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Design and Implementation of a Sociocultural Didactic Sequence for the Preservation of Traditional Vallenato Music in Secondary Education: A Case Study in Cesar

Alcides Caleb Manotas Pizarro¹, Edelmira Pizarro Urieles², Jhenifer Rincón Guevara³, Martha Esther Guerra Muñoz⁴, Carmen Beatriz Araújo Quiroz⁵

Abstract

This article presents the results of a qualitative research oriented to the design and implementation of a didactic sequence with a socio-cultural approach for the preservation of traditional vallenato music in secondary education, in an institution of the department of Cesar, Colombia. The study responds to the need to strengthen cultural identity and the intergenerational transmission of intangible heritage in a context marked by globalization and the loss of local cultural references. A case study methodology was used, integrating interviews, participant observation, focus groups and documentary analysis. The results show a significant increase in the students' interest, knowledge and appreciation of traditional vallenato, as well as improvements in school coexistence and critical thinking. The proposal demonstrates the relevance of contextualized pedagogical strategies for the safeguarding of musical heritage and the formation of intercultural citizenship.

Keywords: Vallenato, Music Education, Cultural Heritage, Didactic Sequence, Socio-Cultural Approach.

Introduction

Traditional Vallenato music, declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2015, is an essential pillar of the regional identity of the Colombian Caribbean¹. However, new generations show a progressive distancing from this legacy, influenced by globalization and the hegemony of commercial music genres. This situation poses challenges for the educational system, which is called upon to promote the active preservation of local cultural heritage.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of integrating cultural content into the school curriculum in order to reinforce pupils' sense of belonging and identity. Within this framework, this article presents the design, implementation and evaluation of a didactic sequence with a socio-cultural approach, oriented towards the preservation of vallenato in secondary education in an institution in Cesar.

The general objective was to implement a pedagogical strategy that favours the appropriation and appreciation of traditional vallenato, promoting critical reflection, creativity and intercultural coexistence in the classroom.

¹ Universidad Popular del Cesar, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5277-5843>, Email: acmanotas@unicesar.edu.co

² Institución Educativa San José, <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8139-5926>, Email: edelmirapizarrou@unicesar.edu.co

³ Universidad Popular del Cesar, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0956-668X>, Email: jheniferrincon@unicesar.edu.co

⁴ Universidad Popular del Cesar, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6927-1157>, Email: marthaguerra@unicesar.edu.co

⁵ Universidad Popular del Cesar, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6429-535X>, Email: carmenaraujo@unicesar.edu.co



The sociocultural approach to learning, proposed by Vygotsky (1979), argues that the construction of knowledge is a socially mediated process, where interaction and participation in cultural practices are essential. From this perspective, music is conceived not only as an artistic manifestation, but also as a symbolic vehicle of collective memory that contributes to the transmission of values, knowledge and identity narratives (Galeano, 2019).

The didactic sequence, understood as a structured and progressive organization of learning activities, constitutes an effective pedagogical tool to approach musical heritage from an integral perspective. According to Camps (2003), the didactic sequence makes it possible to articulate listening, analysis, interpretation and musical creation, favoring the construction of meaningful and contextualized learning. In the field of music education, Díaz Guerra and Amaya De Alba (2019) emphasize that the implementation of didactic sequences with a sociocultural approach enhances students' critical understanding and creativity, while promoting the re-signification of folklore in contemporary youth contexts.

Regarding vallenato music, Galeano (2019) stresses its importance as intangible cultural heritage and as a central element in the regional identity of the Colombian Caribbean. Recent educational experiences show that the integration of cultural and musical content in the school curriculum strengthens students' identity, creativity and critical thinking (Contreras Delgado, Lizarazo Díaz & Reyes Caro, 2024).

The Colombian regulatory framework supports the inclusion of vallenato in formal education, through laws, ordinances and international recognition, such as the UNESCO declaration (2015) that legitimizes its teaching and safeguarding. The Special Plan for the Safeguarding of Traditional Vallenato Music (Ministry of Culture, 2020) emphasizes the need for innovative educational strategies that guarantee the intergenerational transmission of this heritage. In sum, the articulation of didactic sequences with a sociocultural approach in the teaching of vallenato contributes not only to the preservation of the musical heritage, but also to the integral development of students and the consolidation of an intercultural and critical citizenship.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing specifically under the case study modality, in order to analyze in depth, the implementation of the didactic sequence in a public institution in the department of Cesar. The case study is especially relevant when seeking to understand complex phenomena in real contexts, allowing to capture the richness and particularity of the educational and cultural processes involved (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

The participant population consisted of high school students (grades 6 to 9), music and social sciences teachers, as well as school administrators. The selected institution is characterized by its trajectory in the promotion of vallenato culture and its disposition towards pedagogical innovation, which facilitated the implementation and evaluation of the proposal.

