07	1,07
Asking a classmate questions in Spanish and answering his questions helped me learn.	3,93	1,02
I would instead learn by taking notes and writing than speaking and acting out words.	3,65	1,25
I want to learn in a relaxed environment facilitated by the teacher.	4,08	1,23
The teacher could maintain a friendlier relationship with the students.	4,20	1,14
I want to learn through songs, games, riddles, etc.	4,20	0,99
I want the teacher's way of teaching vocabulary with visual aids (natural objects, photos, cards, and drawings).	3,85	1,51
I prefer that learning occurs through synonyms, antonyms, words of the same family, avoiding translation.	3,75	1,17
Teachers may encounter problems applying the total physical response method during vocabulary activities.	3,70	1,27
To learn, I would prefer expressive language skills (speaking, reading, writing, and listening) and implicit ones (mime, gestures, body movements, among others).	3,93	1,12

**Source:** Elaborated by the author

Table 1 shows the students' and the teacher's answers concerning some activities with the total physical response method. The highest averages point to the response preference of the student and teacher, mainly regarding the friendly attitude of the teacher toward his students and the pleasure they have in learning and teaching with songs, games, and riddles, with an average of 4.20 points, respectively.

The lowest average response item (3.65) was the students' preference for taking notes and drawing rather than speaking and acting out the words. Regarding other proposed activities, there is a high interest on the part of the students in applying the activities of the total physical response method since, in all cases, it borders on the average of 4 points.

**Table 2** Student's and teacher's opinions about the grammar-translation method

	Mean	Stand. Dev.
Speaking Spanish more often in the classroom would help me learn English.	3,72	1,432
The translation only serves to teach grammar.	3,65	1,001
Students who learn through grammar translation do not develop students speaking abilities.	3,45	1,467
Grammar translation improves the confidence of high school students.	3,93	1,207
Grammar translation improves students' English thinking ability.	3,68	1,118
Grammar translation is a primary method for teaching English.	4,07	1,207
Grammar translation is the favorite teaching method of most public school teachers.	3,85	1,145
Grammar translation does not require any teaching aids except a whiteboard and marker	3,73	1,396
Grammar translation is unable to develop students' creativity.	3,65	1,424
Grammar translation only works for teaching grammar and cannot develop the speaking ability of high school students.	3,53	1,301
A grammatical rule is a key to understanding what is said in a foreign language; without it is not clear, there is no communication.	3,87	1,181

**Source:** Elaborated by the author

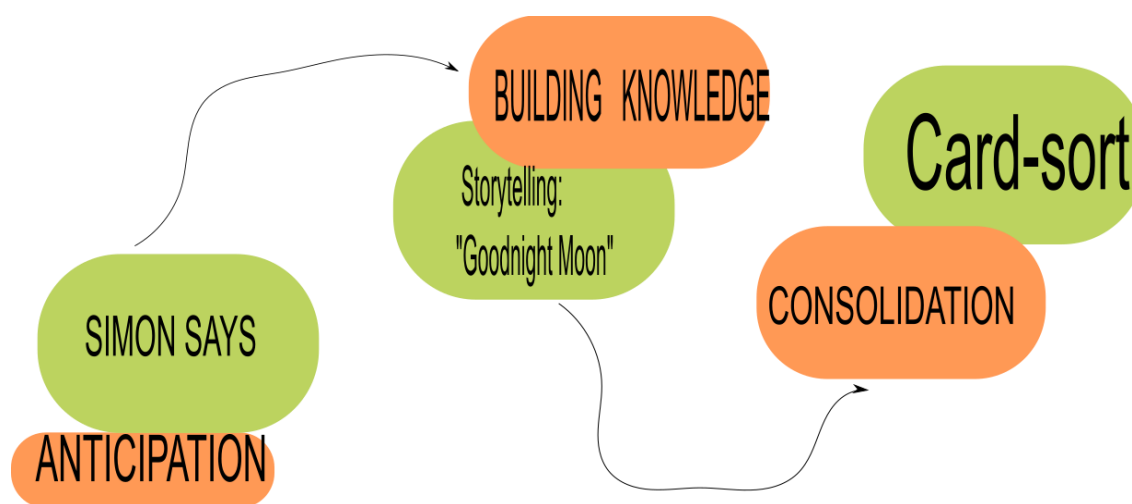
Regarding the expectations of teachers and students for the grammatical translation method, the highest average indicates a coincidence for the option that suggests Total Physical Response is the most basic for teaching English (4.07). An important aspect is that grammatical translation improves students' confidence (3.93), and the lowest average points to the idea that students who learn with the Grammar translation method do not develop the ability to speak with the average (3.45) concerning the other activities. In this sense, the students present a more or less generalized level of acceptance of using the grammatical translation method. However, it is essential to note

