

UNIVERSIDADE DO VALE DO RIO DOS SINOS - UNISINOS
UNIDADE ACADÊMICA DE GRADUAÇÃO
CURSO DE LETRAS

TAÍS CRESTANI SCHMITZ

LANGUAGE PLAY:
An analysis of interactions in context of ESL classroom

São Leopoldo
2021

TAÍS CRESTANI SCHMITZ

LANGUAGE PLAY:

An analysis of interactions in context of ESL classroom

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso
apresentado como requisito parcial para
obtenção do título de Licenciado em
Letras Inglês, pelo Curso de Letras da
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos -
UNISINOS

Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Márcia de Oliveira Del Corona

São Leopoldo

2021

I dedicate this paper to the students who participated in this research. You have made me grow as a teacher, a researcher and a human being.

“And perhaps the ability to play with language may be an essential part of being human.” (BRONER; TARONE, 2001, p. 363).

ABSTRACT

This research paper approaches Language Play (COOK, 1997; COOK, 2000; TARONE, 2000; BELL 2005; BELL, 2011; WARING, 2012), which, despite not being a widely researched field, as it is a considerably recent area of study, has positive aspects for ESL classroom and language learning. LP happens when participants use language with the purpose of enjoyment. It does not serve *directly* to manipulate the environment nor to form and maintain relationships (COOK, 1997). It can be done through linguistic, semantic and pragmatic levels and it is natural and important to human beings (COOK, 2000). The objective of this research is to understand how LP happens during classroom interaction and game play of *UNO*. To accomplish it, the method used was a qualitative analysis of naturally occurring interactions that happened in an English advanced classroom. The participants are two teenage girls aged 13 and 14 years old and their female teacher. The data was transcribed in the light of Conversation Analysis and the moments of playful language were identified and categorized, which led to three main categories: *Biographical play*, *Creation play*, and *Game rules play*. Even though these classifications enable us to see the distinct moments in which LP happens, the greatest conclusion of this research is the importance of the role of alignment among the participants, as it has leveraged the occurrences of LP in the interactions. Another contribution is the understanding that there is space and opportunities inside ESL classrooms for the use of LP, no matter its taxonomies. What is important is to maintain mutual respect and to preserve the moments of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Language Play. ESL. Classroom interaction. Conversation Analysis.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa aborda Language Play (uso da linguagem com o intuito de brincadeira) (COOK, 1997; COOK, 2000; TARONE, 2000; BELL 2005; BELL, 2011; WARING, 2012), que, apesar de não ser um campo amplamente pesquisado, por ser uma área de estudo consideravelmente recente, tem aspectos positivos para a sala de aula de inglês como língua adicional e para o aprendizado de línguas. LP acontece quando os participantes usam a linguagem com o propósito de diversão. Não serve *diretamente* para manipular o ambiente nem para formar e manter relacionamentos (COOK, 1997). Pode ser feito em níveis linguístico, semântico e pragmático e seu uso é natural e importante para o ser humano (COOK, 2000). O objetivo dessa pesquisa é compreender como ocorre LP na interação em sala de aula e durante o jogo *UNO*. Para tanto, o método utilizado foi uma análise qualitativa das interações que ocorrem naturalmente em uma sala de aula de Inglês avançado. Os participantes são duas adolescentes de 13 e 14 anos e sua professora. Os dados foram transcritos à luz da Análise da Conversa e os momentos de Language Play foram identificados e categorizados em três categorias principais: *Brincadeira biográfica*, *Brincadeira de criação* e *Brincadeira de regras de jogo*. Embora essas classificações possibilitem perceber os distintos momentos em que ocorre LP, a maior conclusão dessa pesquisa é a importância do alinhamento entre os participantes, visto que ele potencializa as ocorrências de LP nas interações. Outra contribuição é o entendimento de que há espaço e oportunidades dentro da sala de aula de inglês como língua adicional para o uso de LP, independente de suas taxonomias. O importante é manter o respeito mútuo e preservar os momentos de ensino e aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Language play. Inglês como língua adicional. Interação em Sala de Aula. Análise da Conversa.

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1 - Participant's age in LP previous research used in the <i>Literature Review</i> ...	14
Chart 2 - The features of Language Play	22
Chart 3 - Participants.....	31
Chart 4 - Summary of the data	37
Chart 5 - Identities given during LP	44
Chart 6 - Fictitious ideas created by the students.....	47
Chart 7 - Features of LP (COOK, 2000) in <i>Biographical Play</i>	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Student's book activity	38
--	----

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Total of LP.....	53
----------------------------	----

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Conversation Analysis
CMC	Computer-Mediated-Communication
ESL	English as Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LP	Language Play
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

SUMMARY

1 WHY LANGUAGE PLAY	11
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 TALK-IN-INTERACTION	16
2.1.1 Classroom discourse	17
2.2 LANGUAGE PLAY	20
2.3 POSITIVE ASPECTS OF LP FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING	25
2.3.1 Play as a natural phenomenon	25
2.3.2 Lowering the affective filter and improving intrinsic motivation	26
2.3.3 Improving sociolinguistic competence	27
2.3.4 Legitimate and meaningful use of language	28
2.3.5 Memorization and proficiency	29
3 METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 DATA COLLECTION	30
3.2 PARTICIPANTS AND SETTINGS.....	31
3.2.1 Dani	31
3.2.2 Liv	32
3.2.3 Teacher	32
3.3 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSES	32
3.4 METHOD.....	34
4 ANALYSIS	35
4.1 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PATH.....	35
4.2 THE ANALYSIS.....	37
4.2.1 Biographical play	38
4.2.2 Creation play	45
4.2.3 Game rules play	50
4.3 TOTALITY OF THE FINDINGS	53
5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	57
REFERENCES	60
APPENDIX A – VOICE USAGE AUTHORIZATION TERM	63
ANNEX A – TRANSCRIPTIONS CONVENTIONS	64

1 WHY LANGUAGE PLAY

“Far from being merely for fun, humor is a pervasive and fundamental aspect of the human experience.”¹

The idea to pursue a research in this path happened throughout a long process that started in 2017. It was my first contact with English teaching, at the age of 18, when I got my first full time job experience in a private language course. I was already at University, studying Languages and Arts, more specifically English², and this course is meant to provide its students with a lot of information about teaching, mainly in regular schools. Even though my only contact as a teacher with a regular school was in the last semester of the course, during the Mandatory Practicum³, my professional experience in a private setting was still a great help during my undergraduate studies, because it enabled me to relate theory and practice. As I enjoyed teaching in the English course I worked in, I knew that my undergraduate research would eventually be related to teaching in the context I was inserted into and was relevant to me.

In some of my classes at University, we studied about classroom discourse and what called my attention to it were the articles we read about IRF, which stands for Initiation-Response-Feedback. Another possible variation is IRE, Initiation-Response-Evaluation. From now on, we will refer to it only as IRF. It occurs when the teacher asks a question, gets a response from the students and to conclude, s/he gives a feedback to the answer received. A good example of it is given by Paoletti and Fele (2004, p. 70):

A: What time is it, Denise?

B: two-thirty.

A: Very good, Denise!

Being letter A the teacher and B the student, this type of conversation is different from what usually happens in ordinary conversations, also exemplified by Paoletti and Fele (2004, p. 70):

A: What time is it, Denise?

B: two-thirty.

A: Thank you.

¹ Bell, 2011, p. 152.

² Letras Inglês.

³ Estágio Obrigatório.

The difference is to what is seen in the third line, which is the teacher's feedback, and also the intention of why this question was asked in the first place. In classrooms and in this example, the teacher wants to know if the students are able to understand the question and answer it appropriately, with the correct vocabulary and grammar structure. This is why s/he answers with "very good", to assess the accuracy of the answer. However, in interactions outside the classroom settings, if we ask about the time, it is because we *really* want information on the time, or perhaps we want to be sarcastic with someone who is late, but we do not have interest in the structure of the answer.

IRF called my attention because the more I read about it, the more I realized it is not only common in classroom interactions, but we actually recognize what a classroom setting is because of it, as it is its predictable sequence (GARCEZ, 2006). IRF is a popular research area and it is probably regularly seen inside schools because it allows teachers to have a structure of the organization of the class and to grasp how much the students are learning. As the teachers ask a question, the students must give a response for it, and therefore teachers are able to evaluate it. Giving a correct answer means that the pupils have learned the subject, while giving the wrong one indicates that more study is needed. Some researchers (WELLS, 1993; CAZDEN, 2001; MARKEE, 2005; GARCEZ, 2006; WARING, 2009) have questioned the use of IRF, as it might mean that students are reproducing knowledge and because it does not give space for the students to think of a new perspective nor participate as much as going out of the IRF structure would allow them to. All of this made me eager to see the format and the organization of my own classes, as well as my students' interactions in them.

In addition to that, throughout the semesters, I had some classes in which we read about Conversation Analysis (henceforward CA), such as *Discurso Falado*, *Inglês VI* and *Aprendizagem de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira*. Because of that, I began to be interested in the use of CA as it enables researchers to understand how interactions are co-constructed and which actions participants perform. Until this point of the course, I already knew I wanted to study my own classroom, using CA as a method to analyze the data, which meant I had to use naturally occurring data.

In 2019, *Discurso Falado em Língua Inglesa* gave me the opportunity to do so. The final project for this course was that we had to audio record a real interaction and analyze it using one of the articles we had read during the semester, mainly about

CA research in the education and public health areas. I collected the data in one of my teenage English groups, recording it in October of that same year. During the final minutes of the classes, the students and I used to play *UNO*, a card game not related to ESL learning. When I listened to the recording, I noticed that the students were laughing a lot, making jokes, mocking each other and the teacher and speaking fluently in English. To analyze it, I chose the article by Waring (2012) that had called my attention at the time, which was about *Playful Language*, something I had never heard of during my previous 4 years at University.

As I was doing the project, I realized I had found what I wanted to research about in this undergraduate paper and because of it I continued recording more audios of the group, so in the future I could have more data. After having that project accomplished, I realized how much importance play can have in classroom interactions and for the students' learning as well. More than that, play is an important and a predominant aspect in people's lives, from children to adults and it is a natural phenomenon for human life (COOK, 2000).

Even though young children do play more frequently, probably because of the lack of social obligations, such as work or study, adults do a lot of play as well, especially during their leisure activities (COOK, 2000). One of the greatest examples is the television, which only in Brazil, according to IBGE (2018), is present in 96,4% of households. In fiction movies, actors constantly pretend to be someone else. Another example can be found in the newspapers, which often "are devoted to representing events in weak puns" (COOK, 2000, p. 4). Nowadays, our life is filled with *memes* from the internet and we spend a great amount of time on social media having contact with funny images, videos and fiction scenarios.

Besides the examples of play that exist in our lives, inside the classroom it could not be different. Even though it is considered a busy place, in which many things happen, such as problems regarding prioritizing students' needs or the institutional agenda (PAOLETTI; FELE, 2004), play is also present, for what it is named Language Play or Playful Language, henceforward LP (COOK, 1997; COOK, 2000; TARONE, 2000; BELL, 2005; POMERANZ AND BELL, 2007; WARING, 2012).

