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Exploring the Journey of formation as an English teacher; A Case Study of an indigenous Spanish-Kichwa speaker.

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Autores:

Estefania Cristina Benitez Ruiz

Jonnathan Fernando Ortiz Garcia

Tutor:

Diego Patricio Ortega Auquilla, MS.c., Ph.D(c)

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TODA LA INFORMACIÓN EXPRESA EN EL PRESENTE TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN ES DE ABSOLUTA RESPONSABILIDAD DEL AUTOR Y TUTOR Y SE ENCUENTRA DEBIDAMENTE AUTORIZADA PARA SU CORRESPONDIENTE PUBLICACIÓN

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Resumen

Formarse como docente de inglés en un contexto indígena, en el que la cosmovisión de la persona difiere en su totalidad en relación a la nueva lengua a aprender, es dificil. Sin embargo, lo es aún más cuando esta situación se añade el hecho de que la persona que así se forma es una mujer. Esta investigación relato el camino de una mujer indígena Saraguro hacia su educación como docente de Inglés. El objetivo de este estudio fue examinar cómo las afiliaciones culturales, socioeconómicas y étnicas afectan el desarrollo académico y profesional de mujeres indígenas quienes son docentes de Inglés. Se ha utilizado un estudio de caso con un enfoque cualitativo, conceptualizando los datos a través de entrevistas a profundidad con la participante, con el propósito de examinar la educación como una mujer indígena Saraguro. Los resultados de esta investigación demostraron que los desafíos de estudiar y enseñar un nuevo idioma mientras se defiende su identidad cultural y su lengua nativa (KICHWA). Cada una de las experiencias narradas por parte de nuestra participante ha mostrado cómo la resiliencia , el apoyo personal y académico la han ayudado en la superación de los obstáculos atravesados en su camino. A pesar de todos los desafios asociados con su situacion económica y social, la participante manifestó una determinación significativa al usar su identidad cultural como una fuente inspiración y tenacidad. A si mismo su aliento personal , apoyo de algunos de sus familiares y profesores , le permitieron alcanzar su meta al convertise en docente de Ingles. Por otro lado la participante resalto la importancia de una modificacion en el sistema educativo para que este sea mas inclusivo , especialmente con las comunidades indigenas. En conclusion esta investigación pretendio exponer que asi como la identidad cultural de cada comunidad puede presentar barreras y desafios , tambien pueden convertirse en herramientas de empoderamiento.

Palabras claves: Formación docente,Identidad cultural ,Docentes indígenas

Abstract

Training as an English teacher in an Indigenous context, where the person's worldview differs in its totality in relation to the new language to be learned, is difficult. However, it is even more complicated when this situation is added to the fact that the person being trained is a woman. This research tells the story of a Saraguro Indigenous woman's journey towards her education as an English teacher. The objective of this study was to examine how cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic affiliations affect the academic and professional development of indigenous women who are English teachers. A case study with a qualitative approach was used, conceptualizing the data through in-depth interviews with the participant, with the purpose of examining education as a Saraguro indigenous woman. The results of this research demonstrated the challenges of studying and teaching a new language while defending her cultural identity and native language (KICHWA). Each of the experiences narrated by our participant has shown how resilience, and both personal and academic support have helped her in overcoming the obstacles in her path. Despite all the challenges associated with her economic and social situation, the participant manifested a significant determination to use her cultural identity as a source of inspiration and tenacity. Her family's and teachers' encouragement and support enabled her to achieve her goal of becoming an English teacher. Additionally, the participant highlighted the importance of a modification in the educational system to make it more inclusive, especially with the indigenous communities. In conclusion, this research aims to demonstrate that while the cultural identity of each community can present barriers and challenges, it can also serve as a tool for empowerment.

Keywords: Teacher training, Cultural identity, Indigenous teachers

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I.Introduction

Context

In most indigenous communities of Ecuador, indigenous people rarely use English for any purpose, as they mostly rely on Spanish and Kichwa for socialization, cultural exchange, and daily coexistence. This relies on the findings of Reyes (2017), who stated the limited use of English in indigenous communities where ancient languages have more cultural and social importance. In contrast, humans who live in big cities and who receive tourists from all over the world see English as a way to improve their social work and commercial relationships and also as a way to enter the competitive job market (Baker, 2015).

According to Smith (2018), the struggles of Indigenous individuals to have access to education, specifically in fields that are not seen directly connected to their cultural and community needs, sometimes reflects broader societal pressures and cultural rules. These societal pressures often give more importance to educational goals over indigenous knowledge systems that creates a dilemma for people who wish to succeed in both worlds. Furthermore, these struggles are formed by structural barriers, such as limited access to quality education in remote areas, linguistic challenges, and discrimination.

All of these aforementioned backgrounds have somehow made our participant's English learning process different from that of other English language learners, this being what makes her a case study. She is characterized as the first in her family to obtain a professional degree, which defies cultural and family expectations who see the study of a foreign language as irrelevant and unnecessary for personal and professional success. The fact that our participant is a woman and has challenged the customs and traditions of what indigenous communities expect from the new generations is one of the main reasons why our participant is the subject

of this case study. Additionally, winning scholarships at the university to study abroad and prepare to become an English teacher is another reason that makes her a source of motivation for this study.

As stated by Garcia and Wei (2016), the intersection of familial support and cultural perceptions of education can profoundly influence the educational aspirations and opportunities of individuals from marginalized communities. These factors were evident in our participant's experience, as the lack of emotional and financial support from her family posed a significant barrier to her teacher training. Additionally, her decision to become an English teacher challenged the cultural expectations of her community and family, adding further complexity to her educational journey.

Diagnosis of the situation

The participant's path to becoming an English teacher was fraught with institutional and cultural challenges. As a young indigenous woman from a rural location, her decision to become an English teacher differs significantly from the traditions of her society, where regional languages, such as Kichwa, are given more excellent value than other foreign languages.

Garcia (2014) defined adapting to another culture as “the social, economic, political and cultural assimilation of indigenous people by a more development society; in this process, the Indigenous people who are assimilated tend to lose their identity, language, and idiosyncrasy” (p. 1). This choice challenges cultural norms that place greater emphasis on indigenous knowledge, values, and local languages in addition to being a personal academic accomplishment.

A lack of family support was one of the many obstacles our research participants had to overcome. Her family believed that learning a foreign language was superfluous and unrelated to her success in her career, practical requirements, and cultural identity. Her academic journey

was further complicated by her family's lack of financial and emotional support. The experience of growing up in a rural region with limited access to educational resources added another level of difficulty. Therefore, their exposure to the English language prior to entering the university level is little to none (Velandia, 2007). The scarcity of quality educational facilities and limited infrastructure for foreign language instruction in such communities pose significant challenges to students who wish to pursue studies outside of the local cultural context.

The participant's success in securing study abroad scholarships for indigenous communities, in spite of these obstacles, demonstrates the transformative power of these learning opportunities. In this sense, as pointed out by Williamson (2008), the following key insights are important to be taken into account:

> Since 1998, the Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, affiliated with the Christian Social Union of Bavaria, has awarded 550 scholarships to underprivileged students in Ecuador, primarily of indigenous origin, and has carried out social development projects in Argentina, Bolivia, Central America, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela (p. 133).

This opportunity to study abroad and gain academic experience plays an important role in shaping the development of teachers as they immerse themselves in new spaces and cultures, increasing their potential to contribute to the education sector in their country. Further, in today´s globalized world, learning a foreign language is seen as a means of acquiring tools to understand different cultures, as well as strengthening values such as tolerance, a sense of belonging, and respect for others (Alvarez, 2019). In this way, learning English opens up new opportunities for career and personal development, both locally and globally, and serves as a pathway to mastering a foreign language.

Importance of the study

This case study provides valuable information about the challenges faced by an indigenous Saraguro woman on her journey to obtain an English teaching degree. Our participant's decision to become an English teacher demonstrates the impact of her choice, as her community viewed it as an act of rebelliousness. The inhabitants of her community considered English to be the language of white and mixed-race people. This accomplishment is a testament to her firm conviction and perseverance in achieving things uncommon in her cultural background. A study conducted by Muranguri (2011) confirmed the presence of several agents, which are mixed to give rise to the selection of the profession. According to this author, the cultural environment, the ideals, life experiences, guidance and expectations to any field or topic affect the profession or occupation selected by the participant.

Delving deeper into their formative process is crucial to understanding the obstacles faced by Ecuadorian Indigenous women, especially those who grew up in rural places and attempt to step outside cultural norms and construct their own educational and professional trajectories. To deepen in the meanings of our participant’s experiences will give way to an understanding of the multifaceted relationships between individual, culture, family and society, and contextualize their impacts within the existing educational and career trajectories that young indigenous women encounter in Ecuador.

Such in-depth exploration has the potential to communicate the experience of undertaking these challenges not only within the context of trying to navigate cultural, familial, and societal expectations but also the complexities of having to learn and teach a foreign language in this space. As researchers, we are trying to gain a greater understanding of how Indigenous communities in Ecuador, particularly their youth, face specific barriers when trying to gain access to English language education by looking at the experiences of participants. As

Smith (2020) pointed out, approaching educational and professional careers with a cultural lens can significantly promote equality and inclusion in societies.

The rationale for this study also lies in the relevance of the topic in the Ecuadorian cultural context, as the participant's experience in this study sheds light on the multifaceted realities of indigenous youth striving to access education and improve their working lives. This qualitative approach allows for a rich understanding of their experiences and meaningful access to data. The findings of this exhibition will be of utmost importance, as they will not only raise awareness of the issues that indigenous peoples face in academic settings (including schools), but will also shape the development of more equitable societies through future educational policies that are more inclusive and culturally aware. Thus, this research contributes to the implementation and strengthening of MOSEIB (Intercultural Bilingual Education system model) by offering a deep exploration based on the experience of how indigenous identity, language and cultural values can coexist with the learning and teaching of English. Moreover, this paper will strengthen the intercultural perspective by offering inputs that promote equity and inclusion and the development of a fairer and representative system for indigenous peoples.