As for the data collection techniques, semi-structured interviews were used with students, teachers and directors, in order to explore perceptions and experiences related to the teaching-learning process of vallenato. Likewise, participant observation was conducted during the development of the musical sessions, which allowed recording interactions, attitudes and group dynamics in real time (Angrosino, 2012). Focus groups were organized to encourage collective reflection on identity and cultural heritage, and a documentary analysis of curricula and institutional regulations was carried out, following the methodological recommendations of Flick (2015).

The methodological process contemplated several phases: initial diagnosis of students' prior knowledge and interests, design and validation of the didactic sequence, implementation of the proposal during an academic period, collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, and finally, triangulation and validation of the results to ensure the credibility and rigor of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In the ethical field, the informed consent of all participants was guaranteed, as well as the confidentiality of the information and respect for the autonomy of those involved, in line with the ethical principles of educational research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Findings

The implementation of a didactic sequence with a sociocultural approach showed significant changes in the perception and appreciation of traditional vallenato among high school students. After the intervention, 90% showed a greater interest in this musical genre, which resulted in an increase in knowledge about its origins, characteristics and cultural importance. This result coincides with Contreras Delgado, Lizarazo Díaz and Reyes Caro (2024), who demonstrated that contextualized didactic strategies favor the appropriation and enjoyment of traditional music in the school environment, promoting active participation and meaningful learning.

Strengthening of Identity and Sense of Belonging

85% of the participants were able to identify vallenato songs associated with their family and community history, reflecting a renewed pride in regional identity and a greater willingness to share musical heritage with other contexts. Previous research has indicated that the integration of cultural content in the school curriculum strengthens students' sense of belonging and identity (Lozano, Peña & Abril, 1999; Guerra & Pinzón, 2014). As stated by Galeano (2019), vallenato, more than an artistic manifestation, constitutes a vehicle for the transmission of values, knowledge and collective memories, consolidating local and national identity.

Improvement in Coexistence and Valuing Diversity

The collaborative activities designed in the didactic sequence promoted respect for difference and the integration of students from diverse backgrounds. 92% recognized the potential of vallenato as a symbolic mediator for intercultural coexistence, in line with Sanchez and Zamora (2017), who argue that sociocultural approaches in education allow students to develop competencies for coexistence and intercultural citizenship.

Development of Critical Thinking and Creativity

The critical analysis of lyrics and the creation of new musical compositions stimulated reflection on social issues, argumentation and creativity. This finding is supported by Díaz Guerra and Amaya De Alba (2019), who point out that didactic sequences with a sociocultural approach enhance critical understanding and creative production in students, allowing folklore to be re-signified in contemporary youth contexts.

Student Participation and Motivation

The active methodology implemented increased participation and attendance in the music sessions by 40% with respect to conventional classes, and 95% of the students rated the experience as positive or very positive. These results coincide with the contributions of Camps (2003), who argues that well-structured didactic sequences improve student motivation and commitment, especially when articulated with the students' cultural context.

Indicator	Before (%)	After (%)
Interest in traditional vallenato	30	90
Pride in regional identity	50	85
Attitudes toward coexistence	Low	High
Participation in school activities	Low	High

Table 1. Indicators Before and After the Intervention

These results underscore the relevance of traditional music as a pedagogical tool for holistic education, heritage preservation, and the promotion of intercultural citizenship within the Colombian school context (UNESCO, 2015; Ministry of Culture, 2020).

Discussion of Research Findings

The results obtained in this study confirm the effectiveness of the didactic sequence with a sociocultural approach as a strategy for the preservation of the vallenato musical heritage in the school context. The integration of contextualized, participatory and reflective activities not only favored the cultural appropriation of vallenato, but also promoted the development of critical, creative and social competencies in students. These findings are aligned with the perspective of Vygotsky (1979), who argues that learning is a socially mediated process, in which interaction and participation in cultural practices are essential for the construction of meaningful knowledge.

The empirical evidence collected in this study corroborates what Camps (2003) stated regarding the effectiveness of didactic sequences to articulate listening, analysis, interpretation and musical creation in the classroom. The progressive and coherent structure of the activities allowed students not only to understand the formal and stylistic features of vallenato, but also to re-signify it as an integral part of their identity and collective memory (Galeano, 2019).