LP has not been the focus of attention in past research. It is considerably a new research area, with one of the first main publications being the one by Cook in 1997, with a more detailed book released in 2000. A great deal of research regarding

classroom discourse is precisely on IRF. Other than the shortage of research on LP, it is noticeable the lack of research regarding teenagers' use of it, as the few existing studies are focused on children's or adults' use of it. To accomplish this research, I had trouble finding previous ones that had been done with teenagers. The participant's age of the research used in the *Literature Review* of this paper is mostly from children up to 10 years old or participants above 18 years old, as presented in the table below:

Chart 1 - Participant's age in LP previous research used in the *Literature Review*

Research	Terminology used to refer to the participants	Observations
Hay (1995)	Between 18 and 35 years old	Research on <i>humor</i> , however significant to LP understanding
Tarone (2000)	Young children, around 2 to 5 years old and teenagers aged 11 and 14 years old	Research on L1 and <i>some</i> L2
Broner and Tarone (2000)	Children (age not mentioned)	Research on Fifth Grade Spanish classroom
Hay (2001)	Male and female. Man and woman	Research on <i>humor</i> , however significant to LP understanding
Warner (2004)	18 to 25 years old	Research on CMC ⁴ in a university-level German course
Cetaike and Aronsson (2005)	Children aged 7 to 10 years old	Refugee and immigrant children research
Bell (2005)	18, 24 and 23 years old	Research with advanced students in interaction with native English speakers
Pomerantz and Bell (2007)	University students	University students of advanced Spanish course
Bell (2012)	Adult learners	Research that compares recall of items in serious and playful interactions

⁴ Computer-Mediated-Communication.

Waring (2012)	Adult ESL students	Research done on 8 different adult ESL classrooms
---------------	--------------------	---

Chart 1 - author's source.

It is not only the lack of LP studies with teenager participants that is problematic, but the lack of research about LP in general. When I tried to investigate the real number existing of it, I realized that it is nearly impossible to know, as the words *language* and *play* are fairly common ones, used in studies of a variety of areas and the results presented are many. However, when I took a closer look at the research which is in fact about LP, the real number is much less. Using *Capes Periódicos*⁵, when I searched for *Language Play* it returns 847.262 results. As I scrolled through the pages, the first 12 ones contained relevant articles regarding LP and after it, they contained these two words, but were not about it.

After presenting the motives which led me to study this topic and the relevance of it, the following chapter is about the review of literature. In it, we present information on talk-in-interaction, classroom discourse, as well as IRF, which is briefly described. In addition to that, we present the definitions of LP based on previous research in the area, as well as its positive aspects, to show the reader that it is not just for fun, but there are also pedagogical reasons for allowing these moments to happen in class. In the third chapter, we show the methodology used to conduct the research. We describe the data, the context where it was collected, as well as the participants. This data is analyzed in chapter 4. To conclude, we use the data to try to answer the following question: *what actions happen in moments of LP during classroom interaction?*

⁵ Available in: <https://www-periodicos-capes-gov-br.ez101.periodicos.capes.gov.br/index.php?> Access on: 16 Mar 2021.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

LP has been shown in previous research to be a great ally for many pedagogical reasons, which will be presented in this chapter in more detail. The review of the literature in the area of LP is approached, in which we explain the basics, definitions and past research about it. In addition, we explain talk-in-interaction and turn-taking, as they are important concepts in understanding how conversation happens in the first place. To contextualize LP, we write briefly about classroom discourse as well.

2.1 TALK-IN-INTERACTION

Turn-taking is present in our everyday life. For example, when we go to a restaurant, the waiters and waitresses have an order to serve the clients, serving the ones that arrived first. When we drive our car or motorcycle, we must take turns on the streets, intersections and in traffic lights. We do it also to follow board game rules, to buy tickets on the train station and to vote for our political representatives. These are examples of how common turn-taking is and how sometimes, even without realizing, we take turns in our daily activities.

Turn-taking is present in our everyday lives in different ways and in conversations it could not be different. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) explain that the organization of interactions also happens through its use, which is a clearly coordinated system, as “one party talks at a time, though speakers change, and though the size of turns and ordering of turns vary” (p. 699). Sometimes we take the turn for a long time, such as in an oral presentation for school, university, or work, while other times our turn finishes quickly, as when we say “hello” to our neighbor in the building common areas and expect their response.

In conversations, turn-taking is constructed by two forms, either by *current speaker selects next speaker*, when the current speaker selects the one who is going to take the following turn or by *self-selection*, in which a speaker selects himself or herself. Despite this organization, “there are rarely formal rules about who can talk, when, and about what” (TRACY, 2002, p. 135), because it is negotiated within the conversation itself by the participants.

For Brown (2001) communicating is not simply communicating, but rather interacting with others. For him, “interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication” (p. 165). It is by interacting that “we send messages, we receive them, we interpret them in a context, we negotiate meanings, and we collaborate to achieve certain purposes” (p. 165). Through communication, we cooperate with others and we have goals we want to accomplish. In the classroom, the most frequent goal is that the teacher wants to teach a new subject or the students have a question they wish to ask and understand the answer to. However, it is a fact that classroom discourse is quite different from the one we do daily, so we will have to present it separately in the following section.

2.1.1 Classroom discourse

It is known that classroom interaction is notably different from the interaction in other aspects of life (GARCEZ, 2012), because it is “an instance of institutional talk and in the most familiar form is teacher-led” (MARKEE, 2005, p. 197). Therefore, the democratic choice of who gets to speak next does not always happen in the context of classroom, as McHoul (1985, p. 58–59 *apud* WARING, 2009, p. 797) pointed out, “the ‘next speaker self-selects’ option is not available to student next speakers” and “the ‘current speaker selects next speaker’ option is only minimally available to them as current speakers” (emphasis in original). In general, students do not have the opportunity to decide whether they are going to talk or not, as the next person to speak is usually pointed out by the teacher, who aims for a student to answer his or her question. In the moment a student is speaking, s/he may have the option of selecting the next speaker, but this is not usually what happens in the organization of discourse in the classroom.

Garcez (2006) states that “the organization of talk-in-interaction in the classroom happens in large scale by predictable sequences”¹ (p. 68, our translation). This sequence occurs by using IRF. This sequence is the basis of the so-called traditional classroom discourse (CAZDEN, 2001) and it occurs when the teacher asks a question, whose answer s/he already knows, then gets the answer from a student, followed by the teacher’s feedback or evaluation to it. According to Wells (1993, p. 2),

¹ “Organização da fala-em-interação de sala de aula se dá em larga medida por seqüências previsíveis”.

“it is estimated that this format accounts for some 70% of all the discourse that takes place between teacher and students”. Therefore, it is not only frequent, this structure is usually used by default, meaning that if there is not any reason to use any other type of discourse, the teachers will use it preferentially (CAZDEN, 2001). She refers to IRF as “doing what the system is set to do ‘naturally’ unless someone makes a deliberate change.” (2001, p. 31, emphasis in original).

It is already agreed by the research community of classroom discourse that IRF is its main discourse, being practically ubiquitous (WELLS, 1993) and that the teachers have privileged rights about it (MARKEE, 2005). However, IRF value for teaching purposes has also been studied (WELLS, 1993; CAZDEN, 2001; GARCEZ, 2006; WARING, 2009) and some negative aspects have been pointed out. For Garcez (2006, 2012) IRF means reproduction of knowledge, as it does not require any new formulation from the students’ part. In this case, they are only answering the teachers’ questions, without speculating or generating their own ideas. In addition to that, they tend to accept what the teacher says as an absolute truth, without questioning it. More than these two aspects, the teachers already have an expected answer in mind, so they become indifferent to other possible variations, which lowers the students’ participation, as they know that if a classmate answered what was considered as correct, the answer they have in mind, if different, is wrong.

In Waring’s (2009) findings, “learning is more likely to happen when the understanding issues are generated by the learners themselves” (p. 816), so it is better when they are the ones to bring their own questions to the group discussion instead of only answering what the teacher believes to be relevant. Cook (1997) is also critical towards the belief of authentic, natural and the focus on meaning that the premises of language learning nowadays - and since the 70’s - have. He suggests that these theories were “developed without reference to what learners want or need.” (COOK, 1997, p. 226). He also states that one of the most natural and authentic use of language is LP.

Another characteristic of classroom discourse is that “teachers have the role-given right to speak at any time and to any person” (CAZDEN, 2001, p. 82). In Cazden (2001) book, she analyses classroom discourse and states that this is noticed frequently in traditional lessons, as the asymmetry of rights in the control of the right to speak is visible. The students do not object if the teacher is speaking, but the teacher can interrupt, speak at any volume s/he deems necessary and with any

one at any time. According to her research, the teacher nominates students to speak 88% of the time. In the times when the teachers did not nominate, they reprimanded the person who started to speak half of the time. It means that even when students choose to nominate themselves or their peers in traditional lessons, their attention is often called out because of that.

On the other hand, Cazden (2001) specifies that in non-traditional lessons the participation of students is essential for their own learning and their peers', in the way that the teacher's knowledge is not the only one being accounted for. The questions asked are known to be metacognitive, which means that the teachers wish to understand the students' understanding, by asking questions such as "why do you think this way?" or "can you give me an example?" so the students explain what they are thinking and reflect on what they said, escaping the traditional dichotomy of a right or wrong answer. In this way, the teachers are not just motivated to hear students' ideas and not just his or her own, but they are dependable on students' contributions.

Because of the frequency of IRF, as seen in this chapter, it is comprehensible the number of studies regarding its use in classroom interactions and how much attention it has been given (WELLS 1993; WARING 2009; RUSTANDI AND MUBAROK, 2017). However, "relatively little is known about less 'legitimate' moments such as humor or off-task talk." (WARING, 2012, p. 191, emphasis in original). Markee (2005) defines off-task talk as "interaction that diverges from whatever topic(s) teachers designate as the current class agenda" (p. 197), meaning that it happens whenever students speak about something rather than what the teacher has decided. It happens when students are speaking while the teacher is explaining a subject or when students finish a group discussion and move on to another topic decided by them. Teachers are aware of the potential noise and disturbance for the classroom environment when students are talking at the same time (CAZDEN, 2001). However, Cazden (2001) mentions there is a positive aspect that is often ignored, that off-task talk "may be closer to learners' 'real life' interactional needs" (p. 212, emphasis in original). Another reason to why these moments are not so frequently studied is that "recent research on second language acquisition (SLA) has focused on second language (L2) learners' participation in negotiation of meaning" (BRONER; TARONE, 2000, p.364), as if we could only use language to talk to another person merely out of interactional needs, as to transmit

some information. Naturally, sometimes there is indeed the necessity of negotiating the meaning, as problems with intersubjectivity may appear at any given moment. However, research often ignores that perhaps using language for enjoyment is the participants' main goal at that time (COOK, 2000).

2.2 LANGUAGE PLAY

Defining LP has been shown to be of great importance for many scholars in the past years (BELL, 2005), because it is of relatively new use in research. According to Hay (2001), studying LP, or as she prefers to call, “spontaneous spoken humour”, in natural conversations is quite recent. In the previous years, it was more common for written humor to be studied or even spoken humor, but the one which is “context-free and reusable” (p. 57) and it was mainly researched by using only questionnaires and surveys. This means that the way the data was collected has also changed, perhaps even improved, because of the use of naturalistic data in real conversations, such as by recording audio and video.

To define LP, first it is necessary to define what humor is. Although having a multidisciplinary interpretation, not necessarily focusing on language, Bell (2011) defines humor as “generally recognized as a way of establishing and maintaining friendly relationships” (BELL, 2011, p. 136), meaning that language serves the purpose not only to communicate and share information, but also to entertain. Cook (1997), has a similar interpretation, as “‘play’ very often has something to do with enjoyment and relaxation” (p. 227, emphasis in original) and it is a

[...] behaviour not primarily motivated by human need to manipulate the environment (and to share information for this purpose) and to form and maintain social relationships—though it may indirectly serve both of these functions. (COOK, 1997, p. 227).

It is interesting to realize that Cook has an interpretation of “play” as inherent for all human beings. For him, play is not used with the strict goal of maintaining relationships nor sharing specific information, its use is much broader and at the same time simple, it means we can use language for the sake of it, to have fun and to enjoy. Regarding the use of LP for ESL students, he states that it demonstrates advanced knowledge of language use.

Hay (2001) also states that defining humor can be troubled, but the minimum necessary to have humor is that the speaker needs to have intent in making something funny and that audience response is present. It does not mean that this response needs to be laughter, but the other participant needs to react somehow. According to her previous research (1995), she found out simply - or perhaps not so simply - that humor is anything the speaker intends to be funny.