Main Research Question:

How have cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic affiliations shaped the academic and professional formation of an indigenous female English teacher?

Sub-Questions:

- How has ethnic affiliation influenced the integration of cultural values and aspects of indigenous cosmovision in the teacher training of an indigenous female English teacher?
- How have socioeconomic factors, such as limited financial support from her family, affected the participant’s success in completing her English teacher training?

Objectives:

Main Objective

To explore the ways in which cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic affiliations shape the academic and professional development of an Indigenous female teacher of English

Specific Objective

- To investigate how ethnic affiliation influences the undergraduate training of an Indigenous female English teacher, focusing on the integration of cultural values and aspects from her cultural cosmovision.

- To examine the influence of socioeconomic factors, particularly the lack of financial support from family, on the educational journey and success of an indigenous female English teacher in completing her training program at university.

II. Literature Review

This chapter explores the undergraduate training process of a young Saraguro Indigenous woman from the Tuncarta community in Ecuador as she prepared to become an English teacher. To support this discussion, relevant national and international studies on English teacher education are presented.

Previous Studies

The first study was conducted in Mexico by Martha Vergara Fregoso and Salomé Gómez Pérez. They carried out the research *Bilingual Teacher Training* in 2020. For this, they compared and analyzed two cases of bilingual teachers: those who teach indigenous languages and those who teach foreign languages. The reflection was on the positions and formative situations in each context of bilingualism. The case study examined bilingualism related to the

education offered to indigenous groups in Mexico, with the aim of preserving and disseminating the respective indigenous languages through specific educational programs. The case addresses the teacher training of bilingual teachers in foreign languages, which takes place in the Department of Modern Languages of the University of Guadalajara. The methodology employed was qualitative, along with a descriptive-comparative approach. It was based on the documentary analysis of educational programs; study plans and didactic materials related to the two contexts mentioned above. Likewise, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers who teach the aforementioned programs, with the purpose of approaching their perceptions about bilingual education and their respective specific formative challenges. The conclusion was that despite the recognition of cultural diversity and the need for educational decentralization, the level of investment in teacher training is insufficient.

This study connects with our thesis, as both explore the challenges of training bilingual teachers in different cultural and linguistic frameworks. In both cases, indigenous Spanish-Kichwa speakers face the idea that learning a second language threatens their cultural identity. For this reason, both studies suggest the importance of cultural diversity in schools and, in particular, of better education to promote effective teaching practices adapted to students' cultures and languages.

The second study shows the findings of the research *University Teaching in Indigenous Contexts*, which examines university instruction in a Mapuche context at a conventional university in La Araucanía, Chile. The article was carried out in 2022 by Katerin Arias, Miguel del Pino, and Gerardo Muñoz. They aimed to describe, from the voices of university educators, the factors that facilitate or hinder their professional teaching practice in a Mapuche context at a conventional university in La Araucanía, Chile. Their research includes attention to both indigenous and non-indigenous students in the Faculty of Education Sciences.

Researchers employed in Mapuche universities participated in semi-structured interviews using a qualitative, descriptive technique. In addition to content analysis, the data was examined from the standpoint of grounded theory. The primary findings demonstrated that teaching professionals who work with new professionals require ongoing training and intercultural sensitivity. The authors concluded that, from an intercultural perspective, professional training indicates that educational practices with sociocultural and territorial importance in a variety of disciplines take into account indigenous needs and objectives in their teaching, incorporating their worldviews in their training.

Since both articles emphasize the value of intercultural education and its adaptation to the cultural uniqueness of Indigenous peoples, they are closely related to our research study. Our research focuses on how an indigenous Kichwa-Spanish instructor prepares English teachers, whereas the paper focuses on the elements that support and impede professional teaching practice in a Mapuche context. Both articles concur that worldviews must be incorporated into educational processes and that ongoing training is necessary to integrate the cultural and territorial needs of indigenous peoples. They argue that the use of qualitative approaches in research, which prioritize the perspectives of those involved, enhances the multicultural viewpoint and promotes the development of instructional strategies with sociocultural and territorial significance.

The third study, entitled Narratives of Praxis: Challenges and Pathways of Resistance to Colonial Curriculum in Teacher Development in the Plurinational Country of Ecuador, was conducted by Magdalena Madany-Saá Donleyd, Germán Flores, Julio Lojano, and Kevin in Ecuador in 2024. In that study, the authors sought to argue that understanding resistance to the hegemony of the English language as a more profound project of decoloniality should lead to the consideration of a concept of the critical praxis of the American language.

In other words, resistance to English hegemony should be the purpose of language teacher education, preparing teachers to practice critical consciousness. The authors used research data that were based on cooling four autoethnographic narratives. Through a recursive process of inductive, deductive, and thematic analysis, they provide concrete examples and pedagogy of how prospective language teachers practice resistance to the hegemony of English in their pre-professional activities. They concluded their work by offering curricular and pedagogical suggestions that encourage prospective language teachers to practice critical consciousness not only toward the hegemonic power of English, but also resistance to the colonial curriculum.

This study is related to our research topic as it addresses critically important issues of resistance and decolonization in teacher education. Like the present research, where we explore the training process of an indigenous teacher who speaks Spanish and Kichwa, the work of Madany-Saá, Flores, Lojano, and Kevin highlights the importance of questioning the hegemony of English and colonialism in the education of future English teachers. Comparably, both studies point to the need to develop critical consciousness in prospective teachers, especially in multilingual and multicultural situations such as the indigenous Kichwa-speaking teacher in our research. The analysis of the autoethnographic narratives in Ecuador allows us to appreciate how prepared teachers practice resistance to colonial and linguistic hegemony, aligning perfectly with our research focused on the indigenous speaker's influence on linguistic and cultural experience and professionalization as an English teacher. From this perspective, both papers contribute to rethinking English education from competency to colonial and cultural resistance.

Theoretical Framework

Indigenous cosmovision

The Andean people have their language, which is the means by which they communicate with "*Pacha mama*" (mother earth) and express Andean knowledge. Inquilla & Apaza (2019) stated that "in Andean culture, the perception of nature and its institutions as enduring entities, beyond the passage of an individual's life, has deeply influenced the way communication is conceptualized in this cultural context" (p. 511). This demonstrates how crucial language is in persevering cultural identity, as well as the interconnected customs, knowledge, and behaviors that characterize Andean life.

As most communities are governed by rules and principles, the Andean worldview is also shaped by four fundamental Indigenous principles: reciprocity, respect for life, Mother Earth, and solidarity. This is supported by Pérez (2018), who stated that "these concepts, rooted in the Andean worldview, are based on complementarity and reciprocity, where respect for life and Mother Earth is essential to maintaining balance and harmony between humans and nature" (p. 128). Principles such as reciprocity, respect for life, solidarity, and respect for Mother Earth stress environmental care, promote unity, and strengthen social ties through reciprocity.

Likewise, an essential characteristic that frames the indigenous worldview is its integral approach. This highlights their deep trust in Pacha Mama, rooted in the belief that she provides them with everything they need: food, health and prosperity. "The community has a comprehensive, visible worldview, with the perception that they receive from Pacha Mama all the necessary resources to exist in a full life while enjoying the benefits of Mother Nature" (Pérez, 2018, p. 124). The fact that Indigenous people consider the Pacha mama (mother earth) as the one that provides them everything in life, shows the dependency and love they have towards the earth.

Another characteristic element of the Andean vision is the "Apus" (Spirits), better known as the spirits of the mountains, which, according to indigenous perspectives, are beings with their own life who protect them and watch over their health and nutrition. As stated by Sanchez (2006), “Apus” is the word used to designate the spirits that inhabit the hills around the communities. The origin of these deities is usually part of great cosmogonic cycles, which explain the meaning of the world and human existence, as well as the general order of Andean societies” (p.6).

Furthermore, the Andean worldview holds that during life, certain aspects of the world undergo periodic and cyclical changes. This is known as the term *“Pachacutic”*, which translates as “return to the origin” or “rebirth”. As Inzunza (2010) mentioned, Pachacutic means the transformation of the whole, a general change of order, an inversion, where what is above becomes below and inversely the same. In addition, it echoes the call to cyclical time, which refers to time and space, Pacha, advancing, turning, and returning; however, we never return to the same place, but rather to a new and different one. It is supported by Beckerman (2023) who stated that “the worldview of the Indigenous communities of the Andes conceptualizes time as something circular, cyclical, or spiral. For the Aymara, the past is ahead of us, and the future is behind us” (par. 2).

This clarifies the significance of the indigenous language Kichwa, which denotes organization, unity, and the foundation of respect. Indigenous people view the world through the lens of their language, which explains why the participant's family was constantly perplexed by her decision to teach English rather than Kichwa. Addressing the significance of "Pachacutic" also allows us to perceive the participant's perspectives and living experiences through a beneficial lens.

Understanding how indigenous communities and remote contexts have maintained their cultural identities, languages, and ways of being despite colonial influences helps us understand

why the participant's family did not support them, as they consider their identity and language the most valuable things in their lives. This also helps us examine how the participant's indigenous Spanish-Kichwa identity influences and interacts with their journey of becoming an English teacher.

For native Spanish-Kichwa speakers, this literature is connected to our thesis as it talks about the close relationship between language, cultural identity, and worldview. It reinforces the participant's cultural identity by highlighting the importance of Kichwa as a link to the environment and ancestral knowledge, in addition to being a medium of communication. Furthermore, the Andean worldview's holistic viewpoint demonstrates the connections between existence, thought, and cultural practices, which influences the participants' teaching style. The idea of cyclical metamorphosis depicts their path as one of constant development and adjustment. This fortitude in preserving cultural identity in the face of colonial influences highlights the difficulties they encounter juggling their twin responsibilities as English teachers and Indigenous people, illuminating the driving forces and difficulties of their educational journey.