that this method has a less general endorsement, around 3.75 points, compared to the total physical response method.

Once all the information analysis, it is essential to point out that the method that generates the most outstanding expectation, judging by the qualification of suitability for learning English as a foreign language, is the total physical response method. However, it is essential to note that decent students do not rule out the possibility of including activities from the grammar-translation method. In this sense, the program must consider improving the students' level of interest, an aspect that they indicate as a priority, through methodologies and adequate didactics that the teacher manifests.

### Proposal

The Total Physical Response method is the most practical according to the results obtained. Therefore, it is suggested the implementation of a lesson plan which includes T.P.R. activities. The Total Physical Response method focuses on teaching language or vocabulary concepts using movement, as happens in babies who learn naturally by imitation, emphasizing a link between speech and action to promote language and vocabulary learning. The lesson plan follows a three-phase model: anticipation, building knowledge, and consolidation.



**Illustration 1** Lesson Plan Proposal  
Source: Elaborated by the author

### Anticipation

**Warm-up: Simon Says:** A vocabulary-based game like Simon Says is similar to the process that occurs when children acquire their first language. Students' will play "Simon" and develop creative

commands and actions for your students to perform. It will help students move, and it is extraordinary when learning different body parts and physical directions like right and left. For instance, students can learn about routines by saying words related to the topic, using gestures, facial expressions, and body movements to illustrate the routine.

### **Building Knowledge**

**Storytelling:** Tell the story to the whole class. It can be anything: fairy tale, adventure, horror, and comedy. Say it with a variety of gestures and actions that students often repeat. The story is a means to teach the meaning; the repetition of key phrases and their respective movements would help focus on the keywords the teacher wants to present to the class, not the story itself. For example, *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown when talking about routines. Telling stories helps students explore new vocabulary. Telling stories using gestures and movements is a way to get students into action, and it is fun and great for creating a quick physical response. The teacher looks at the students. In this phase, students can also watch story videos and try to repeat the actions they see with their bodies.

### **Consolidation**

**Card-sort:** is a quick and easy activity that gives teachers valuable insights into content. The teacher prepares cards of different colors, prints drawings, and writes class routines learned in the previous stages. The teacher asks the class to form four groups and hands out the cards. The students try to match the images with their meanings. After that, one student from each group presents their work.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the challenges teachers and students face are closely related to the methodological ones. In the same vein, it was shown that the best method to be applied in the English classes is the Total Physical Response. It is necessary to implement this method in the development of the class since it promotes interaction in the learning activities, especially when learning vocabulary. Students are enthusiastic about participating in these activities. Although English has become an essential language that helps many people have a better quality of life, with the results it was sensed that there is a difference between learning English in

urban and rural areas. The participants demonstrated that the most common challenges they face in rural areas are related to motivation, methodological issues, and teaching materials.

The author recommends using once-a-week activities of the Total Physical Response (T.P.R.) method because it has greater acceptance in the development of activities since, thanks to direct observation, students learn through visual material mimes acting words. The first T.P.R. is popular with beginners because it actively engages them in classroom activities. This phase can effectively introduce English vocabulary. Second, it has brought significant benefits to students' success in learning English vocabulary. Third, it promotes vocabulary understanding at high speed; it is long-lasting and stress-free. However, T.P.R. can be memorable, helping to link language to actions students already know, allowing them to participate and interact in the classroom.

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