Waring's (2012) definition of LP inside the classroom context agrees only partially with Cook. For her, LP is not simply designed for fun, but the "essence of play seems to lie in its transformative power of stepping outside institutional roles and constraints." (p. 206). She adds to the understanding of LP, stating that it happens when participants step outside of their role in the conversation or the world that involves the setting of the classroom and use other identities to play, such as the identity of another peer, for example. This removes the aspect of the setting that the students are in and gives them space to play almost as in a different universe, where the rules and characters common in classroom interaction (students and teacher) are not necessarily present.

It is also important to mention how LP happens. Considering the basics of talk-in-interaction and turn-taking, the participants who are playing need to know when it is appropriate or not to use it and by whom - who has the right to do so -, which means that there are certain implicit rules. Also, Cook (1997) states that there are two levels of LP, formal and semantic. The first one has to do with the play of sounds, such as to create rhymes, songs and grammar structures. The last one is the play with units of meaning, using them to create fictional worlds. This classification by Cook is similar to Bell's (2012), which mentions playing *with* language, such as puns, playing with words and sounds, and playing *in* language, by teasing and joking with others and being role-players of imaginary scenarios.

However, in Cook (2000), he mentions three forms in which LP happens, those being the *Linguistic*, *Semantics* and *Pragmatics form*. He also explains each one of the categories inserted in these three forms, demonstrated in the chart below, elaborated by Cook himself:

Chart 2 - The features of Language Play

Linguistic Form	(L1) patterning of forms (rhythms, phonological, and grammatical parallels)
	(L2) emphasis on exact wording
	(L3) repetition (both of parts and of whole texts)
Semantics	(S1) indeterminate meaning (foreign or archaic language, unknown or obscure words, ambiguities)
	(S2) vital or important subject-matter (birth, death, sexual relations, health, etc.)
	(S3) reference to an alternative reality
	(S4) inversion of language/reality relation
Pragmatics	(P1) focus upon performance and upon the speaker and/or writer
	(P2) use in congregation and/or intimate interaction
	(P3) creation of solidarity' and/or antagonism and competition
	(P4) no direct usefulness
	(P5) preservation or inversion of the social order
	(P6) enjoyment and/or value

Source: Adapted from Cook (2000, p.123).

In each of these three forms, there are examples of the features that happen when they are used. In the linguistic form, there are three possible ways, either by using patterning forms, by giving emphasis on a word or by repeating a word. On the semantics level, there are four possible ways, which are using an unknown vocabulary, referring to an important subject, referring to another reality or by changing the relation of the participants. The pragmatics form is the one that has more possibilities, these are: focusing on the performance of the participant, using intimate interaction, being solidary or showing competition, having no obvious usefulness, maintaining or not the social order, and showing enjoyment. One of them or more than one can be found in a LP interaction.

Related to Cook's definition of the pragmatics form of *creation of solidarity*, on Hay's (2001) research on humor, she tries to challenge the main idea that the only

possible reaction to play and of showing solidarity with the speaker happens by laughter. There are many other possibilities to react to and validate it. The first way can be contributing to more humor, by continuing the conversation with more funny topics and maintaining it humorous. Echoing humor - repeating what the other person said - can also be a way to demonstrate understanding and appreciation. Using overlaps, for example, shows great involvement with it and provides the speaker with more support to continue.

Actually, there are “some instances of humor for which explicit support does not seem to be required at all” (HAY, 2001, p. 77), as when using irony - when the speaker states the opposite of what he or she really means - or even “if the humor is itself supporting other humor, it does not require further explicit support.” (HAY, 2001, p. 77). More than that, Hay states that, in some cases, laughing can be an inappropriate response, for instance, in cases in which the speaker is using fun to talk about an unfortunate moment of his or her life. In this sort of case, if the other participants laughed, it would most likely indicate that the audience is finding the speaker's unfortunate situation funny.

Thus, as in some cases we have the need for the audience's interaction, it is imperative to mention some definitions regarding the identities of the participants of the play. Waring (2012) shows that there are three types of appropriated identities while interacting playfully: situational, relational and personal. *Situational play* happens when a participant acts in a different identity than the one s/he has, for example pretending s/he is a teacher to playfully order a classmate to accomplish something. *Relational play* is “enacting symmetrical relationships that are somewhat at odds with the asymmetry typically dominating pedagogical interaction.” (WARING, 2012, p. 199). This is exemplified in this present research, when a group of students is playing a card game and one of them breaks the rule of the game, “treating an otherwise non-negotiable task as negotiable” (2012, p. 199) and, as the teacher is playful as well, they continue approaching the task as negotiable. The last identity is *personal*. It happens when the participants bring to play another participants' personal life or characteristics, or even when the speaker mentions his or her own. This is illustrated in her research when a student is talking about the differences to when she goes shopping in the supermarket and her husband's. She is mocking the fact that she walks through all aisles without a list, while her husband uses one and

goes directly to where he is supposed to, while buying only the essential. She is giving herself the identity of a *shopper*.

It is visible that we cannot do LP without thinking about the identities of the participants. A relevant term related to it used by CA analysts is *ethnomethodological spirit*. This is used to replace the vague term “everyday practices” in social interactions (ANTAKI; WIDDICOMBE, 1998). Also, according to Antaki and Widdicombe (1998),

once we are at a scene, the ethnomethodological argument runs, we shall see a person's identity as his or her display of, or ascription to, membership of some feature-rich category. Analysis starts when one realizes that any individual can, of course, sensibly be described under a multitude of categories. (p. 2).

This means that when we study talk-in-interaction, or even take part of a conversation, we are constantly showing off our identity and what kind of membership we own. Naturally, as fluid human beings, we do not belong to simply one category. We have many identities and each of them may become relevant in a specific interaction, but not in others. In each interaction, “membership of a category is ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored) in local places and at certain times” (ANTAKI; WIDDICOMBE, 1998, p. 2), which means we are not all categories at the same time. Depending on the interaction's participants and topic, we make relevant one or more aspects of our identity. For LP, this understanding is essential, as we are constantly using our own individual categories and our co-participants' to make language fun.

Other than the terminologies related to LP, it is necessary to talk about the reasons for using it. The positive aspects in classroom interaction are often forgotten and Pomerantz and Bell (2007) argue that “in FL classrooms the potential benefits of play are ignored, and little effort is made to include such creative forms of language use.” (p. 574). LP is not considered part of the traditional classroom discourse but it has many useful points for learners and language learning, and they are presented in the next section.

2.3 POSITIVE ASPECTS OF LP FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

LP has been proved to be a great ally for both teachers and students in SLA (COOK, 2000; TARONE, 2000; BELL, 2005; CETAIKE, ARONSSON, 2005; BELL, 2012; WARING, 2012), even though research conducted by Pomerantz and Bell (2007) showed that play was considered an activity that should be avoided inside the classroom, by the teacher and by the students themselves. In it, one of the students commented that she liked working in pairs with a specific classmate for the “wrong reason” (p. 574), as they would always talk about something other than the activity, even though she enjoyed it. Their research demonstrates that LP has an important role in the students’ language acquisition, as to the “development of learners’ identities, multicompetent selves, and communicative repertoires” (p. 575), though the group and teacher could not perceive this. Therefore, in this section, the positive aspects of LP for language acquisition are mentioned.

2.3.1 Play as a natural phenomenon

Play is common for children; this is a well-known fact. The natural aspect for human beings to play was described by Vygotsky (1978), as he writes about children’s development. He defines play as an imaginary world that children invent to themselves mainly to satisfy certain needs, as well as that it is “a leading factor in development” (p. 101). During “play, a child always behaves beyond his average age... play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development” (p. 102), therefore play should not be viewed as an activity that has no purpose. When the children play, they create fictional characters and events and use it to experiment with the language in the real world.

However, it is not only children who play. Adults do it as much in their leisure activities, however they do what is called the *adult fantasy* (COOK, 2000) and they devote as much time as children to do it. For them, there are “fictional narratives created entirely through language” (COOK, 2000, p. 35), which is perceived in novels, soap operas, movies etc. Many adults spend as much free time as possible with this form of entertainment and, as stated by Cook (2000) regarding play, “if adults had the same amount of free time as children, they might spend as much time as children in this pursuit.” (p. 36).

Even though play is usually associated only with children, this happens more frequently because their needs are taken care of by the adults who are responsible for them, and they also have a lot of free time available - and energy. In Cook's previous research (1997), he demonstrates how play is present in human life, in every aspect of it. Adults use it to talk with their friends, when watching television or football matches and sometimes even in their workplace. Waring (2012) mentions that one of the aspects of LP is that it helps students create opportunities to do conversation. It means that play is not only for children, and LP much less.

2.3.2 Lowering the affective filter and improving intrinsic motivation

Tarone (2000) mentions many ways in which LP is suitable and even positive for SLA, such as the power of lowering the affective filter. Affective filter is a metaphor illustrated by Stephen Krashen and it demonstrates attitudes that can hinder learners' success in SLA. By decreasing anxiety levels, it can potentialize the student's acquisition (KRASHEN, 1981). It is believed that the less anxiety the students have, the easier language acquisition will be. For Tarone (2000), "language play might correlate with more positive motivation or attitude" (p. 46), as LP can lower the filter by making the students get relaxed.

Waring (2012) also agrees with the LP factor in contributing to improve students' motivation. She states that "an intrinsically motivated person gains satisfaction from the work itself rather than any external rewards such as money or prestige." (p. 192). This means that the students could be so motivated with the learning itself, that they would not need rewards such as grades to feel fulfilled. More than agreeing with the existence of positive aspects of LP to SLA, she indeed wishes that LP can be legitimated inside classrooms.

These factors are also agreed by Cetaike and Aronsson (2005) as "language play is seen as a pedagogic tool that is intrinsically motivating and facilitates L2 learning." (p. 122). It means that if the students are motivated, they can learn more easily. This can be related with Brown (2000), as he mentions that the students who get satisfied with their own learning start creating a system of self-reward: the more they use the language, the happier they are. It is also likely that the more they use the language, the better learning they will have, as when "learners interact with each other through oral and written discourse, their communicative abilities are enhanced."

(BROWN, 2000, p. 48). One thing leads to the other: the students are motivated, therefore, they are able to interact orally or in the written form with their peers or teacher and when they do so, they are improving their communicative abilities and working on their target language. By doing this, they are already with their effective filter lowered.

2.3.3 Improving sociolinguistic competence

Another way LP helps in SLA is by improving sociolinguistic competence, which is knowing how to use the language properly to deal with social expectations, as having a conversation according to the context. An example of social expectations is understanding the difference between speaking to your close friends and speaking to your doctor.

LP helps students understand these social goals, which happens by mastering “varieties appropriate to the speech communities to which the learner belongs, or wishes to belong.” (TARONE, 2000, p. 46). This way, a student can use a language that does not necessarily belong to him or her, incorporating it to their vocabulary and life. This allows students to own these voices and construct their own identity and also participate in conversations with more resources and freedom of self-expression (TARONE, 2000). Bakhtin (1981) states that

[...] language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 293-4, emphasis in original).

When students use LP, they are aware, even if unconsciously, of him or herself and the other participants, especially when they are using personal identities (WARING, 2012). They may perhaps understand the other speaker's discourse variety by using it to imitate him or her, or even realize the moments the speaker is using that specific language. As Bakhtin (1981) states, we do not use language from dictionaries, but we use it from people. We acquire language from others, and when

we instigate students in using LP, we help them improve, achieve and master several language varieties (TARONE, 2000).

Waring (2012) agrees that play offers learners the opportunity to experiment with different voices that they are not usually used to. For example, they can use the language of their teacher or their parents to play. For her, and following Tarone's (2000) belief, this is what can broaden their sociolinguistic competence. Pomerantz and Bell (2007) also acknowledge this improvement by the use of LP, as "the more and more varied experiences a learner has with the L2, the more that person will develop a strong and broad communicative repertoire." (p. 575). This occurs because language competence happens only through experience and the more the learners use it, the better they are at it. They also mention the importance LP has in helping students develop their own identities when they play with other participants, while also providing opportunities for them to use language in complex forms, which is another way of improving their language use.