Indigenous Perceptions of English as a Foreign Language

Historically, the relationship between Indigenous communities and foreign languages in Ecuador has been marked by tensions. According to Quispe (2014) Indigenous communities have always been under the dominance of the Spanish conquests in the context of colonial segregation. The Spanish language, which was adopted during the colonial era, frequently represented oppression and cultural deterioration, underscoring the previously noted points. This is supported by Fernández (2010, as cited in UNESCO, 2019), who stated that "the Kayambi, Saraguro, Karanki, and Kisapincha indigenous peoples face a serious situation, since only between 15% and 29% speak their language" (p. 17).

As a result, Indigenous groups have been cautious about adopting foreign languages, fearing further marginalization and the loss of their native tongues. Essentially, speakers who are part of a dominant language promote injustice and social inequality, which increase social conflict (Oliveros, 2008). In this context, English, being another foreign language, is sometimes viewed with similar skepticism.

Some indigenous people view English as a danger to their cultural heritage and sense of autonomy because it symbolizes globalization and the invasion of Western values. This perception is not universal, in any case. Many Indigenous people in Ecuador are aware of the usefulness of learning English. The Indigenous communities have not been the exception; in fact, they are more interested in learning this language to let the outside world know about their philosophy (Haboud, 2009). Proficiency in English can give people the chance to have access to inaccessible educational and economic opportunities in a world that is becoming more interconnected by the day. Especially for Indigenous teens, English can be a powerful tool for social mobility and drive people to participate in global conversations.

Some people choose to add English as a necessary and beneficial language to their repertoire because it makes scholarships, overseas programs, and job opportunities more accessible. According to Marco and Marco (2024), it is undoubtedly surprising that 80% of international scholarships assume that students have an adequate proficiency in English. This means that mastering English is not just a desirable skill, but an essential requirement to succeed in global academic programs.

The way indigenous populations in Ecuador view and interact with the English language is significantly influenced by cultural pride. Many people oppose the supremacy of any foreign language that could jeopardize their native tongues because they view their preservation as an essential part of who they are.

In order to preserve linguistic diversity in the face of globalization, indigenous leaders and activists frequently support linguistic rights and the revival of indigenous languages. Garcés (2020) mentioned that the languages of this country, such as *Epēra* and *Sapara*, are at risk of disappearing, to name a few examples. In this context, English is sometimes seen as a two-edged sword: it can provide access to global opportunities, but at the same time, it poses the risk of further marginalizing indigenous languages.

Additionally, opinions on English might differ significantly among Ecuador's Indigenous communities and geographical areas. For instance, because English is seen as having more economic advantages, communities that are more exposed to tourism or international trade may have more favorable opinions of the language. Cifuentes Rojas, Beltrán Moreno, and Vasconez Mera (2024) state that "in a globalized and highly competitive environment, those destinations and companies that can effectively offer services in English have a clear advantage over those that do not" (p. 5).

We firmly believe that discussing this area in the literature review offers a more thorough comprehension of the cultural background that influences the participants' experiences and motives. It might provide insight into how indigenous groups view English as a tool for empowerment or as a holdover from colonialism and the difficulties its members encounter in striking a balance between their Kichwa and Latin American ancestry and the requirement for English.

Being an Indigenous Woman in Ecuador: Identity, Challenges, and Empowerment

The intersectional experiences of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are the key aspects that shape the identity of indigenous women in Ecuador. Historically, indigenous women have faced barriers of marginalization rooted in colonial legacies, which have perpetuated disparities in education, healthcare, and political representation (Radcliffe, 2015).

Their stories are representative of more significant battles against long-standing misconceptions that diminish their value to their communities and society.

Educational access remains a significant challenge for Indigenous women, despite efforts to improve equity in recent decades. These views were further observed by Macaulay et al. (2017):

> Indigenous women face different obstacles, including the following: severely restricted opportunities to join the labor market; unique geographic and economic challenges to gain access to health and education services; limited access to social programs and services; high rates of illiteracy; low participation in the political process; and social marginalization. (p. 11).

It should be noted that these difficulties reflect structural barriers like poverty, which limits resources to access and remain in educational institutions, as well as linguistic limitations that may hinder full participation in a system that frequently does not recognize Indigenous languages like Kichwa or Saraguro.

Furthermore, time and learning opportunities are limited by gender norms that prioritize women's home duties over formal schooling. Nevertheless, education can also be a powerful tool for change. As CEPAL (1984, 1988, and 1991b) mentioned, already in the 1980s, it began reporting restrictions on the inclusion of women in education, which led them to focus mainly on university education in fields recently recognized as being of "female interest," such as the social sciences, the arts, and some areas of medicine.

These efforts highlight the dynamic role of Indigenous women as agents of change despite the structural barriers they face. Through political action and social movements, indigenous women's emancipation has accelerated in recent years. According to Lux (2011), "The political participation of indigenous women in parliament is a true act of heroism, because

while it is already very difficult for a woman to reach parliament, for an indigenous woman, it is a female odyssey" (p. 253).

Our study is related to this research since both focus on overcoming obstacles and empowering people. These women's struggles, like their lack of education and financial barriers, are similar to those that the case study participant faces. She emphasizes education as a transforming tool for both individual growth and societal change by choosing a career in English teaching. Her story exemplifies the larger fight by Indigenous women for equality and recognition, demonstrating how personal goals may promote community empowerment.

External Factors in EFL (Socioeconomic and Cultural)

The experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, particularly those employed in multicultural settings, are influenced by external circumstances, such as socioeconomic and cultural aspects. These elements can have a significant impact on the educational experiences of native Spanish-Kichwa speakers as well as their educational journeys. According to López and Pérez (2017), opportunities for professional and academic growth, and even access to school resources such as materials and technology, are most of the time influenced by people's economy. Emphasizing the above EFL teachers must overcome these obstacles and come up with innovative ways to deliver successful language education in situations where resources are scarce. This often requires instructors to be creative and flexible, developing plans that optimize available resources while fostering a classroom atmosphere that compensates for external limitations.

Cultural factors also play an important role in the professional development of EFL teachers, especially for those from indigenous backgrounds. According to Unesco (2019), the indigenous roots were made invisible and, as far as possible, eliminated. Thus, a language was constructed that set aside their knowledge and knowledge and confined them to a space of undermining and inferiority.

These difficulties, however, can also give teachers the chance to incorporate their cultural viewpoints into the classroom, providing pupils with a distinctive and rewarding educational experience. Additionally, training and supervision programs for teachers should ensure that they integrate concepts of intercultural education and promote respect for diversity, based on pluralism and universal values such as human rights (UNESCO, 2015a; UNESCO, 2015b).

To create an inclusive learning environment, Indigenous teachers, for instance, can bridge the gap between their pupils' home cultures and the English language by using their native tongues and cultural expertise. Macías and Gutiérrez (2019) argue that this method not only enriches the experience of students learning a second language but also affirms their cultural identities, enhancing their language learning experience.

Moreover, external socioeconomic and cultural factors can have an impact on the overall effectiveness of EFL teaching. As noted by Johnson and Lee (2020), the broader social context, including economic instability and cultural shifts, can affect both teachers' job satisfaction and student outcomes. Teachers in multicultural environments need to be cognizant of the many cultural backgrounds of their pupils and modify their pedagogical approaches accordingly to guarantee inclusivity. This may be even more evident for Indigenous EFL teachers as they negotiate the challenges of preserving their cultural heritage while adjusting to modern teaching methods. Despite these obstacles, teachers can overcome these external influences with the help of intense professional development and institutional support, guaranteeing that all students receive top-notch, culturally sensitive language training.

Bilingual education in Ecuador

Focusing on the historical journey of Indigenous education, Indigenous communities were excluded from education until the 1940s, when Dolores Cacuango and Tránsito Amaguaña fought to promote education for Indigenous people, advocating for their rights and challenging the prevailing systems of inequality that marginalized their communities. This was characterized by Indigenous civilizations, which demanded an education focused on them an education using their language. On this regard, according to Illicachi (2015), the following stands out:

> These projects and collective actions of the Indigenous movement have been fundamental for the construction of a new concept of democratic citizenship and the transformation of the Indigenous movement, the construction of a new concept of democratic citizenship and for the transformation and inclusion of some principles in the 1998 and 2008 Constitutions; in the first one, Ecuador was declared a pluricultural and multiethnic State; and in the second one, Ecuador was declared a multicultural and multiethnic State (p. 217).

Finally, it was in the 90s that their voices were heard with the creation of Bilingual Education with the objective of educating these Andean cultures. As stated by Inuca (2021), "As a result of these mobilizations, such as that of the 1990s, Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) was created in 1988 as a public policy aimed at eradicating illiteracy (EIB) was created in 1988 as a public policy aimed at eradicating illiteracy in indigenous communities" (p. 7). MOSEIB incorporated a proper curriculum based on the cosmovision of the Indigenous communities, adapting its content to their knowledge and ancestral practices, and focusing on their revitalization.

Since its creation, this educational system has had the purpose of guaranteeing the rights of Indigenous communities to an education in their ancestral language. Based on the history of

bilingual education in 1993, the Intercultural Bilingual Model (MOSEIB) was created, marking the beginning of the curricular redesign process for Indigenous schools. Since the creation of this model, many changes have been made with the purpose to foment a more plurinational education focused on rescuing the ancestral value of the indigenous communities. According to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2013), the Model of the Bilingual Intercultural Education System (MOSEIB) is part of the construction of the plurinational and intercultural State and sustainable development with a long-term vision. Thus, bilingual education in Ecuador promotes intercultural education that shows respect for the country's linguistic diversity by appreciating and preserving native languages in addition to teaching a foreign language.