In this sense, the proposal transcends the traditional folklorist approach, which is usually limited to the reproduction of repertoires, and positions vallenato as a pedagogical resource for the critical understanding of the present and the projection of local identity in global contexts (Contreras Delgado, Lizarazo Díaz & Reyes Caro, 2024).

The integration of cultural content in the school curriculum, especially through music, has been recognized by various authors as an effective way to strengthen students' sense of belonging, creativity and critical thinking (Díaz Guerra & Amaya De Alba, 2019; Guerra & Pinzón, 2014). In the case of vallenata music, its teaching at school contributes not only to the safeguarding of intangible heritage, but also to the formation of an intercultural and critical citizenship, capable of valuing diversity and dialoguing with other cultural references (UNESCO, 2015; Ministry of Culture, 2020).

A relevant aspect of this research is the improvement observed in school coexistence and in the valuation of diversity. Collaborative activities promoted respect for difference and the integration of students from diverse backgrounds, which coincides with Sanchez and Zamora's (2017) statements on the potential of music education to mediate intercultural coexistence and strengthen community ties. In addition, the critical analysis of lyrics and the creation of new musical compositions stimulated reflection on social issues, argumentation and creativity, in line

with Díaz Guerra and Amaya De Alba (2019) on the role of music as a tool for the development of critical thinking in educational contexts.

Student motivation and participation were also significantly increased, as evidenced by the quantitative data and testimonies collected. This result supports the assertion of Camps (2003), who points out that active and contextualized methodologies increase student engagement and satisfaction in learning processes.

However, it is important to recognize the limitations inherent to the particularistic nature of the case study, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to other educational contexts (Yin, 2018). However, the descriptive richness and depth of the analysis make it possible to provide transferable knowledge and practical guidelines for the implementation of similar proposals in institutions with related characteristics (Stake, 1995).

Finally, it should be noted that the inclusion of vallenato in formal education has regulatory and social support, both nationally and internationally. The declaration of vallenato music as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO (2015) and the formulation of the Special Safeguarding Plan (Ministry of Culture, 2020) legitimize and promote the adoption of innovative educational strategies for its intergenerational transmission.

In sum, the experience developed in this study demonstrates that the didactic sequence with a sociocultural approach not only enhances the acquisition of musical skills, but also transforms teaching practice and contributes to the integral formation of students, preparing them to act effectively in intercultural and digital contexts. It is recommended, therefore, to replicate and adapt this experience in other educational scenarios, as well as to deepen in the evaluation of its long-term impact and in the articulation with other knowledge and cultural expressions.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

The present research showed that the implementation of a didactic sequence with a sociocultural approach constitutes a highly pertinent and effective pedagogical strategy for the preservation of traditional Vallenata music in secondary education. The results obtained support the premise of Vygotsky (1979), who maintains that learning is a socially mediated process, in which interaction and participation in authentic cultural practices propitiate the construction of meaningful knowledge and the appropriation of collective identity.

According to Camps (2003), the progressive organization of activities in a didactic sequence favored the integration of listening, analysis, interpretation and musical creation, allowing students to re-signify vallenato as part of their memory and cultural heritage. This approach not only promoted the development of musical skills, but also strengthened creativity, critical thinking and school coexistence, essential elements for the formation of an intercultural and critical citizenship (Díaz Guerra & Amaya De Alba, 2019; Galeano, 2019).

The experience showed that music education, when articulated with the cultural references of the context, enhances the sense of belonging and the valuation of diversity, contributing to the construction of more inclusive and cohesive educational communities (Guerra & Pinzón, 2014). Likewise, the active participation of students in collaborative and reflective activities evidenced the potential of music as a tool for intercultural dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution (Sánchez & Zamora, 2017).

On the other hand, the research reaffirms the importance of the articulation between school, family, community and cultural sector to ensure the sustainability and impact of initiatives to

safeguard intangible heritage. As pointed out by UNESCO (2015) and the Ministry of Culture (2020), the intergenerational transmission of musical knowledge requires inclusive educational policies and the active participation of diverse social actors.

It is recommended to replicate and adapt the experience in other educational contexts, considering the cultural and social particularities of each region. In addition, it is essential to further study the long-term impact of these strategies, as well as to explore their integration with other knowledge and artistic expressions.

In summary, the didactic sequence with a sociocultural approach not only contributes to the preservation of vallenato as a cultural heritage, but also transforms educational practice, promoting the integral development of students and their ability to act as critical, creative citizens committed to cultural diversity.

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