2.3.4 Legitimate and meaningful use of language

Brown (2000) states that "language classroom has not always been the best place for meaningful learning" (p. 57), because of the existence of *rote learning*, which would be a disconnected learning from the students' reality, in a way in which they do not see the connection to their own context and are forced to learn by isolated bits, which gives them little chance of retention of this content in a longer period of time.

To be meaningful, mechanical techniques, grammar instruction in excess, memorization and abstract theories should be avoided. LP can modify the idea of "what counts as a meaningful or legitimate act of language use, momentarily reconfiguring the definition of linguistic expertise and broadening the possibilities for acceptable language use." (POMERANTZ; BELL, 2007, p. 557). This is relevant as it broadens the expectations of what an ESL classroom is, making it possible to be less serious, which is possibly more relevant to students' lives. Without mentioning that, by allowing LP to happen, it creates an expectation for the use of this language, making it possible for it to exist naturally, as it is usually not a language form taught in language schools.

2.3.5 Memorization and proficiency

Bell (2005) suggests that LP results in greater proficiency of vocabulary, as LP makes lexical items more memorable, therefore improving vocabulary acquisition. In her research, this happened when one of the participants was elaborating humorous alternatives to describe a beautiful person and because of the funny context, it made these words more remarkable to the others. Bell also states that play draws students' attention to the relationship between form and meaning, as it is required for them to understand the play in context.

In addition, this study shows evidence that language play indicates proficiency, as the participants, who had advanced English level used the target language in their speech to construct an original speech, with native-like formulations, appropriating LP to do so. This is the same thing that Cook (2000) suggested, as he implies that students who use LP are indeed considered fluent and even the use of LP can be considered a test for fluency. He states that "a person who can play with a language in creative and socially-effective ways - to tell a joke or a story - could certainly also buy an airline ticket." (p. 204). This is an example to state that if a student can perform jokes in class in the target language, s/he also can perform other tasks, often considered advanced. Cetaike and Aronsson (2005) also agree with this proposal.

Bell (2012), in a recent quantitative research, probably one of the first regarding LP, suggested that there may be a stronger recall of lexical items that occur while in PLREs (playful language related episodes). With the use of meaning PLREs, which is just one example of the research, the students recalled items 19,8% more than without it. This happens according to the interactionist perspective, which states that learning occurs *with* the interactions, and not in its conclusion nor because of it. The reasons why it happens may have been given by Broner and Tarone (2001), as they stated that as LP is fun and amusing, it gives pleasure and emotional excitement. As such, the emotional excitement that comes with language play may simply make the L2 discourse more noticeable.

A brief review on the positive aspects of LP finishes in this section. In the following chapter, the methodology which based this research is presented.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodological procedures used to accomplish this research are explained. To answer the question that guided this research, I used naturalistic data with audio recording of an ESL group. In the first section, I explain how this data was collected. In the following one, I describe the participants and the settings of the recordings. Then, I detail the organization of each class and finalize this chapter with an explanation regarding the method used for the analysis of the data.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The data consisted of 16 audio recordings of advanced teenage English classes. The data existed prior to this research, as I used part of it in a project for a University course. The recordings added up to almost 3 hours and 30 minutes, which were recorded during the period of two months, from October to November 2019. During this period, the classes were recorded in audio only, without video, using an iPhone app, called *Voice memos*. Only in 2020, when I started this Undergraduate paper, I transcribed the data, as in 2019 I used only one of the audios to do the project.

The idea to record the audios was presented to the students as an assignment I had to do for University, for the *Discurso Falado* class, for which I had to record a real conversation and analyze it according to one of the texts we had read. At the time, I decided to record a classroom interaction, but I did not have anything in mind and the data led me to notice LP, which called my attention after reading a text by Waring (2012), which is used in great length in this paper as well.

To collect the data, I sent a written message to the parents, as the students were both minors, and they replied giving me consent to perform the recordings. After I finished the assignment, I mentioned to the students I would like to use the data to do my TCC, which would be done in the following year. They enjoyed this idea and told me I could use the audios for this purpose as well. To formalize it, I sent to the parents another written document so they would sign it authorizing me to use the recordings.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS AND SETTINGS

The classes took place in a private English course situated in the center of Sapucaia do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The group in question was formed by two teenage female students, who had been classmates for about three years, since they started the course. Even though they were not best friends, they had a good interaction and proximity, as well as a lot in common.

The course offered a learning methodology in which the classes were conducted 100% in English, from the elementary levels until the final stage. The teenager course covers the age of 10 until 15 years old and has duration of 3 years, divided in 6 semesters, totaling 2 per year. The group was doing the final semester and they met face to face twice a week for 1 hour and 20 minutes each day, for about 16 weeks each semester. It is important to note that both students are fluent in English. Also, even though they knew the audio was being recorded, they showed normal behavior and did not seem shy or affected by it.

The following chart presents an overview of the participants' name¹, their role in the interaction and their age.

Chart 3 - Participants

DANI	Student	13 years old
LIV	Student	14 years old
TEA	Teacher	20 years old

Chart 3: author's source.

3.2.1 Dani

Dani was a 13-year-old girl at the time, who had studied in the school since the first year of the course, almost three years prior to the recordings of this data. She started the course at 10 years old, with no previous knowledge of English than what she had studied in the regular school, but showed great progress throughout the course. Though she speaks a lot in class, probably because the group has only two students, she is an introverted. She rarely starts the conversation topics

¹ Participants' names were modified to protect their privacy.

nor is the one who speaks the most, even though she is fluent and totally capable in the language.

3.2.2 Liv

Liv was a 14-year-old girl at the time the audios were recorded, and studied since the beginning of the course in the school. She was born in London, England and moved to Brazil when she was about 4 years old. Even though she does not remember much of that time, she had a lot of previous contact with English in her childhood, even though her L1 is Portuguese, as it is her mother's as well. After coming to Brazil, she did not have any more contact with English other than in her regular school, but she had always shown much ease with the language. She is talkative and loves telling stories about herself and making comments on other student's as well, making her usually the center of attention, which is appreciated by her.

3.2.3 Teacher

The teacher was 20 years old and had been with the group since the students started studying English. She is talkative and enjoys participating in the activities with the students, by giving her own examples and answering the questions. She enjoys making the classes as informal as possible and accepts students' suggestions of activities. She appears attached to the group and does not have problems sharing some of her life with the students, if they ask about it, which they know plenty about.

3.3 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSES

The classes were conducted mainly by following the students' book, with almost all the activities being oral, as the course's methodology requires the students to complete their written exercises at home, to give maximum time in class for oral production, which is the focus of the language school they are in.

As the group was already advanced and had few doubts regarding vocabulary or grammar, at the end of each class they would play *UNO*, a card game which the students enjoyed. The idea of playing this game during the classes came from the

students and in a natural way. As they studied together since the beginning of the course, for about 3 years, they had familiarity with each other and the teacher to suggest other activities. The group always had the habit of playing games in class, but usually they were created with the intention to teach something specific, such as grammar or conversation topics. Because the group was already finishing the classes, they wanted to do something different.

As the teacher and the researcher are the same person, it is relevant that some aspects are made clear. I did not accept this proposal of the students to play *UNO* simply to kill time in class. I thought it was a good idea for the students to use English during a game, similarly to what they would do in Portuguese. My main objective was to see how my advanced students would use English while playing a game they could play in their L1.

As to clarify, *UNO* is not a game with the purpose to teach English and I did not adapt it for this purpose. The group played the game following its original rules, which means they start the game with seven cards and, to win, in each round they must discard cards in order to be left with none. The players do not need to say anything during the game, other than “uno” if they have one card left. It is common knowledge that when people play card or board games, they speak about the game itself, who is the one to play in this round, if the players are doing something that does not follow the game rules, and they sometimes speak about other topics during games or tease each other about who is losing or winning.

I did not modify the classes or told the students to do something differently than normal, I just explained to them that I would be recording the classes. On the day I began recording, I was focused only on the parts of the class we were playing *UNO*, as I thought it would be more interesting and maybe different from my colleagues from University. I carried out the entire class normally and pressed the recording button the moment we started playing the game. However, after some weeks I decided to record the entire class, in case I found something relevant and decided to change my topic. This is the reason why I have both recordings, from the game and from the traditional parts of the class. In addition to that, we did not play *UNO* because of the recordings, I recorded the audios because of *UNO*. This means that we had already been playing it regularly at the end of the classes throughout the semester.

3.4 METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative analysis of a naturally occurring interaction that happened in a classroom of ESL. After the data was recorded, it was transcribed using the system developed by Gail Jefferson (1984, adapted by Schnack, Pisoni and Ostermann, 2015) and the principles of Conversation Analysis. CA sees talk-in-interaction as a social aspect, as a means to do things in the world. "CA is an analytical tool designed to uncover the tacit methods and procedures of social interaction by conducting detailed analysis of naturally occurring data transcribed from audio or video recordings." (Waring, 2012, p. 195). CA happens by analyzing recordings of real-life interactions, which are known to be naturally occurring data. The data analysis is done using an emic perspective; the perspective of the participant's themselves, "not from any exterior, God's eye view, but from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of 'what is going on'." (HUTCHBY; WOOFFITT, 1998, p.15, emphasis in original).

After the transcripts were done, they were examined closely and the playful interactions were noted, as they emerged in conversation. To perform the analysis, first the study of LP was made indispensable. As LP is a much more recent area of study, with its first important publications dating 1997 on, there is not much study about it, as more focus of classroom interaction is given to other areas, such as IRF, for example. Some main and most relevant articles regarding LP are from Cook (1997, 2000), Tarone (2000), Bell (2005, 2011, 2012) and Waring (2012). After this part was completed and we could understand the instances of the classes that were treated as fun by the participants themselves, we categorized these moments in three sections that were frequent for this data. The analysis is presented in the next chapter.

4 ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first one is called *Reflection on the research path* and it is my reflections and explanations to the reader about the data, as some questions can arise. The second section is the analysis itself, in which we show the results of my data collection and present LP divided in three categories that we noticed as most relevant during the ESL classes. Also, we relate the data with Cook (2000) and Waring (2012), as similar characteristics are perceptible. The last section is called *Totality of the findings*, in which we present the total number of LP present in the entire data, not just what was possible to present in this research.

4.1 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PATH

Firstly, it is relevant to mention that I am aware that the reflection section of a research paper is commonly done after the analysis of the data, but as it is a specific case, it is better to start backwards, and the reader will soon understand the reason why. This is a reflection that the path of the research has shown me and I believe it comes to the humbleness of the researcher to come across unexpected surprises and frustrations and to share them with the reader as well.

It has become clear, after analyzing the data, that some readers may believe I have been misled by the data itself. Perhaps indeed I was a researcher too immature to realize it at the beginning of this undergraduate work, and it may seem that I tried to fit these recorded audios into the research theme of Playful Language, and I did not let the data itself show me the path. This is the reason it is relevant to make things clear.

After having researched much about LP and matured as a researcher, I started the analysis of the data and it showed me that LP *is* present in it, which will be shown in detail in the next subchapter, but perhaps it was secondary. I now believe that the primary aspect present in the recorded audios was the construction of the alignment among teacher and students, as the frequent contact during the period of 3 years provided that the group became too close and too informal. Alignment does not necessarily arrive from the proximity of a person to another, even if it is from a lengthy period of time, but it derives from connection among people. It is present in this data, as much of the time the students and the teacher were

performing the renewal of this alignment, by showing previous knowledge of each other's private lives and teasing each other.