Thus, not only does bilingual education simplify the teaching of a foreign language, but it also acts as an essential instrument to value and preserve native languages, promoting an intercultural education that appreciates the linguistic diversity of the nation. MINEDUC (2013) highlights the importance of Bilingual Intercultural Education in valuing and revitalizing the cultures and languages of indigenous peoples and nationalities in the country.

Therefore, examining the formation process of an indigenous Spanish-Kichwa speaker as an English teacher offers important insights into how they have negotiated this challenging historical and geopolitical environment in order to achieve their career goals. The importance of this research can be better understood and contextualized by placing the case study within this larger framework.

This part of the literature review provides a foundation for understanding cultural diversity and its impact on education. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating diverse cultural backgrounds, which is essential to contextualize participants' experiences as Hispanic Kichwa human beings. Effective teaching methods that encourage inclusivity and assist participants in incorporating their native knowledge into their English language learning can be informed by the insights found in this work.

It also looks at how cultural identification affects teaching, which enables a thorough examination of how your identity affects your method of instruction.

Population of teachers according to ethnicity in Ecuador

A report published by MINEDUC evidenced that teachers have become increasingly racially homogeneous over the last decade. According to Newman et al. (2023), in the 2009-2010 school year, 88.4% of teachers self-identified as Mestizo, and in 2020-2021 this number increased to 91.0% during the academic year. Moreover, as observed by Newman et al. (2023), in racial terms, the survey percentages of teachers of English as a foreign language closely match the percentages of teachers of all subjects in the MINEDUC national report (2021). The report identified that 90.7% of teachers are Mestizo, followed by Indigenous (4.1%), White (2.6%), Montuvian (1.3%), and Afro-Ecuadorian (2.0%). Our study found that 91.9% of English teachers identified themselves as Mestizo, while only 3.7% identified as Montuvian, 2.0% as Indigenous, 1.3% as Afro-Ecuadorian, and 0.9% as White.

Newman et al. (2023) stated, "More teachers are now self-identifying as Mestizo as a means of obtaining racial capital" (p. 31). This report supports our study on the growing racial homogeneity among teachers. As Mestizo teachers proliferate, the lack of diversity may restrict coverage and comprehension of the difficulties faced by Indigenous students, like our participant, who is the first person in her family to obtain an English degree. Language itself plays a dominant role in the formation of social and ethnic identity, and English teaching, in particular, is closely associated with imperial domination (Canagarajah, 1999). Her family's view of English as the language of whites or mixed races underscores broader societal attitudes that diminish the cultural importance of English in indigenous communities.

This lack of support reflects systemic barriers that impede their educational trajectory, which mirrors the report's findings on teacher demographics. Newman et al. (2023), “After completing the gender and ethnic analysis, we also considered if the lower representation of

certain ethnic groups, particularly of Indigenous people, was related to their geographic region in terms of access to teacher training and/or to English certification programs" (p. 34). The significance of English is further constrained by the predominance of Spanish and Kichwa in social interactions, as well as the scarcity of resources in rural areas. Satisfying the educational needs of Aboriginal people and guaranteeing that their voices are heard in language instruction depend on an awareness of these racial dynamics in education.

Teacher Training in the Multicultural Context of EFL

According to UNESCO (2019), The incorporation of Indigenous peoples and their ways of understanding the world into education is based on the multicultural scenario that characterizes all countries in the region. Taking into account what UNESCO mentioned, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers must possess a thorough understanding of pedagogical material and the capacity to relate to the cultural variety of their pupils in order to be trained in multicultural settings. According to Lucas and Villegas (2016), teachers need to develop competencies that allow them to adapt their teaching methods to respect and value the cultural experiences of their students, thus facilitating greater understanding and participation in the classroom. This would be particularly relevant for a teacher whose identity is rooted in multiple cultures, such as an indigenous Spanish-Kichwa speaker, as they can draw from their personal experience to increase cultural empathy in their teaching approach. Furthermore, Tran (2018) highlighted that training in inclusive strategies, such as using culturally specific resources, fosters more effective and meaningful learning in culturally diverse settings, which is crucial for success in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, high-quality teacher training in EFL has been shown to impact student academic performance, particularly in multicultural contexts positively. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that teacher training is directly related to student achievement across various academic areas, and this finding also applies to English teaching in multicultural environments.

EFL teachers with specialized training not only master the language but are also prepared to use culturally responsive teaching strategies, which helps students from diverse backgrounds engage actively and achieve better academic outcomes (OECD, 2018).

There are unique opportunities and problems while teaching English in multicultural environments. Although it can be difficult for educators to modify their teaching methods to accommodate cultural differences, Walker and Schafer (2019) emphasized that an intercultural approach in teacher training enables educators to integrate students' cultural experiences into learning. This contributes to creating an inclusive environment that strengthens the connections between content and students' life contexts. Additionally, Civitillo and Juang (2019) noted that teachers trained in intercultural methods can use their students' cultural perspectives as learning resources, thus promoting an enriching and collaborative classroom that supports English language learning. This framework highlights how an Indigenous teacher's journey not only benefits their personal development but can also significantly influence their students' engagement and academic performance in a multicultural setting.

Intrinsic motivation in EFL

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the construct of intrinsic motivation describes the tendency toward mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration, which is essential to cognitive and social development, and represents the primary source of joy and vitality throughout life. This implies the importance of having the intention for learning, liking or even doing things without the intervention or motivation of anybody else.

Additionally, as stated by Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is essential for social and cognitive development. It represents the innate desire for mastery, inquiry, and impromptu curiosity that results in personal development and fulfillment. People learn more deeply and become more resilient when they participate in activities that they enjoy for their own sake.

Because people are more inclined to encourage and exchange knowledge with one another, this motive also promotes constructive social interactions and cooperative settings. In the end, encouraging intrinsic drive improves personal well-being and aids in the development of communities as a whole.

Yasmeen et al. (2019) stated, a professor that is intrinsically encouraged to do different tasks for the feeling of achievement, success and self-determination. The affirmation of Yasmeen highlights the value of the motivation inherent in teachers. For students this implies that an enthusiastic and dedicated professor can foster an environment of positive change. When teachers experience a feeling of satisfaction, they can transmit this energy to their students, encouraging them to get the best out of them and so encouraging their interest and enthusiasm. Thus, this can lead to superior academic performance and more significant personal growth among students.

Being an Iindigenous Spanish-Kichwa speaker, our participant's educational experience is intimately linked to their innate desire to learn English and so become an English teacher. This sense of self and cultural identity in the classroom are shaped by this personal drive, which also affects how they teach. We firmly believe that addressing this topic by emphasizing the internal interests that influenced our participants' educational experience as well as how intrinsic motivation can promote engagement and integrate instruction with personal fulfillment.

Extrinsic motivation in EFL

According to Kashefian et al. (2024), “Extrinsic motivation is connected with external factors and has its origin in one’s social status in relation to others and the surrounding environment; thus, extrinsically motivated individuals may strive to keep face and seek social prestige” (p. 24).

Generally speaking, extrinsic motivation is affected by external factors such as rewards and recognition. This type of motivation can significantly influence behavior and performance particularly in educational contexts, where pupils are more likely to delve into the activities to achieve high grades instead of doing it because they really want to learn. In addition, extrinsic motivation can be particularly effective in circumstances where immediate effort is needed or where goals are defined and quantifiable.

According to Topalov, (2011) those extrinsically motivated perform a certain action not because they truly enjoy it, but because of a reward that is available in their environment. In addition to that, extrinsic motivation can generate many beneficial contributions. Extrinsic objectives, for example, can offer more structured, defined, and achievable objectives, which can be beneficial in the classes where students require guidance. Moreover, this can promote learning habits and discipline, which are essential for further learning. Learners are extrinsically motivated when learning is done for the sake of rewards such as grades or praise that are not inherently associated with the learning itself, that is, when learning or performing well becomes necessary to earning those rewards" (Ng & Ng, 2015, p. 24). Additionally, the teacher plays a significant role in this extrinsic motivation process, as they are the ones who can promote motivation, inspiration, and encouragement for students to keep learning.

According to Aacha (2010) and Benell (2004), teacher motivation is linked to teachers' attitudes towards their work, their willingness to participate in pedagogical techniques, and their preferences regarding student discipline and classroom management. This motivation also depends heavily on how teachers motivate students. Not all students will feel as motivated as others. The teacher's role in this extrinsic motivation process is closely tied to their performance and the way extrinsic motivation is applied. Furthermore, as stated by Cain (2007), the teaching

and learning processes in various schools produce varied results depending on the quality of teacher performance.

Extrinsic motivation has played a crucial role in the participant's training as an English teacher, stimulated by elements such as scholarships, academic recognition and employment possibilities. According to Ng and Ng (2015), also highlighted how external rewards incentivize students. In addition, the role of the teacher is crucial, given that it directly impacts student motivation. The participant's account evidences that extrinsic motivation and individual effort can overcome cultural and socioeconomic obstacles, underscoring the relevance of an inclusive educational model that appreciates both academic progress and cultural identity.

Autonomous Learning in EFL

Dickson (1987) defined autonomy as a situation where the learner makes all the decisions regarding their learning. It is evident that autonomy encourages critical thinking and self-motivation, allowing students to interact extensively with the content and customize their educational experiences to suit their individual needs and preferences. It also calls into question the support networks required to promote this kind of independence. While autonomy is desired, it must be developed through resources and direction because not all learners start with the same amount of confidence or ability to make wise decisions.