Indeed, this alignment was so deep into the veins of the group, that in some cases it is difficult for an outsider to perceive who the teacher is and who the students are, as everyone acts informally and uses vocabulary sometimes not associated with classroom interaction. The moments of teacher talk that are clearly visible happen when the teacher is guiding the class by following the activities of the book, by helping with vocabulary and correcting exercises. However, in most cases, the teacher even gives her own answer to these questions, transforming the class into a conversation with the students and possibly modifying the asymmetry that exists in classroom discourse into a symmetrical one. I will not start a discussion whether this is a good or bad thing, as it would be necessary to do extensive research to successfully accomplish this discussion. In addition, I believe that, as I am both one of the participants and the researcher, my opinion would be too biased regarding this topic to reach a conclusion without putting my personal feelings and beliefs in the way.

Along with the alignment, which possibly is more present than LP itself, it is pertinent to mention that the concept of LP, or more specifically the "play" in it, might have influenced me in a certain and unconscious way. Maybe the research, as I wanted to do initially in focusing on *UNO*, the game played in the classes and used in this data, may have been unnecessary. Maybe this relation of "play" and "game" misguided me into focusing on a part of a class in which predominated the rules of the game and not the classroom discourse or LP.

However, another relevant aspect to mention one more time is that I stand by what I mentioned in the methodology: I recorded the audios because we were playing *UNO*, which at the time I thought would be relevant to the research, which means we were not playing *UNO* because I was recording. The students were the ones who chose the game to be part of our class and I agreed, which happened weeks before the data was recorded. Even if there are many other aspects that can be researched, as in *any* data, I found aspects of LP and I will defend this research as a valid one. Of course, the readers are welcome and will reach out to their own opinions and will agree or not depending on their point of view. For this reason, I am still going to present the *UNO* data as well as the parts of traditional classroom

discourse, however I will not be separating them in a different subsection, as I was planning too.

This reflection, other than maturing me as a researcher, was meant to say that during the analysis I found more than 35 accounts of LP and could classify them in three categories. I do not believe this research was in vain, as it brings to life LP as it happens in the real classroom and can help other future researchers. This serves as a lesson learned for me and perhaps for other people who are beginning at research: let the data speak by itself. I also suggest that it is not good to analyze data if you are participating in it, especially if it evokes sentimental feelings, as it can be difficult to see clearly and rationally, and to accept criticism about it.

4.2 THE ANALYSIS

The analysis done in this chapter shows how participants use LP in different moments of class: the traditional section, which consists of most part of the class, and happens when the group is following the book's suggested activities and doing oral exercises. The secondary moment is at the end of the classes, more specifically when the group is playing the card game *UNO*. The analysis was conducted by looking deeply at the data and trying to identify the similarities among all the LP and creating categories out of them. Besides that, after forming these categories, we wanted to see how they appear and are carried out during the traditional and during the *UNO* parts of the classes.

In chart 4, the summary of the data is presented, to make it easier for the reader to understand the parts of the class in which each example is fit, as well as the date¹ of the recording, which might be useful when thinking about the timeline of when it was recorded.

Chart 4 - Summary of the data

Examples	Date of recording	Part of class
1. You're rich	08/10/2019	Traditional
2. When she's 90 years old	08/10/2019	Traditional
3. It's always you	10/10/2019	UNO

¹ The date is written according to the Brazilian date format (day, month and year).

4. Vegetarian zombie	08/10/2019	Traditional
5. We're the <i>bestest</i>	08/10/2019	Traditional
6. No you cannot do that	10/10/2019	UNO
7. I'll improvise my game	21/11/2019	UNO

Chart 4: author's source.

Chart 4 shows that most of the examples used in this research happened during the period of only 3 classes, in the days of October 08th, 10th and November 21st of 2019. Even though we had other 13 recordings of other days, these were the ones which grouped the majority of LP, which is the reason they called our attention. In addition, we used four examples of LP that happened in the traditional and three in the *UNO* parts of the classes. However, as mentioned in section 4.1, we will not separate these two in different subsections, just in the one specific case when the analysis shows that one category of LP happens specifically in one type of the class and not the other.

4.2.1 Biographical play

One of the ways to accomplish play presented in the data is what we decided to call *Biographic play*. These cases are seen when the participants use their previous knowledge of each other's personal lives, characteristics and preferences to LP. They probably occur mainly because of their extensive time spent together as a small group.

One such manifestation of LP happens by mocking a statement based on a delicate topic: social class. This is usually treated with caution by participants in conversations and it is one of those *taboo* issues that people usually do not play with, especially if it is about somebody else's social class. In the following segment, the group is doing a written exercise suggested by the book that ends up turning into an oral activity. The activity is shown by figure 1.

Figure 1 - Student's book activity

STRESS & PRESSURE

CHAPTER 19

1) What makes you stressed? Classify these situation from 1 to 10, 10 being the most stressed. Then, discuss your answer with a partner. Add 4 more things that make you stressed.

a) Riding the bus when it is very full. 5

b) Waiting in line for a long time. 8

c) Working under pressure. 5


d) Studying for a big test. 1

e) Problems with money. 10

f) Having many things to do in a short period of time. 10

g) Traveling by airplane. 2

h) Speaking in public. 1



Source: MONTEIRO, Sérgio. **S.A.T.**: Second Semester. 1 ed. Belo Horizonte: 2011.

Example 1. You're rich

1 TEA so okay you have there °mhm° (.) some °mhm° some situations
 2 letter a to (.) h and >then you have to number 1 to 10< if the
 3 situations make you stressed like if it doesn't make you
 4 stressed it's 1 and if it makes a lot of stress @ if it
 5 causes you a lot of stress then it's 10 (.) and letter i j k
 6 and l you are going to ADD to create other 4 different
 7 situations that make you stressed. (.) okay.
 8 (0.5)
 9 TEA it's individual °so you can do it by yourself°
 10 LIV but==
 11 TEA =>THEN were going to compare==<
 12 LIV =but-
 13 (.)
 14 TEA what.
 15 (0.5)
 16 DAN @ what
 17 LIV @@@@
 18 TEA @ wha::t
 19 LIV i was going to say that- °if we could talk° xxx
 20 TEA OKAY so↓ riding the bus when it is very full how stressful is
 21 it for you.
 22 LIV i never (.)@ ride the bus
 23 TEA OKAY::

24 DANI cause you're ri::ch
 25 TEA because you're rich?
 26 LIV @@ no.
 27 TEA NORMAL PEOPLE they ride the bus. so dani how do you feel?
 28 DANI <i feel a little bit stressed but not very much>
 29 TEA °uhum°
 30 DANI °so 4°
 31 LIV i would put like. (.) 5?

The teacher starts the segment by explaining the activity suggested by the book to the students (lines 1-7). In the exercise, the students are presented with some stressful situations and they must number them from 1 to 10 according to how much it stresses them in their daily lives: if the action does not cause stress at all, they should put number 1, while the opposite extreme would be number 10. After a considerably long pause (line 8), which demonstrates that the students do not understand or agree with the activity, the teacher explains that it is supposed to be done individually. She is then interrupted by LIV, in line 10 with “but”, which the teacher ignores in the following line to continue explaining that their individual answers are going to be compared after they finish. From lines 12 to 19, the group is trying to negotiate what they are supposed to do, as they are laughing and asking “what” to each other, to demonstrate they are not understanding each other (lines 14, 16 and 18).

These doubts are resolved by LIV, in line 19, who presents another alternative for doing the activity. Even though the teacher had previously suggested the students to follow the book and write their answers down individually, the student prefers to do it as a group speaking activity. The teacher does not show any sign of disapproval and starts the activity as suggested by her and begins by asking the first question orally, in line 20.

It is interesting to observe that up to this point, the roles of teacher and student are visible, as the teacher is *doing being a teacher* by explaining the activity and dealing with moments of silence, as seen in line 8, when she continues explaining, and in line 13, when she asks “what” as to try to understand the reason the students are not doing what they are supposed to. Just moments later, LIV breaks her traditional role of *doing what the teacher has told* by suggesting another form of accomplishing the activity. Waring (2012) explains that this happens by “enacting symmetrical relationships that are somewhat at odds with the asymmetry typically

dominating pedagogical interaction” (p. 199). It perhaps can be explained by the three years that the group spent together, by having such familiarity with each other that the students feel comfortable in suggesting changes to the teacher’s planning.

Following the course of interaction, the students answer the teacher’s question, which is if the students feel stressed when riding the bus (line 20). LIV is the first one to do so, by stating that she never rides the bus, much to the amusement of the other two participants, who play with her by saying that it happens because she is rich (lines 24 and 25). They use LP while laughing, to ease the situation. It is interpreted as a joke by LIV, which in line 26 denies this statement with another laugh token. Playing with what is considered a polemic topic to the community is usually avoided, especially when talking to a person you are unfamiliar with, because it is considered rude and can be understood in a negative way. It shows yet again how familiarity can be an important aspect while language playing. Besides feeling comfortable in playing with social class, and by effectively doing so, DANI and the teacher are showing previous knowledge of LIV’s personal life and social status. By accepting the comments as a joke, LIV demonstrates alignment to what the other participants consider something to be played about.

Some moments later of the same class, the students gather to play with the biographic knowledge they have on the teacher. This is demonstrated by the following transcription.

Example 2. When she’s 90 years old

1 DANI <when we go. (.) like to another place and> we're not like
 2 studying english >you ((to the teacher)) will like< listen and
 3 just like cry.
 4 LIV °what?°
 5 DANI thinking of us? @@@
 6 LIV YEAH:: @ she's gonna listen >to this audio< when she's
 7 like <90 years old> and she's thinking <°where are they now°>
 8 DANI drinking a beer @
 9 LIV no @@ wine
 10 DANI wine yeah
 11 LIV eating like vegan cheese
 12 DANI on berlin
 13 TEA yeah:: of course if i don't die in berlin i'm going to come
 14 back and i'm going to haunt <EVERY SINGLE ONE>
 15 that ever came to my life because i'm going to be very

16 miserable (.) 'cause i want to die in berlin.

Between lines 1 and 5, DANI starts constructing the idea that in the future, the teacher will listen to the audio of this data and will cry thinking about the students. LIV joins in, in line 6 and 7, and specifies that this would most likely happen when the teacher is around 90 years old. In the following lines (8-12), the students start listing possible scenarios of where the teacher will be and what the teacher will be doing, based on what they know of her tastes and personality. In line 8, DANI mentions that the teacher will be drinking beer², which is disagreed by LIV in line 9 (“no, wine”), indicating that she is aware of the teacher’s preference for wine instead of beer, which is then agreed by DANI by the use of the agreement token “yeah”. LIV adds that the teacher will be likely eating vegan cheese (line 11), as they know the teacher is a vegetarian, and DANI states that this scenario will be in Berlin, a city they know she has traveled to and enjoyed.

This example shows both students engaged in making LP happen by using the knowledge they have on the teacher’s private life, who demonstrates agreement with them by laughing and giving support. The shift from classroom interaction, in which the group is correcting an exercise, to an everyday talk is accepted by the teacher herself, who joins in to acknowledge everything the students are saying, in line 13-16 (“yeah of course if I don’t die in Berlin I’m going to come back and I’m going to haunt every single one of you”), showing that she probably recognizes herself in what the students have said.

The third and last example of biographical play presented in this research can also be found when the group is playing *UNO*. The following transcription demonstrates that.

Example 3. It’s always you

1 DANI °it was me right°
 2 TEA yes it's always [you]
 3 LIV [it] was always you.
 4 TEA @ sorry
 5 LIV @ go dani
 6 TEA °<sorry sorry sorry>°

² The teacher does not influence the students into drinking alcohol. They follow her on *Instagram* and therefore have access to everything she posts, even outside of work hours.

7 LIV @@@@
 8 TEA ((clears throat))
 9 LIV dani (.) °yeah:: teacher°
 10 TEA do you know that you always ask dani to go, you are so (.)
 11 impatient you don't [have] any patience right
 12 DANI [LIV go] please go LIV ((in a different rhythm))
 13 TEA go LIV go LIV go go
 14 LIV I BOUGHT @@

In the first line of the transcription, which is the start of the game as well, DANI asks if she is the one who is supposed to start playing in this round. LIV and TEA answer almost simultaneously that it is *always* her. As noticed in every game recorded for this data, DANI frequently reaches a point where she does not know if she is the one to play at that time, which has become some sort of internal joke for the group. In line 5 LIV briefly calls DANI's attention to the game, which is pointed out by the teacher as frequently done by LIV, in line 10, as well as stating that her student is very impatient (line 11).

In line 12, DANI herself decides to mock LIV, the same way she usually does to her, by asking her to play ("go LIV go LIV go go go"). It is not possible to view this on the transcript, but the student makes use of a sarcastic voice and even a different tone and rhythm while she is saying it, with the goal to sound exactly like LIV does. This is what Tarone (2000) mentions when she writes about the participants using LP to grasp the variety of the others. DANI is using LP to apply LIV's style of voice and choice of words as her own. Also, the actions performed in this example can be recognized as biographical play, as everyone in the group is displaying previous knowledge of each other's behavior while on gameplay and they joke with it.

Biographic play is quite similar to what Waring (2012) defined as *Play with personal identities*, which happens when "life outside the classroom is used as a resource for constructing play in the classroom" (p. 203). He gives the example that a student displayed self-mockery and put herself in the identity of an obsessive shopper. We believe however that *Biographic play* is a bit different from this, as the identity is not self-given and it demonstrates knowledge of the other person in a deeper level. The focus of the play, whether it is the personal identity, preference or actions that are frequently done, is not noticed because of *one* conversation, but from a deeper coexistence and awareness of each other.

In addition to the relation to Waring's (2012) research, Cook's (2000) classification³ appears in these examples as well. Starting with example 1, the group uses LP with linguistic form by using repetition ("what", in lines 14, 16 and 18) to both give emphasis to their misunderstanding and to amuse each other. Also, they make use of pragmatics' intimate interaction, when they are joking about LIV's social class. In example 2, the group uses play with semantic form. The first one happens by referencing an alternative reality, when the students are imagining a future situation in which the teacher will miss them, and the other one is by using an important subject matter, which is the teacher's preferences and characteristics (Berlin, wine and vegan). The third example shows the *inversion of the social order*, which is considered pragmatics form, when the students are attacking each other because they take too long to play the game. Other than that, example 3 shows evidence of LP with linguistic form by *patterning of forms*, when DANI uses a different rhythm, almost like singing, to mock LIV, and *repetition*, when using words such as "go", both by DANI and the teacher, to repeat and emphasize their mockery.

Other than the taxonomies by Cook (2000) and Waring (2012), it is noticeable that the group uses *Biographical play* at great length to create distinct identities for the other participants, beyond teacher or students. These identities are reviewed in chart 5.

Chart 5 - Identities given during LP

Example	Identity given by	Identity received by	Identity
1. You're rich	DANI and TEA	LIV	Rich
2. When she's 90 years old	DANI and LIV	TEA	Wine drinker, vegan and Berlin lover
3. It's always you	LIV and TEA	DANI	Distracted player

Chart 5: author's source.

Chart 5 shows the summary of the identities that the participants give to one another. They use their previous knowledge of each other's characteristics to put the others in certain identities to joke with them. In the case of 1. *You're rich*, the teacher and DANI put LIV as an identity of "rich", while in 2. *When she's 90 years old*, the

³ See Chart 2.

students put the teacher in the shoes of a vegan, wine drinker and Berlin lover, and in 3. *It's always you*, LIV and the teacher put DANI in the shoes of a distracted player.

4.2.2 Creation play

Another category of LP seen during the recordings is what we named *Creation play*. It is used only by students, in these cases, who are creating imaginary situations and vocabulary words with the help of LP. This is evidenced through the transcription that follows.

During the class, the same one as in 1. *You're rich* and 2. *When she's 90 years old*, the group is talking about the stressful situations, as suggested by the book⁴. The conversation evolves to something not related to the activity, as one of the students starts imagining an apocalyptic situation and then the other one goes along with it, helping to create an imaginary scenario.

Example 4. Vegetarian zombie

1 DANI i always imagine [like-
 2 TEA [oh] we're such horrible people
 3 DANI like we have (.) apocal-
 4 TEA Apocalypse
 5 DANI apocalypse [like]
 6 LIV [@@@]
 7 DANI i would be- like zombie apocalypse so if i=
 8 LIV =I WOULD totally give
 9 myself to the zombies [so i would turn] into a zombie
 10 DANI [no::]
 11 DANI i would be the person that have like a gun and just like aaa
 12 ((imitating the sound of a person screaming))
 13 LIV i would be the person that gives itself to zombies >because
 14 i'd rather be a zombie than be a human running from the
 15 zombies<
 16 (.)
 17 LIV think of that @ it's a zombie apocalypse why run from †them (.)
 18 you-
 19 TEA I WOULD run from them totally
 20 DANI yeah @@

⁴ See Figure 1.

21 LIV i would be a part of them (.)it's much nicer @ you xxx you
 22 don't need to run @
 23 DANI @@
 24 LIV >>you don't need to think of anything @@ <<
 25 DANI °@@ you don't need to run°
 26 TEA hhh okay that makes all the sense
 27 LIV @@
 28 DANI @@
 29 TEA .hhh like okay i'm not gonna
 30 LIV °just be a pacific zombie° and don't KILL anyone. @@@@
 31 DANI but you're dead
 32 LIV YEAH so what? @
 33 (0.4)
 34 DANI then you're not-
 35 LIV pacific zombie
 36 TEA @@@ pacific zombie
 37 LIV PACIFIC ZOMBIE @@@
 38 DANI @@ vegetarian zombie
 39 LIV @@@ vegan zombie
 40 TEA @@@@ i cannot kill people i'm vegetarian
 41 DANI @@
 42 TEA oh my goodness @ °why are we saying things like these always°

This conversation section starts by DANI imagining a situation in which a zombie apocalypse is happening. She started this topic after the group talked about sentence *g) traveling by airplane* in the book. This topic is not at all related to the activity, but emerged purely out of the student's mind.

After DANI introduces the zombie apocalypse topic, in line 1-7, LIV goes along naturally with it, in line 8, even stopping DANI in the middle of her sentence and not letting her finish it, just so herself could continue, demonstrating excitement with the idea. Even though talking about a zombie apocalypse is not a common theme and the students had never mentioned it before, LIV appears to affiliate with DANI's choice of conversation topic, because she continued it willingly.

Both students have different opinions in relation to the fictitious scenarios they are creating, LIV (lines 8 and 9) said she would prefer to give herself in to the zombies and become one herself, while DANI (line 11) would prefer to have a gun and kill them all. In line 17, LIV comments while laughing that, as it is a zombie apocalypse, it makes more sense to surrender yourself to the zombies and not run from them. The teacher does not affiliate with this opinion and comments that she

would prefer to run (line 19), which DANI agrees with, while laughing and saying “yeah” (line 20).

Another playful comment done by LIV is in line 21 and 22, stating that one more reason to give herself to the zombies is that she would not need to run, which is found to be funny by all participants. In line 30 LIV tries to convince the group yet again that being a zombie is a good option, because they could simply become a pacific zombie and not kill anyone. In lines 38 and 39, both students create what they call “vegetarian zombie” and “vegan zombie”, making everyone laugh. Other than creating these ideas from scratch, another interesting thing found in this section is that this creation of a fictitious scenario is made almost entirely by the two students only, the teacher having little participation. It shows that many good things can happen if the students are allowed to have space to imagine and talk about what is relevant for them.

In example 4, the students created some fictitious ideas, other than the idea of the zombie apocalypse, which initially started the conversation. Chart 6 illustrates them.

Chart 6 - Fictitious ideas created by the students

Fictitious idea	Student who created it	Line
Pacific zombie	LIV	35
Vegetarian zombie	DANI	38
Vegan zombie	LIV	39

Chart 6: author's source.

The following example of yet another use of *Creation play* happens in the final moments of the same class that was analyzed in the previous transcript. In example 5, which is also a direct continuation of example 2, the students are imagining the teacher as an older person who would think about them in a caring way.

Example 5. We're the *bestest*

1 LIV and she will cry like. (.) i was so young and they would would
 2 would be worst and my best like class my best students that
 3 anyone, °ever (.) like passed them in the° [bestest] level
 4 TEA [WHAT? @@@
 5 DANI @@@@

6 TEA i didn't understand one word you said @@@@ did you
 7 UNDERSTAND anything. ((talking to dani))
 8 LIV @@@@ like we were the best anyone could like be over us we
 9 are the best (.) @@ in the bestest level
 10 TEA oka::y=
 11 DANI =the bestest @@@@
 12 TEA we are the bestest ever ((imitating the students))
 13 LIV yeah because we are like so good to be just best we are
 14 bestest,
 15 TEA we are bestest okay
 16 DANI we are bastards. @@
 17 LIV @@ bastards

In line 1-3, LIV is trying to explain that the teacher will miss the students when they finished the course and they do not see each other anymore (“and she will cry like I was so young and they would would be worst and my best like class my best students that anyone ever like passed them in the bestest level”). The way LIV constructed her sentence demonstrates a lack of structural organization, a fact that does not usually happen as she is considered a good student and fluent in the language. The teacher does not understand and asks DANI if she could follow LIV’s idea (lines 6 and 7).

In line 8, LIV tries to self-repair by explaining what she means, while laughing at the same time (“we were the best anyone could like to be over us we are the best in the bestest level”). DANI believes that “the bestest” is a mistake that LIV made, as she made other mistakes before while formulating her sentence, so she repeats it (line 11) in a way to call her attention to this error. However, the teacher herself does not believe that this is a mistake, as it can be seen in the following line, when she repeats what the student said without trying to correct it, but simply imitating and joking with LIV (“we are the bestest ever”). LIV tries to explain her joke yet again in line 13, by saying that “[...] we are like so good to be just best we are bestest”, demonstrating that the mistake is not a mistake at all. In line 15, the teacher shows for a second time that she understands LIV’s joke (“we are bestest okay”).

LIV is a student that demonstrates great knowledge of the language, even though it may appear otherwise, by the beginning of this stretch, when she lost herself before making her message understood. Creating a word such as *bestest* shows previous knowledge of superlatives, and adding the suffix *-est*, which is what usually happens with most adjectives in this case, makes it sound even greater than

simply best. *Bestest* emphasizes the idea of greatness, of the high degree that *best* already has, which is exactly her goal.

The type of play seen in examples 4 and 5 relate with the findings that Cook (2000) established with the features of LP. In example 4, the students are using the semantic form of playing with an alternative reality, the apocalyptic one. This is also a type of pragmatic play, in a way that it exercises no direct usefulness and is mainly done for enjoyment purposes. In addition, in the interaction presented in example 5, LIV makes use of play with semantic form, by using an unknown word, or in this case creating one. Also, as her sentence is not initially understood by the other participants, they used the play with linguistic form by repetition, as the teacher is repeating the word to demonstrate affiliation and understanding of what LIV said, and by giving *emphasis on exact wording*.

Even though the students are not creating a story necessarily, but creating an entire scenario, they are definitely collaborating to the creation of an imaginary world, as described by Cook (2000):

“Although the primary functions of language are often conceived to be social organization and the accumulation and transmission of factual knowledge [...] It might be that, both ontogenetically⁵ and phylogenetically⁶, the first function of language is the creation of imaginative worlds: whether lies, games, fictions or fantasies.” (p. 47).

Guy Cook (2000) demonstrates that the creation of these imaginary worlds is perhaps more relevant than we imagine, as language does not serve the purpose of only transmitting information. Besides that, he considers that it can be an aid to language learning, as creating something does not have limits and the students can use linguistics structures in ways they would not do normally, other than calling attention to these structures, which could by itself improve learning and memorization. The same has also been pointed out by Bell (2012).