Also, according to Benson and Voller (1997), learner autonomy can be defined as the ability to take responsibility by self or the ability to take self-managed responsibility, and it can be an indicator for predicting academic performance. It defines learner autonomy as a crucial component in forecasting academic success and emphasizes it as the ability to assume self-managed responsibility for one's education. Based on this viewpoint, autonomy encompasses more than just freedom; it also includes the capacity to evaluate one's learning processes, establish objectives, and make wise choices.

However, this also makes us think about how it might affect teaching methods. Establishing settings that promote self-directed learning while offering the required direction and resources is essential to promoting learner autonomy. For students who might not have previously experienced autonomy in their education, this balance is essential. Additionally, Nunan (1997) argued that learner autonomy may occur in different situations and states that a fully autonomous learner has the competence to make and implement all decisions. This emphasizes how successful learners can be and how capable they are of making and implementing any activities, provided that they are autonomous learners.

Since the study participant is an example of an autonomous learner, the material covered in the literature review is directly related to our thesis. She continuously demonstrated willingness in her learning throughout her academic career by looking for extra materials that helped her grasp the subjects and topics she had covered in school. In addition to demonstrating her capacity to oversee her education, this self-directed approach embodies the core principles of learner autonomy. This part of our literature review is connected with our thesis as it claims that autonomy improves academic achievement and equips students to handle obstacles in the future. By including autonomy into training, we support the growth of critical students' competencies such as goal-setting and self-assessment.

III. Methodology

This section discusses the research methods, techniques, and instruments used throughout the study. It also provides a detailed description of the participant, her experience, and her relationship to the research. From a structural perspective, this section discusses the systematic steps followed in data collection and analysis to provide a complete understanding of the processes behind the research findings.

Research approach

For this study, a qualitative approach was used, which is characterized by allowing the facts to speak for themselves since it allows the researcher to collect information about the experiences of individuals and the stories of their lives. Pathak et al. (2013) mentioned that a qualitative method is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions. Thus, this study allowed us to understand the cultural, social, and economic issues experienced by the participants of this study.

In the present study, the qualitative design follows these research paradigms: ontological, epistemological, and methodological. Charmaz (2014) stressed that ontology in qualitative research is the belief that reality is socially constructed through people's experiences that are deeply rooted in their culture and personal context. On the other hand, epistemology means that knowledge is a co-production that is born through the interaction between the researcher and the participants, which allows verticalizing the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of the study subjects. As supported by Creswell and Poth (2018), constructivist epistemology denotes knowledge as co-constructed meaning, in which importance is given to how individuals perceive and create meaning from their experiences.

Finally, the methodological perspective refers to the tools applied throughout the research. In this case, as it is a qualitative study, interviews are used to capture the perspectives of the subject being studied. According to the interpretation of Denzin and Lincoln's (2018) work, qualitative research uses approaches that are inductive in nature, such as interviews or observation, to gain a deep and contextual understanding of human experiences through the scrutiny of the subjective and context-dependent interpretations of the participants.

The qualitative approach to methods allows us to discover knowledge and achievements that would not be possible with quantitative methods.

In addition, Gil (2009) mentioned that the qualitative research process is characterized by being tremendously dynamic and flexible. Since it is a flexible approach, it allows us to adapt our procedure according to the needs of the study.

Research design

Our research uses a case study design, a method that allows for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon situated in the context in which it occurs. According to Creswell (2013), "The case study method explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes" (p. 97). The main characteristic of this method is to explore in depth the challenges presented in the academic trajectory of our participant in a clear and contextualized way in order to obtain narratives that respond to our research objective.

Thomas (2011) mentioned that a case study is an analysis of systems that are studied with a comprehensive view by either one or several methods. Thus, through this study design, we not only explored specific aspects of the participant but also gained an in-depth understanding of them.

Instruments and data collection

For this case study, the main instrument used by the researchers for data collection will be the in-depth interview, as it allows us to explore in detail the experiences, perspectives, and qualities of the participant in our study. Three in-depth interviews will be conducted with a duration of two hours each, which will be in virtual mode through the Zoom Platform.

Considering the aforementioned, this instrument is ideal for case studies since it facilitates a deep understanding of the sociocultural and personal context of the field to be studied. In-depth interviews are crucial tools in qualitative research because they enable access to the meaning behind the words, examine personal narratives, and comprehend the subtleties

of lived experiences (Patton, 2015). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), these kinds of interviews are helpful for creating a rich and relevant narrative that is customized to each participant's individuality in addition to gathering facts.

The use of this data collection instrument is essential in our study, as we focus on exploring our participant's teacher education. Through in-depth interviews, researchers will be able to capture the complexity of the participant's lived experiences, recognizing the interferences between her cultural, linguistic, and professional identities. Thus, this instrument will allow the participant's voice to be prioritized and analyzed in her context, following Kvale's (2007) methodological recommendations on the importance of giving space to the interviewee to express herself freely and construct a genuine narrative.

Research setting and participants

The participant in this study is a young woman from the Saraguro village in the province of Loja. The participant majored in English and foreign language pedagogy at the National University of Education (UNAE) and obtained her third-level degree approximately two years ago.

What makes her career a case study is the fact that she chose to study a career focused on teaching English, which is in complete contrast to her mother tongue (Kichwa). Since her ancestral language and customs are essential components of her cultural identity, she believed that introducing foreign languages into her community could endanger her cultural traits. Even some of the elders or those known as *"kapak"* (Leaders) felt that the decision taken by the participant was a rebellion against their tradition.

Thus, the participant's decision demonstrated her openness and willingness to immerse herself in a more globalized world while maintaining her cultural identity

Research Procedures

Designing the case study

The research design represents the logical structure that connects the data to be collected with the initial questions of a study. By nature, any study cannot do without theory. Yin (2003) proposed that for the case study, there are five essential components of research design: the study's questions, propositions, units of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Case Study's questions

The questions in our research align with Yin's (2003) recommendation that how and why questions need to be created and addressed in case research studies.

- How have cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic affiliations shaped the academic and professional formation of an indigenous female English teacher?
- How has ethnic affiliation influenced the integration of cultural values and aspects of indigenous cosmovision in the teacher training of an indigenous female English teacher?
- How have socioeconomic factors, such as limited financial support from her family, affected the participant’s success in completing her English teacher training?

Propositions

Each proposition directs attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study (Yin, 2003). This involves examining in detail each stage of our participant's development, from her initial motivations to the challenges she has faced.

Units of analysis

The unit of analysis specifies whether the level of investigation will focus on the collection of data about individual people, groups, organizations, movements, institutions, countries, and other relevant entities (Neuman, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). The unit of analysis for this research is individual-focused, as we have centered our study on a single participant. We

aim is to comprehensively understand specific and detailed aspects of her experiences and behaviors.

Criteria for interpreting the findings.

It refers to the set of standards or guidelines used to analyze and make sense of the results obtained from a research study. According to Yin (2003), identifying and addressing explanations for findings is an important and indispensable strategy when it comes to conducting case study research.

Data analysis

In regard to the analysis of our data, the software MAXQDA facilitates the organization, analysis, and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data, which allows to conduct an in-depth analysis of collected data. In this sense, the aforementioned software made it easier to code, organize, and analyze unstructured data, namely the data that were gathered through the interviews within the context of the present study. Using visualization tools like idea maps and graphs enables us to spot trends and connections. To put it briefly, MAXQDA was of great help during the process of data analysis, as it increased the efficiency and accessibility of our lengthy interview data.

The data obtained from this research was analyzed through an inductive analysis as the most relevant information was categorized. According Newman, G. D. (2006) deductive and inductive reasoning is very useful for research. Deduction makes it possible to establish a link between theory and observation and to deduce from theory the phenomena under observation. Induction leads to the accumulation of isolated knowledge and information.

IV. Results and Discussion

In this qualitative narrative inquiry research, data were collected to explore the experience of the Journey to become an English teacher of an indigenous Spanish-Kichwa speaker. This survey research provided valuable findings that can contribute to students from the same or similar indigenous backgrounds or contexts. The present results were obtained from three two-hour interviews in Spanish that were conducted virtually through the Zoom platform. These interviews addressed different thematic dimensions and associated key questions, focused on exploring the participant's life. Inductive coding was used to identify the data collected, which were represented in graphs for better visual understanding, and an explanatory narrative of the graphs to express this information. In the following, the results will be presented and discussed by themes, codes and subcodes. Of which it has been decided to eliminate some or assimilate them with others, due to lack of relevance to our study and because they share similar characteristics. The quotations and/or illustrative fragments of the participants chosen for inclusion in this section were translated from Spanish into English.

The following table shows the themes, codes and subcodes that emerged from the three interviews, which were key to organizing all the information in order to analyze and interpret the data.