Creation play was not found during any *UNO* match. It probably happens due to the reason that the group is deeply focused on the game itself and the players are

⁵ Ontogenesis is “the process of an individual organism growing organically; a purely biological unfolding of events involved in an organism changing gradually from a simple to a more complex level; According to the free dictionary” (Available in: [thefreedictionary.com/ontogenetically](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/ontogenetically). Access on: 26 Mar, 2021).

⁶ Phylogenetic is “a part of systematics that addresses the inference of the evolutionary history and relationships among or within groups of organisms.” (Available in: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phylogenetics>. Access on: 26 Mar, 2021).

very competitive, which does not leave space to perform other actions or talk too much about topics outside of the game.

4.2.3 Game rules play

Game rules play is a way of using LP that happens in the data when the participants try to explicitly break the rules of the game *UNO*. This is done in order to facilitate their winning and amuse the others. In contrast to 4.2 *Creation play*, this present category is only found in the parts in which the group is playing *UNO*, as the only rules they create or break during the audio recordings are the ones during the game.

The following example illustrates the students trying to find a breach to not let the teacher win. They do it by breaking a rule and commenting to each other about their cards.

6. No you cannot do that

```

1  DANI IT'S ME AGAIN why.
2  TEA >cause this is how the game works< uno
3  LIV HOW HOW (.) ((shaking legs loudly))
4      (0.8)
5      ((to DANI)) do you have plus 2
6  DANI no.
7  LIV do you want one?
8  TEA no you cannot do that
9  LIV it's me
10     ((plays draw +2)) buy 2 teacher

```

In line 1, DANI asks why she is the one to play again. The teacher answers in the following line that this is the way the game works and at the same time she screams “uno”, meaning she has only one card left and is about to win. This action takes LIV by surprise (line 3), as it is only the beginning of the game, usually when all the players are still left with many cards. In the following line, LIV initiates playfulness by using misconduct she is aware it is not correct, as she has played this game multiple times, and asks her fellow classmate if she has a plus two⁷ card. She is

⁷ The original name of the card is *draw two*, however, even though the teacher had already explained that, the students insist on calling it *plus two*.

trying to do this because if she gives it to the teacher, she would need to buy two more cards, and then she would not be winning anymore. After DANI denies having it, in line 6, LIV offers DANI her own card (line 7), which is when the teacher reprehends them, by saying “no you cannot do that”. The game is a competitive one, supposed to be played individually and the players cannot collaborate against another one, nor talk about the cards they have.

The action of calling the student’s attention shows that the teacher does not align with what LIV treats as playful, but rather as an action that should not be done. LIV somewhat ignores the teacher’s warning and continues to play, even placing a card on the table that makes the teacher have to buy more cards (line 10), and consequently not be as close to winning as she was before, which was LIV’s intention all along.

Example 6 shows what happens when someone tries to break the rules, but the other person does not show enjoyment with it. The following transcript, which also happens when the group is playing the game, shows how LP happens when the participants are aligned on their joint goal: to not let the other participant win the game.

7. I’ll improvise my game

1 DANI uno,
 2 TEA oh you bought me a thousand cards no. (.) okay she has (.)
 3 don't know which color °actually let me see if i have-°
 4 do you have anything xxx ((asking to LIV))
 5 LIV °can you put a yellow card @.°
 6 TEA °don't know let me see° (.) hmmm can't
 7 LIV °ah damn°
 8 TEA I JUST HAVE 9 and 2
 9 LIV so put this one. ((pointing to one of her cards))
 10 TEA okay (.) okay let me see what i have
 11 LIV i'll put a plus 2 (.) or plus 4
 12 TEA don't have
 13 LIV >i'll improvise my game<
 14 (0.7)
 15 TEA °not good not good not good°
 16 LIV °good good=°
 17 TEA =OH GOOD yeah (.) °now it's°-
 18 LIV @@ i know @@ do you have plus 2.
 19 TEA @@ no

20 LIV i hate you::: @ >now i'm doing this cause i don't know if she
 21 has yellow<
 22 TEA @@@

In this example, DANI is the one to scream “uno” (line 1). This action is followed by the teacher herself breaking the rule of the game in lines 2-4, as she asks LIV if she has anything (talking about the cards), and she asks if the teacher can play a yellow card, which she does not have. From lines 5 to 13, the student and the teacher are trying to negotiate which card to play, so DANI does not win. The teacher talks about the cards she has (line 8), LIV suggests one to place on the table (line 9) and LIV even shares her plan on playing a *draw 2* or *draw 4* card (line 11). In line 16, LIV demonstrates through her reaction (“good good”) that their combination went well. In lines 18 and 19, LIV and the teacher continue to combine which cards to play, amongst laughs.

This example is quite different from the previous, as the person who is supposed to prevent rule breaking and has a role of respect, the teacher, is also participating in the mischief. This is the reason why the transcript is considerably longer, as the conversation is allowed to continue for more time than the last one.

Play by breaking rules of games has been previously described by Waring (2012), to what she calls *Relational play*, which in her data happens when a student “breaks the rule of the game, thus treating an otherwise non-negotiable task as negotiable.” (p. 200). This is an interesting aspect, as the students can try to break a rule, but the teacher has the possibility of not accepting it, limiting its effect. This is what is shown in example 6. However, if the teacher does affiliate with the rule breaking, different actions can occur with it, as seen in example 7.

Other than that, the group is also using the pragmatic form of LP (COOK, 2000), by creating a competition within themselves. Naturally, as they are playing a game that is not collaborative, there will always be competition, but these examples show a greater deal of it. Another use of the pragmatic form of LP happens by *inversion of the social order*, which is visible in example 6, when the students are trying to combine movements to not let the teacher win the game.

One thing that is important to mention is that *Game rule play* does not prove that the students are learning something new. However, they are indeed practicing and using a language form that can be considered legitimate and authentic. This is something that Waring (2012) and Brown (2000) believe to be relevant for ESL

acquisition. Also, as the students are using play to achieve other language functions, breaking the rules and mischief, it can help them improve their language repertoire, because this is not a function the students are used to use (in their L2, at least).

As the analysis of the data is completed, the following subchapter concludes this section. In it, we present the number of LP from these three categories is found in the recordings. In addition to it, a reflection about Cook's (2000) description of LP and the importance of alignment in the data are also done.

4.3 TOTALITY OF THE FINDINGS

After we selected the three main categories of LP (*Biographic*, *Creation* and *Game rule play*) shown in the previous subsection, we counted their recurrences on the data. As mentioned in the methodology, there are 16 audio recordings that formed the data for this research, which totaled more than 3 hours and 30 minutes of conversation. I got the following results, shown in table 1:

Table 1 - Total of LP

Type of LP	Number of occurrences
Biographic LP	24
Creation LP	7
Game rules LP	6

Table 1: author's source.

The amount of *Biographic LP* found during the recordings, especially when comparing it to the number from the other two categories, demonstrates how the intimacy within the group can clear the path to the use of LP. It does not show that groups which do not have background knowledge of each other do not use LP at all, but it indicates that perhaps closeness and affinity are a facilitative to it.

Creation LP and *Game rules LP* are found in similar numbers, with 7 and 6 occurrences respectively. *Creation LP* shows how much creativity the students are using to construct fictitious scenarios together and they do so in diverse forms, whether by creating new vocabulary or fabricated storylines. Some authors (COOK, 2000; BELL, 2005) say that the amount of LP usage is related to proficiency. This is relevant to be stated here, as it goes according to the data, as both students are

considered advanced and fluent, well capable of using the language in contexts outside the classroom.

Game rules LP is found only when the students are breaking the rules of the game *UNO* - or trying to do so. What is found in common in all the 6 times it is used is that this form of LP is done by one person trying to break a rule, sometimes accompanied by another, but often being warned by the third peer to stop doing so. In none of the examples the participants are angry at each other, which would be a plausible reaction, but they continue playing along with it, laughing or even ignoring, which can also be a plausible reaction to LP (HAY, 2001).

As noticed throughout the analysis, Cook's (2000) findings about LP are still relevant, even in 2021, the date of this research. The descriptions and details of the features of LP are deeply present in the data and can be easily related. Even though it is explained in more details in the previous section, the following chart presents a summary of the relations of the examples 1-7 and the features noticed by him:

Chart 7 - Features of LP (COOK, 2000) in *Biographical Play*

Example	Form	Feature of LP (COOK, 2000)
1. You're rich	Linguistics	Repetition(both of parts and of whole texts)
	Pragmatics	Intimate Interaction
2. When she's 90 years old	Semantics	Reference to an alternative reality
	Semantics	Vital or important subject-matter
3. It's always you	Pragmatics	Inversion of the social order
	Linguistics	Patterning of forms (rhythms)
	Linguistics	Repetition (both of parts and of whole texts)
4. Vegetarian zombie	Semantics	Reference to an alternative reality
	Pragmatics	No direct usefulness
	Pragmatics	Enjoyment and/or value

5. We're the bestest	Semantic	Indeterminate meaning (unknown words)
	Linguistics	Emphasis on exact wording
6. No you cannot do that	Pragmatics	Creation of antagonism and competition
	Pragmatics	Inversion of the social order
7. I'll improvise my game	Pragmatics	Creation of antagonism and competition
	Pragmatics	Inversion of the social order

Chart 7: author's source.

As perceived on chart 7, pragmatics is the most occurred LP form, with 8 occurrences, and this can be explained by the frequent contact the group has had within themselves, as to create meanings and contexts that are possible to be used for fun, which perhaps would not make sense for other participants. This is shown by *inversion of the social order*, which is present three times in this data, explained by a group that is so intimate and connected that it is possible for the teacher to break the rules as much as the students, for example, or that the students feel very comfortable in breaking rules in front of the teacher.

The other forms, semantic and linguistic are also frequently seen, both with 4 occurrences, and it demonstrates that perhaps the students are so fluent in the target language that they can make fun not only using the language, but also within the language. This happens when they use emphasis, different rhythms and repetition to make fun using their L2 and even creating a new word, as shown in Example 5. This goes according to the findings that demonstrate that LP indicates fluency (COOK, 2000; CETAIKE AND ARONSSON, 2005) as it requires deep knowledge of the language to be able to modify it in purpose to create another wording, especially with the meaning that was presented in this data. As of the semantic form, it shows how much creativity is needed to play, because in this case it happens mainly by making a meaning out of the creation of an alternative reality and different wording. The junction of these three forms of LP is what makes LP so much present and relevant for the group.

In addition to these forms of LP that are noticeable in the data, alignment also has great importance for the group, as it grants the amount of opportunity to language play, as seen in the research. It allows participants to play more, as they are aware of each other's characteristics and the most relevant is that they know what topics are playable or not. Beyond this, even after categorizing the three sets of LP, classification does not serve much purpose, as LP has the place to happen in classroom of ESL, no matter the taxonomies it has. It brings many positive aspects, such as inducing students in creating fictitious situations and using English in ways they perhaps would not without it. LP has a purpose and should be more than enabled; it should be encouraged and treated as natural.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

When this research began, we were focused on Waring's (2012) classifications of LP, as her text deeply instigated us back in 2019, and therefore we used her categorization at first. While we were doing the Literature Review, we came across an important book, the one by Guy Cook (2000), which has more classifications of LP and appeared to be even more related to what we were looking for. We decided to use both categorizations, showing if/how they would fit in the data.

Nevertheless, these taxonomies made us reflect about what categorizing LP *really* serves for. LP has been proved here and in previous research to be moments in classroom interaction that have their space, as they happen frequently and naturally, and they are indeed moments that deserve to be allowed to happen. Understanding the role of LP for ESL learning is much more important than the classification itself.