Table 1

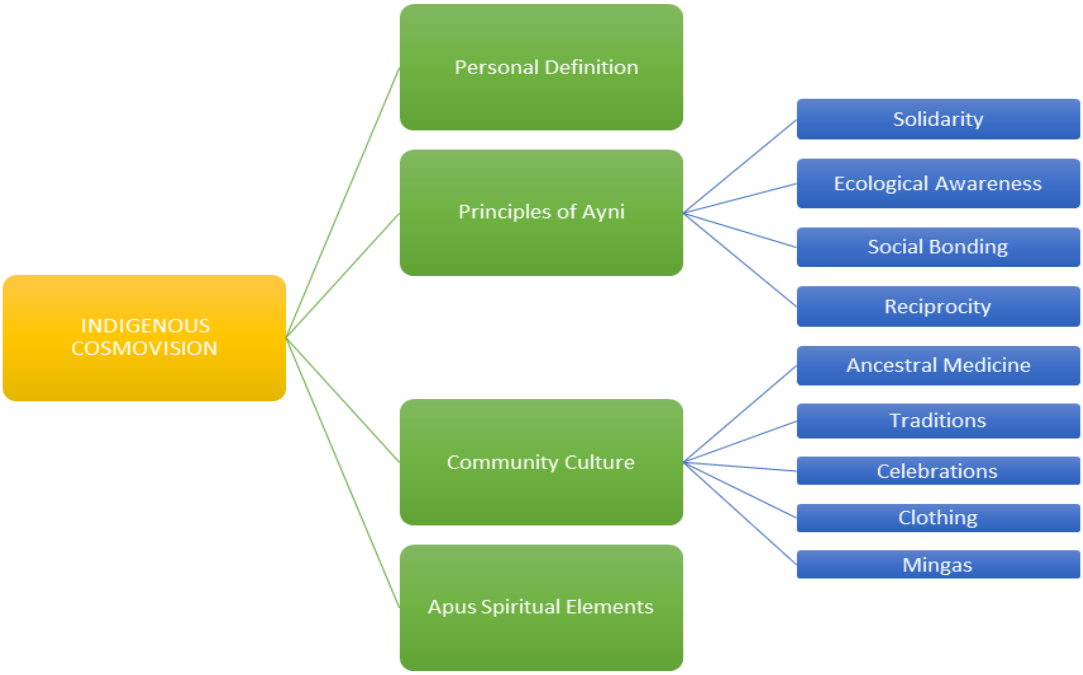
Themes, codes, and subcodes emerged out of the data analysis

THEMES	CODES
Indigenous Cosmovision	Personal Definition
	Principles of Ayni **SUBCODES** • Solidarity • Ecological awareness • Social Bonding • Reciprocity
	Community Culture **SUBCODES** • Ancestral Medicine • Traditions • Celebrations • Clothing • Mingas
	Apus Spiritual Elements
Indigenous Perceptions of English	• Ignorance of its importance • English as a foreign language • Threat Perception • Language Devaluation English • Motivation to learn English
Bilingual Education in Ecuador	• Impact of English on Indigenous Life • Bilingual Model Redesign Proposal • Importance of English in bilingual Education • Perspectives bilingual educational models in Ecuador
Being an Indigenous Woman in Ecuador	• Cultural identity strengths • Cultural identity challenges • Managing cultural and linguistic intersection • Gender Barriers • Academic resilience • Motivation and self-esteem • Identity building process

Empowerment through education	• Motivation and inspiration for students • Transformative Career Moments • The teaching role on empowerment
External factors and Institutional support	• Family Support • Need for intercultural training • Professional mentoring received • Indigenous educational accessibility • Socio-economic influence
Experience in Teacher Training	• Strategies Implemented • Description on the training process
Teaching in Multicultural Context	• Elements to support future indigenous teachers • Preparation of PINE programs • Multiculturalism in English language teaching • Adaptation of strategies

Note. Created by the authors based on the analyzed interview data.

Figure 1
Indigenous cosmovision



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 1 presents the codes that emerged from one of the interviews, in which the codes created were, Personal definition, Principles of *"Ayni"*, (values) Community Culture and Apus Spiritual Elements form part of the theme of Indigenous cosmovision. According to her perspective, Indigenous Cosmovisions is defined as: *"A philosophy of life based on principles such as reciprocity, correspondence, and the social bond rooted on a worldview that embraces life and, above all, the diversity of Indigenous people"* (Interview N1, 2025). Drawing from these principles, the code Principles of "*Ainy" (values)* was established, with the following subcodes: solidarity, ecological, consciousness, social bonding, and reciprocity which are essential elements of this Andean cosmovision. She highlighted the same elements, stating that, *"The Sumak Kawsay" (Living Well) that is truly great is an approach that is so important for us as an indigenous people, where coexistence, equality, and harmony are valued, but above*

all, ecological awareness." (Interview N1, 2025). This suggests that in her community, people have a deep reverence for Mother Nature recognizing themselves as part of the earth and coexistence with it. Likewise, it reflects their commitment to equity and justice for all.

Subcodes such as ancestral medicine, traditions, celebrations, clothing and *" minga"* (Collaborative work), were part of the Community Culture code. These subcodes were derived from the collected data, the same that come from the interviews. A particular emphasis is placed on ancestral medicine, where the participant mentioned that, "They have so much ancestral wisdom, for example, on the subject of medicine, of ancestral medicine, that not everything is pills, not everything is pharmaceutical chemicals, that there are really things that can be treated at home" (Interview N3, 2025). Based the participant`s insights, it is evident that Indigenous communities hold extensive knowledge in traditional medicine, demonstrating a deep understanding of natural healing practices.

Regarding the concept of traditions, she mentioned that, "*Having long hair for us means wisdom and power, so it is not just anything"* (Interview N3, 2025). This illustrates the importance and the significance of maintaining traditions as part of ones´ identity and cultural pride. The fact that cutting a part of their hair symbolizes the loss of part of their identity demonstrates the profound respect they have for their culture and identity. With regard to celebrations, the participant explained that in her community, people perceive celebrations not as a mere expression of joy but as a means of fostering unity and communal sharing. This reflects a deeper sense of solidarity and caring of each other.

One of the celebrations in her community is called *"Inti Raymi"* (Festival to the sun), and as she mentions, "*Inti Raymi, the time of harvests, marks the conclusion of the Andean year in June. Specifically on June 21st our Andean calendar comes to an end, and we celebrate by*

expressing gratitude to the Earth, appreciating the seeds that have germinated and that will sustain us for another year. (Interview N1, 2025). Another significant celebration is "*kapak Raymi"* (Festival to the leaders and blooming) described by the participant as, *"We celebrate Kapak Raymi, which is something that goes beyond Christmas and the 25th. It is not a matter of family gatherings, it is a matter of an entire community that comes together not only on one day of celebration, but on several days, which really begins on the 23rd, sorry, it begins on the 20th and ends on the 25th, which is Christmas Day"* (Interview N1, 2025). These celebrations allow us to appreciate the essence of being part of a community. As she emphasizes, all of these festivities focus on collective well-being and not only on individual interests. They serve as a remarkable example of a unique heritage that dates back centuries, even preceding the Spanish conquest of these indigenous groups.

Another reason for including Clothing as part of our main theme, is that clothing for her and the Indigenous cosmovision, is regarded as something symbolic of her cultural environment. "We use an "anaco" (skirt), a "faja" (wool belt), the shirt and on top of the shirt we have the "rebozo" (shawl) and well, apart from that, we use the "topo", (shawl pin) which serves as an object to fasten the "rebozo" (shawl). The earrings are also quite large" (Interview N1, 2025). The clothing worn by the people in her community is not solely for protection against cold weather. As she mentions in one of the interviews, "The fact that we dress like this is not just because it is cold and that is the only reason. I mean, it is one of the reasons, yes. But also, everything we wear is quite symbolic, as she mentions in one of the interviews" (Interview N1, 2025). Rather than being purely functional, clothing embodies history, tradition, and cultural values passed down from one generation to the next. This refers to community gatherings where everyone comes together to achieve a collective goal. These mingas are typically led by *"kapaks"* (leaders) who hold a respected leadership role in the

community. This is reinforced by her statement: "*We all get together, each member of the community has something to contribute, we join the minga, we will always have a kapak, which in Kichwa means leader, the leader is kapak"* (Interview N1, 2025).

Apus spiritual elements constitute another code derived from the nature elements previously mentioned by the participant. In Indigenous cultures, these elements are recognized as spiritual entities that inhabit the Andes mountains and are regarded as guardians of nature, protectors of life and sources of ancestral wisdom. This is affirmed by the participant, who states "*We are part of our land, of Pachamama, as we say in Kichwa, in our language. In reality, the way we apply it, beyond applying it, is how we live it." (*Interview N1, 2025). The fact that they identify themselves as belonging to the earth highlights the deep connection they have with nature. This enduring bond demonstrates how their identity and lifestyle are interwoven with the natural world. It represents a worldview in which people are considered integral parts of nature rather than separate from it.

Considering all of the previously discussed points, the participant has emphasized her personal definition of how Indigenous people perceive the world. As she explains, in the Indigenous cosmovision, "*Pacha mama"* (mother earth) and humans are interconnected as a single body and spirit. This aligns with Rojas (2015) who states, "In the Kichwa "*pacha"* (world), thought and work constitute a similar reality. There is no distinction between place and time; these realms do not adhere to divisions such as mind-body, thought-sense, or argument-impression*"*

In addition, the participant emphasizes on the principles of the *Ayni* which promote a more harmonious and integrated living. As she explains, this is evidenced not only on the respect in

the respect she has to Pacha mama, but also in the respect shared by all individuals who are part of an Indigenous cosmovision. This offers valuable insight for our society which is becoming increasingly fragmented, where individualism is prevailing over solidarity. These Indigenous principles and concepts can serve as a model for fostering more equitable societies. This corresponds with Perez (2018) who asserted that these concepts, emanating from the Andean worldview, are based on principles of complementarity and reciprocity, where respect for life and Mother Earth is essential to maintain a balance and establish harmony between human beings and nature.

These elements, as the participant explains, not only represent the cultural identity of her community but also function as a mechanism for preserving their Indigenous identity transmitting knowledge from one generation to another. According to, Unesco (2019), Indigenous knowledge articulated from their own languages and intersubjective experiences and collective they express themselves, for example, in areas such as the use of spaces, agricultural and livestock management, in the ecology of territories, in medicine and knowledge of the body and emotions. As part of her traditional practices, the *Apus* elements are regarded as living entities that protect and guide the people of her community. She describes as living forces that share a unique, unified connection. As Sanchez, (2006) mentioned, "*Apus* is the word used to designate the spirits that inhabit the hills around the communities. The origin of these deities is usually part of great cosmogonic cycles, which explain the meaning of the world and human existence, as well as the general order of Andean societies" (p.6).

Figure 2

Indigenous perceptions of English



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 2 illustrates codes such as Ignorance of its importance, English as a foreign language, Threat Perception, Language devaluation English and Motivation to learn English, which were identified in the process of creating the theme Indigenous perceptions of English. Generally speaking, since the colonization of the Andean cultures in Latin America, Indigenous communities have considered the integration of foreign languages as a form of dominance and a potential threat. However, as time has gone by, the idea of the integration of foreign languages has gained greater significance, especially in the new indigenous generations due to their closeness to different and unknown cultures.

Through the analysis of the interviews conducted with the participant, the previously mentioned aspects were evidenced.

Majority of the people from these communities perceives English as insignificant and irrelevant due to their lack of awareness regarding its importance. As the participant mentions, “I think that English is really too important, sometimes due to lack of information, we think it is not, and that typical phrase that English opens doors, many people see it as something insignificant, but in reality, it is quite the opposite” (Interview N1, 2025).

This statement highlights the limited understanding of the importance of this language and how this can create numerous opportunities which can bring personal growth and success. This is without a doubt related to language devaluation English when she says the following, “So for us it was like, oh, yeah, that's what English is. You just memorize things and that's it” (Interview N2, 2025). Such remarks suggest the perception of English as simplistic may stem from educational settings where even the teachers lack proper training to teach this foreign language in Indigenous communities. As she further explains, “You are teaching English, but you're teaching it in Spanish. It doesn't make sense. So, I think there's a lot of work to be done” (Interview N1, 2025).

Regarding the code English as a foreign language, which is also part of the main theme, it can be argued that in these remote communities, English is considered as the language belonging to the white and mixed-race language. The participant states, *“We are Indigenous, you don't have to be learning another language, that language is from the gringos, it's from another country, it's not even from here” (Interview N1, 2025).* This statement highlights the low level of importance attributed to English in these communities and how it is perceived solely as a language of dominant cultures. Nevertheless, the participant also noted that for the Indigenous youth, English is seen as challenging and difficult to learn. She explains, *“Between fear, insecurity and actually being able to speak English at some point, it was something very far away, very difficult” (Interview N1, 2025).*

The previously mentioned ideas fully relate to the Threat perception of English, as she mentioned, “I think my community sees it as a threat” (Interview N1, 2025). This highlights how Indigenous communities perceive this foreign language as threatful capable of destroying their mother tongue. Another statement mentioned by the participant, which emphasizes her familiar context is the following one “*But my dad was one of the people who, if I spoke to him in English, he felt like a threat, really, to our language”* (Interview N1, 2025). These words expressed by his father lead us to reflect on how the family opinions can have an impact at the moment of taking future decisions. This is the case of our participant, who despite the comments of her family and community continued to learn English with the purpose of becoming an English professor , constantly reminding herself, “*It's not about a change in culture, it's not about changing our traditions, but about making English one more thing that is added to our lives”*(Interview N1, 2025) The fact that his father and community perceive English as a threat contributes to the devaluation of English believing that English is not a valuable threat for the communities. This is supported by her own words, “*It was like that, and I think that until now, really, studying a new language is not so valued. So, I think*

The excerpt from the interview that led us to identify the theme motivation to learn English was the fact that our participant worked in a restaurant frequently visited by American tourists. During that time, she believed she had a strong command of English; however, when she tried to communicate with them, she struggled to do so. She mentions that it was one of the main reasons that motivated her to learn English. This is reinforced by her statement: “*When I finished working at that restaurant, I thought about it and said, how difficult English is. I thought I knew a lot, but I don't know how to speak, I don't know how to speak at all, to be*

honest. So, I think that was one of the things that motivated me and I said, "I would like to learn English, to speak it" (Interview N1, 2025).

Considering all of what has been mentioned before, the participant has highlighted how Indigenous people perceive this foreign language in their communities. The participant mentioned that in her community there is a lack of awareness that leads them to consider English as irrelevant and unimportant. They believe that Kichwa is the language that young Indigenous should be interested in learning as in recent years, these Andean languages have been declining. This is evidenced by Fernández (2010, as cited in UNESCO, 2019), who stated that "the Kayambi, Saraguro, Karanki, and Kisapincha indigenous peoples face a serious situation, since only between 15% and 29% speak their language" (p. 17).

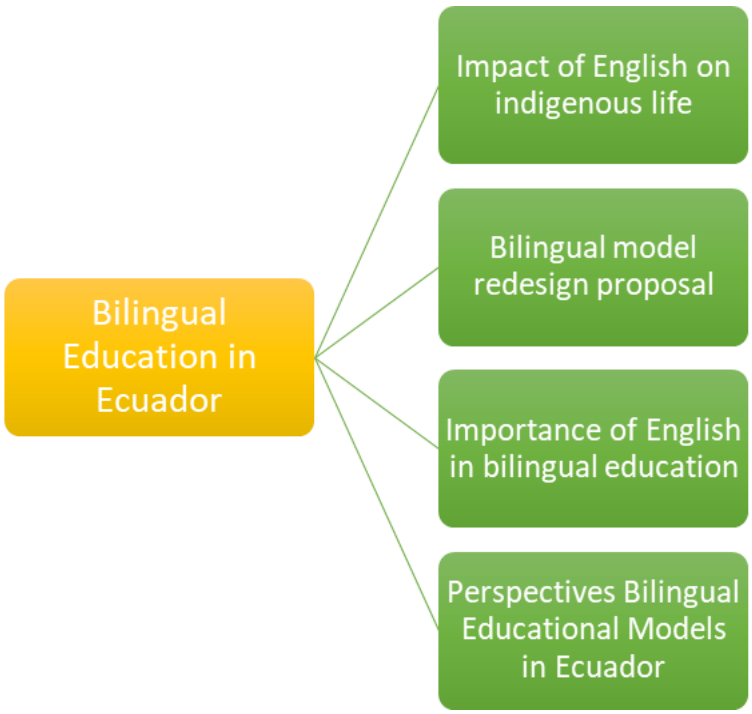
Considering that the learning of foreign languages in her community represents the language White populations and colonial cultures, social and ethnic identity formation is heavily influenced by language, and teaching English in particular is strongly linked to colonial dominance (Canagarajah 1999). This reinforces the perception of a threat that could eradicate their own cultural roots, resembling what happened during the Spanish conquest. This is supported by Unesco (2019), the Indigenous roots, resembling were made invisible and, as far as possible, eliminated.

Unlike these perspectives, there are also other indigenous communities who consider English as a means of personal growth, leading to international connections and greater economic opportunities. And as Haboud (2009) says, the indigenous communities have not been the exception; in fact, they are increasingly interested in learning this language to let the

outside world know about their philosophy. This is the case of the Otavalo indigenous people who speak English to establish connections with tourists and promote their crafts and culture.

Figure 3

Bilingual education in Ecuador



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 3, illustrates codes such as Impact of English on indigenous life, Bilingual model redesign proposal, Importance of English in bilingual education and Perspectives on bilingual educational models in Ecuador, which form the main theme titled as Bilingual education in Ecuador. Ecuador is characterized as a multilingual and plurinational country in which education and holistic evaluation are implemented, considering the varied learning styles of students from different Indigenous communities and cultures.

Aligned with this, in the national and international educational systems, numerous scholarships have been offered for students to go and keep learning and expanding their knowledge. This is closely related to our participant as English has been key to her learning, enabling her to travel overseas as one of the recipients of a scholarship primarily aimed at Indigenous women leaders. And as she mentions, "*The fact that I am indigenous gave me the opportunity to apply for this scholarship for peoples and nationalities and I was able to study with that scholarship, right? So, it has been a very nice opportunity, it has been quite accessible and in fact I have always tried to share with friends, with colleagues who may be studying at other universities and I have told them like, hey, take advantage, ask"* (Interview N1, 2025). This demonstrates that our participant had the chance to study abroad thanks to this scholarship.

This was what gave her the opportunity to explore other cultures, meet new people and broader her mind. This motivated her to continue learning and improving her English language skills for enhanced future communication. And this can be considered as a key achievement that influenced her development as an English teacher. For this reason, she affirms the following, "I *think that English has really been the main tool, I would say, for each of the achievements I have reached so far*" (Interview N1, 2025). She goes on to describe her journey toward becoming an English teacher, and this time she emphasizes how crucial English has been for achieving her goals.

Along with this, the participant, emphasizes the importance of Redesigning the Bilingual Educational Model because in one of the segments of the interviews, she says that, "*Therefore, the leaders of the different schools in the community, where they are the ones who*

live daily, the ones who deal with the students, the ones who know more closely maybe the needs of the students, the educational needs, maybe new forms of inclusion, then things like that, i think they could be redesigned through collaboration between different perspectives" (Interview N1, 2025) In this part, the participant express the importance of redesigning the bilingual model as she believes that the leaders of the community are the ones who are more involved and know how the real indigenous world functions.

She also calls for a more mindful approach to education, stating, "*I think we really have to work on that, so that we have, as you mentioned before, a more conscious education, so that our students can see English as something that motivates them, not as something that frustrates them, not as something like, oh, you have to memorize 30 verbs by tomorrow and you won't pass the year" (Interview N1, 2025).* This highlights the importance of redesigning the bilingual model, as she believes that by doing so students can view English as a source of motivation, taking into account the needs, interests, and challenges of the Indigenous youth.

The previously discussed points align to the next code: the Importance of English in bilingual education. The participant comments that, "*English, I think, has even led me to travel, because, for example, the volunteering I did in 2021 was really to teach English and Spanish. When, now, the last program I did at the university, I was also teaching English, and I think that, for me, has inspired me a lot"* (Interview N1, 2025). These reflections highlight the transformative power of English, as it not only creates opportunities for global communication but also provides access to international resources that can lead to further learning and professional growth.