As the guiding principle of this research was to see how LP happens during classroom interaction and game play, we analyzed the data to answer this question. Though it happened in many situations, we chose three distinct ones, which were named as *Biographical*, *Creation* and *Game rules play*. Both *Biographical* and *Creation play* happen during moments that can be considered examples of classroom discourse, when the roles of teacher and students are visible, through the teacher guiding activities or helping students with vocabulary, for example. *Game rules play*, on the other hand, appears only during the moments the group is playing *UNO*, which is naturally expected, but it is not a good representative of classroom interaction.

Even though these parts of the class do not show a clear example of ESL classroom interaction, it is interesting to see how much use of LP in the students' target language is done by them when they are playing it. It does not prove that playing a card game is relevant for all L2 students, because it comes to the individuality of each one, but I am bound to say it is indeed relevant for this specific group, as it shows how much participation in English there is. In addition, it shows the practice of natural language, which for the students happens indeed in an intrinsic and relevant context, which can favor learning, as mentioned by Waring (2012).

In *Creation play*, the students are often using LP to guide them in constructing new scenarios and vocabulary, thus giving them the opportunity they perhaps would

not have without it. Also, the pair is doing collaborative work when they are creating these scenarios together, which Cetaike and Aronsson (2005) mentioned as something positive:

Collaborative language play entailed the peer group's attention to language form. Thereby, it created possibilities for language practice. Collaborative repetitions and variations can, in turn, be seen to promote the learner's awareness of the phonology and morphology of correct and incorrect language choices. (CETAIKE; ARONSSON, 2005, p. 187).

This means that LP offers students the opportunity to use language in diverse forms and provides more chances for its use. In addition, *Creation LP* promotes awareness of the forms of the words, sentences or scenarios they are creating, especially with collaboration, as one helps the other to pay more attention to the language they are using.

In *Biographical play*, the group is language playing by using the previous knowledge they have on each other's personal lives, characteristics and personality traits. The data presents moments of a typical classroom setting, where the teacher is explaining the activity supposed to be done by the students, and moments later, it changes to a symmetrical relationship (WARING, 2012). The students are given space for participating in the construction of the class, when they can suggest and do activities in ways that are meaningful for them. This also happens because by having such familiarity with one another, the students know they have the space to modify the teacher's planning without putting themselves in awkward situations. Without this closeness, they perhaps would not have - or feel they have - space to use LP as much as they did.

Another way in which alignment has shown its importance for the creation of LP opportunities in *Biographical play* is by the group knowing what is playable for each other or not. Playing with social class, for example, is not something people would do with their acquaintances, as it takes a deeper knowledge of the participants of the interaction to know how that person is going to react to it. In addition, by perceiving things about each other's' own lives, it gives them more topics to play with. Because they are using language to do something fun and to relax, as it is what Cook (1997) states to be the meaning of LP, they are also lowering their affective filter (TARONE, 2000). It happens because they are using LP to have moments when they are not feeling anxious about the class itself nor speaking in a language that is

not their own. Having a fun class may perhaps increase the students' motivation (WARING, 2012), another crucial factor for learning.

Even though the three classifications of LP in this data help see the distinct moments in which LP happens and notice their peculiarities, the greatest conclusion with this research is the importance of alignment. The alignment within this group of participants has allowed for the amount of LP to happen, which has the positive aspects as mentioned. Another contribution is by not necessarily describing it, but comprehending that there is indeed space and plenty of opportunities inside ESL classrooms for using it, no matter its classifications. The important is to maintain respect and to preserve the moments of teaching and learning. There is no necessity in creating a moment for LP, such as a situation of game play, because they arise from the alignment that exists within the participants that give space and the freedom for it.

After these considerations, we suggest that future research regarding LP can be done with bigger groups and perhaps with groups that do not have the alignment and proximity that this group has, to see if LP happens with this much frequency. Also, it would be interesting to see if LP happens during games that have a clear learning goal and classroom discourse markers, to show objectively if LP has a learning improvement aspect.

In conclusion, research throughout the years have shown the crucial role of LP in the classroom by not only making it fun and motivating students, but also by facilitating the acquisition of L2 by numerous forms. This research suggests that the use of LP motivates students into using L2 in other contexts, such as talking about personal topics, breaking rules or creating fictitious scenarios and vocabulary. LP is a great ally for both teacher and students, and this proves what Cetaike and Aronsson (2005) state, "we need to take non-serious language more seriously." (p. 169).

REFERENCES

- ANTAKI, Charles; WIDDICOMBE, Sue. **Identities in Talk**. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. 1998. 224 p.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. **The dialogic imagination: four essays**. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1981. 443 p.
- BELL, Nancy. Comparing playful and non playful incidental attention to form. **Language Learning: a Journal of Research in Language Studies**, Michigan, v. 62, n. 1, p. 236–265, 2012.
- BELL, Nancy. Exploring L2 language play as an aid to SLL: A case study of humor in NS–NNS interaction. **Applied Linguistics**, Oxford, v. 26, n. 2, p. 192–218, 2005.
- BELL, Nancy. Humor scholarship in TESOL: Applying findings and establishing a research agenda. **TESOL Quarterly**, Washington, v. 45, n. 1, p. 134–159, 2011.
- BRONER, Maggie A.; TARONE, Elaine E. Is it fun? Language Play in fifth-grade Spanish immersion classroom. **The Modern Language Journal**, [s.l.], v. 85, n. 3, p. 363-379, 2001.
- BROWN, Douglas H. **Teaching by principles: An interactive approach in language pedagogy**. 2. ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- CAZDEN, Courtney B. **Classroom discourse: the language of teaching and learning**. 2. ed. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2001. 210 p.
- CEKAITE, Asta.; ARONSSON, Karin. Language play, a collaborative resource in children's L2 learning. **Applied Linguistics**, Oxford, v. 26, n. 2, p. 169–191, 2005.
- COOK, Guy. Language play, language learning. **ELT Journal**, Oxford, v. 51, n. 3, p. 224–31, 1997.
- COOK, Guy. **Language Play, Language Learning**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 235 p.
- GARCEZ, Pedro M. A organização da fala-em-interação na sala de aula: controle social, reprodução de conhecimento, construção conjunta de conhecimento. **Calidoscópico**, São Leopoldo, v. 4, n. 1, p. 66-80, 2006.
- GARCEZ, Pedro M; FRANK, Ingrid; KANITZ, Andréia. Interação social e etnografia: sistematização do conceito de construção conjunta de conhecimento na fala-em-interação de sala de aula. **Calidoscópico**, São Leopoldo, v. 10, n. 2, p. 211-224, 2012.
- HAY, Jennifer. **Gender and Humour: Beyond a joke**. 1995. Thesis. (Masters in Arts in Linguistics). Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, 1995.
- HAY, Jennifer. The pragmatics of humor support. **HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research**, [s.l.], v. 14, n.1, p. 55-81, 2001.

HUTCHBY, Ian; WOOFFITT, Robin. **Conversation Analysis: principles, practices and applications**. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.

INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA (IBGE). **Acesso à Internet e à televisão e posse de telefone móvel celular para uso pessoal 2018**. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2018. Available in: https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101705_informativo.pdf. Access on: 16 Mar. 2021.

KRASHEN, Stephen. **Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning**. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981. 154 p.

MARKEE, Numa. The organization of off-task talk in second language classrooms. In RICHARDS, Keith; SEEDHOUSE, Paul (ed.). **Applying conversation analysis**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p. 197–213.

MONTEIRO, Sérgio. **S.A.T.: Second Semester**. 1 ed. Belo Horizonte: Uptime Franquias, 2011.

ONTOGENETICALLY. In: THE Free Dictionary. [S.l.,2016?]. Available in: thefreedictionary.com/ontogenetically. Access on: 26 Mar. 2021.

PAOLETTI, Isabella; FELE, Giolo. Order and disorder in the classroom. **Pragmatics**, Amsterdam, v. 14, n. 1, p. 69-85, 2004.

PHYLOGENETICS. In: WIKIPEDIA. [S.l.,2021?]. Available in: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phylogenetics>. Access on: 26 Mar. 2021.

POMERANTZ, Anne; BELL, Nancy. Learning to play, playing to learn: FL learners as multicompetent language users. **Applied Linguistics**, Oxford, v. 28, n. 4, p. 556–78, 2007.

RUSTANDI, Andi; MUBAROK, Ande Husni. Analysis of IRF (initiation-response-feedback) on classroom interaction in EFL speaking class. **EduLite**, Indonesia, v 2, n. 1, p. 239-250, 2017.

SACKS, Harvey Sacks; SCHEGLOFF, Emmanuel A.; JEFFERSON, Gail. A simplest systematic for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. **Language**, Washington, p. 696-735, 1974

TARONE, Elaine. Getting serious about language play: Language play, interlanguage variation, and second language acquisition. In SWIERZBIN, Bonnie *et al.* (ed.). **Social and Cognitive Factors in Second Language Acquisition: Selected Proceedings of the 1999 Second Language Research Forum**. Somerville: Cascadilla Press, 2000. p. 31–54.

TRACY, Karen. **Everyday Talk: Building and Reflecting Identities**. New York: Guilford Press, 2002. 386 p.

SCHNACK, Cristiane Maria; PISONI, Thaís Dutra; OSTERMANN, Ana Cristina. Transcrição de fala: do evento real à representação escrita. **Entrelinhas**, São Leopoldo, v. 2, n. 2, 2005.

VYGOSTKY, Lev S. **Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological processes**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. 170 p.

WARING, Hanzun Zhang. Doing Being Playful in the Second Language Classroom. **Applied Linguistics**, Oxford, v. 34, n. 2, p. 191–210, 2012.

WARING, Hanzun Zhang. Moving out of IRF: A single case analysis. **Language Learning**. Michigan, v. 59, n. 4, p. 796–824, 2009.

WARNER, Chantelle. N. It's just a game, right? Types of play in foreign language CMC. **Language Learning and Technology**. Austin, v. 8, n. 2, p. 69–87, 2004.

WELLS, Gordon. Reevaluating the IRF sequence: A proposal for the articulation of theories of activity and discourse for the analysis of teaching and learning in the classroom. **Linguistics and Education**, Austin, v. 5, p. 1–37, 1993.

APPENDIX A – VOICE USAGE AUTHORIZATION TERM



UNIVERSIDADE DO VALE DO RIO DOS SINOS
Reconhecida pela Portaria Ministerial nº 453 de 21/11/1983 – D.O.U de 22/11/1983

TERMO DE AUTORIZAÇÃO DE USO DE VOZ PARA MENOR DE IDADE

Eu, _____, residente no endereço _____, nº _____, na cidade de _____/_____, sob o RG nº _____ e o CPF nº _____, autorizo, por meio desta, o(a) Sr(a). _____ do curso _____ e a Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – UNISINOS, a utilizarem, **GRATUITAMENTE**, a voz de meu(inha) filho(a) _____, para inserção no Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso intitulado _____.

Estou ciente de que o referido Trabalho poderá ser disponibilizado em qualquer meio eletrônico de divulgação institucional, utilizado **para os específicos fins educativos, técnico-científicos, culturais e não-comerciais**, abrindo mão, desde já, de quaisquer outras reivindicações a respeito do uso dessa imagem, seja a que título for.

_____, _____ de _____ de _____.

Assinatura do Responsável Legal

Assinatura do Aluno

ANNEX A – TRANSCRIPTIONS CONVENTIONS

[text]	Overlap
=	Continuing speech with no break in between
(1.8)	Pause
(.)	Micro-pause
,	Continuing intonation
.	Falling intonation
?	Rising intonation
-	Abrupt cut-off
:	Prolonging of sound
>text<	Quicker speech
<text>	Slowed speech
°text°	Quiet speech
TEXT	Loud speech
<u>text</u>	Syllable, word or stressed sound
↑ ↓	Raised or lowered pitch
hhh	Aspiration
.hhh	Inhalation

(text)	Transcriptionist doubt
xxx	Inaudible
((text))	Transcriptionist comment
@@@	Laughs

Source: SCHNACK, PISONI, OSTERMANN (2005).