The final code is Perspectives bilingual educational models in Ecuador. Throughout the analysis, we observed how the Bilingual system has undergone constant evolution, allowing for the integration of new educational approaches. This is evidenced by the participant when she says that, "*Montessori pedagogy, where students really learn by doing, especially children learn when they are playing"* (Interview N1, 2025). This insight highlights how the Bilingual Education in Ecuador continues to progress, incorporating diverse methodologies and innovative strategies to enhance the learning process of students.

This analysis addresses the importance of a well-structured Bilingual Education system, one that not only facilitates second-language acquisition but also respects and values the interests, knowledge of the Indigenous communities. It also evidenced the importance of redesigning the bilingual model of education. According the MINEDUC (2013) emphasis is placed on the role that Bilingual Intercultural Education plays in valuing and revitalizing the cultures and languages of the indigenous peoples and nationalities of the country. Moreover, the analysis reflects on the impact of English in the participant´s personal and academic journey, demonstrating how it has opened doors to international opportunities including the chance to learn from other Indigenous cultures through a scholarship to study overseas. Her experience serves as an example of how various countries and international organizations offer scholarships specifically for Indigenous communities. As noted by out by Williamson (2008), the following key insights are important to be taken into account:

> Since 1998, the Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, affiliated with the Christian Social Union of Bavaria, has awarded 550 scholarships to underprivileged students in Ecuador, primarily of indigenous origin, and has carried out social development

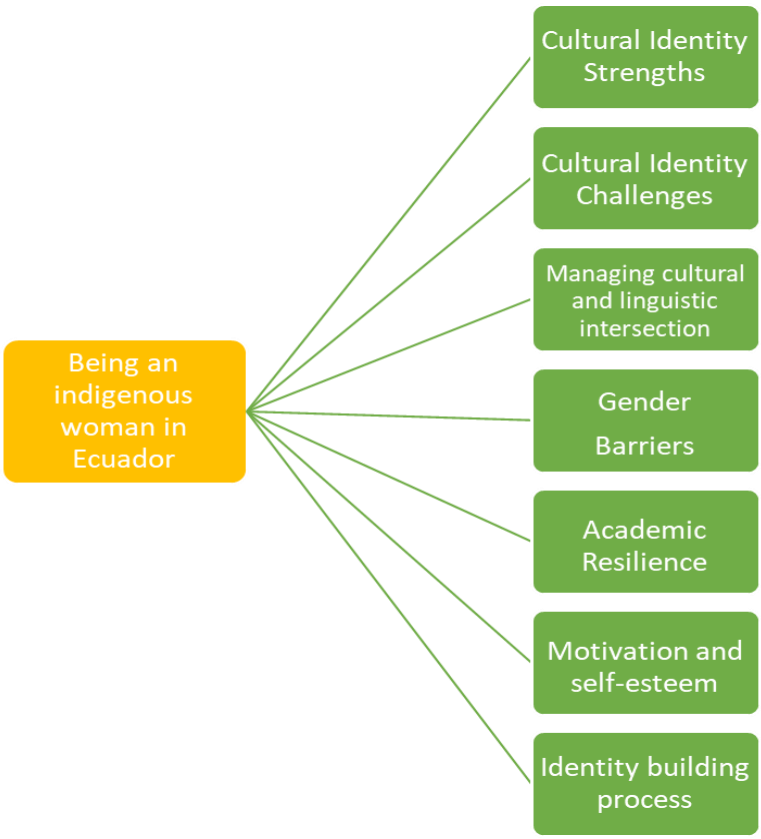
projects in Argentina, Bolivia, Central America, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela (p. 133).

The participant also made emphasis on the importance that English had when traveling abroad to be part of volunteering programs which allowed her to know other cultures, meet new people and even expand her culture and become a more open-minded person. This is linked with Alvarez (2019) who mentions that, “In our globalized world, learning a foreign language is perceived as a means that enhances the acquisition of tools to understand different cultures, as well as strengthen values such as tolerance, sense of belonging, and respect for others”.

He also addressed his perspective on the bilingual educational model in Ecuador, stating that the model continues to have some improvements in the system and therefore also the creation of several educational centers. As stated by Ministerio de Educacion (2013) In this regard, progress has been made in the country with the creation of Community Educational Centers in the indigenous communities, where indigenous languages and the Spanish are linked, based on the Model of the Intercultural Bilingual Education System (MOSEIB).

Figure 4

Being an indigenous woman in Ecuador



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 4, shows codes such as Cultural identity strengths, Cultural identity challenges, managing cultural and linguistic intersection, Gender barriers, Academic resilience, Motivation and self-Esteem and Identity building process which formed the main theme known as Being an Indigenous woman in Ecuador. Since ancient times, women have been seen as an inferior gender, especially in the Andean communities where male gender has always been the one that has prevailed the most and to which the most value is given. The lack of a good quality of education, limited work opportunities have been barriers that Indigenous women had to overcome. Despite this, a time went on woman leaders have started to defend their rights, territory and the environment. This is the case of Dolores Cacuango Kilo, and Transito

Amaguaña Alba, who are considered as symbols of indigenous resistance by impulsing the creation of Bilingual schools focused on Kichwa-Spanish speakers.

Just as this powerful woman who took advantage of their identity to fight for their rights, our participant also saw her identity as a strength, and this is evidenced when she mentions that, *I saw it as an incredible strength, the fact of being able to share my experiences and especially my knowledge as a Kichwa-Saraguro teacher* (Interview N2, 2025). This evidence shows how the participant transformed one of her main challenges of her cultural identity as a strength not only to benefit her emotional well-being but also to let the outside world know about the own meaning of the Indigenous cultures.

Despite her constant pride towards her cultural roots, she faced numerous factors that made her identity a challenge in the outside world who lacked knowledge about the cosmovision of these Andean cultures. Regarding the Indigenous clothing for example, she mentions the following, "*So, a lot of them have asked me, right? And why do you wear so many clothes like that? And how it doesn't keep you warm and things like that. So, at some point that has made me feel bad, right?"* (Interview N2, 2025). This shows how the lack of knowledge of other people can even lead to bullying towards these people who dress differently. And she mentions, "*My best friend at the time, she wore a hat and the boys who were from the city bullied her a lot"* (Interview N2, 2025). In this part, she commented that the comments towards her best friend were denigrating which somehow made her friend feel inferior.

She also mentions that these comments were constant and that her friend even stopped wearing her cultural hat. "*She sat in front and they would tell her, hey, take off your hat so we can't see. And so, it was so much, so much, that at some point at the end of that year my partner had to leave the hat, but because of that social pressure, not because she wanted to"* (Interview

N2, 2025). These facts even caused fears to her who even thought of stopping wearing her own typical dressing. *"So, believe me, I left my hat behind from that time on, I never put it on again for fear of being rejected" (*Interview N2, 2025). This fragment of the interview, allows us to affirm that the cultural affiliations can affect the personal and academic development of the indigenous people. As stated by the participant *"I think that being indigenous has been a barrier at some point, it has been quite challenging and, in my case, well, especially at school, because, obviously, you are really just getting to know the outside world, and I was a very shy person back then" (*Interview N2, 2025).

For many people, the intersection of two languages can result extremely difficult and even impossible in some cases. However, the experience of our student gives us a different view about this factor that can be seen as problematic. Nevertheless, through the journey of our participant, we can affirm that this is possible and this is supported by the own words of her who comments the following, *"I tried to make a match, right? For example, the Ayes are ñawi and so on. So that they can connect it, right? And by the way, they knew, right? that in Ecuador, Spanish is not the only language spoken, that there are also languages of indigenous peoples like Chuar, Achuar, and above all Kichwa" (*Interview N2, 2025). *Based on this as researchers, we fully believe that language intersection is an advantage that can lead us to submerge into different cultures and different ideals.*

In terms of gender barriers, many Indigenous women still continue to be ignored "*The fact of being women, many times we have felt perhaps not heard, because there is a very traditional issue that has influenced us a lot from the past" (*Interview N2, 2025), as many people, especially men from her own community consider Andean women` ideas useless including her own family. *"My grandfather was one of those male chauvinist people, the one*

*who had all the power, the one who had his way of thinking, that men are full of opportunities, that women have to be in the house, they are the ones who cook, and above all, it is always too traditional that women are there to serve men" (*Interview N2, 2025). In this paper, it is important to highlight that not only has she evidenced this type of discrimination in her community but also in her school. She comments that one time, she became the president of one of her classes and her goals and ideals were always considered by her classmates as pointless.

This has been the cause for critics of her classmates at the moment of the participant expressing her ideas. This is evident in the following fragment, *"Being a woman is really challenging, and you do feel discriminated against, because it would have been very different if perhaps one of my classmates had been the class president, and I know that everyone would have listened to them, and I have really felt discriminated against, and maybe not listened to, and maybe they have seen me as, I don't know, as they said, many times they have laughed while I was speaking, and it has made me give up many times, honestly, and I got to the point of saying, no, I'm not going to represent you anymore, because literally, you never listen to me" (Interview N2, 2025).* All of this, shows the challenges that she faced in contexts that are not familiarized with these contexts.

Despite the fact that she could not fit in with her classmates in the University she continued with striving for what she wanted day in and day out showing academic resilience, and she mentions, "*All the hard days I lived through at university, the fact that I could never fit into my course, really, I think that, instead of giving up, I got up, I think that, I said, at some point, this is going to be a memory, at some point, everything that I am living right now, is going to be in the past. gave her the power to not give up and consider her resilient side. And*

as she mentions" (Interview N2, 2025). This evidences the resilience and self-motivation she got to continue studying and after all the process go back to all of the journey and see it as a memory.

Hand in hand with this, motivation and self-esteem take place as the participant mentioned that Indigenous women also have the power and the power to make big changes in the society. She comments, "*We as women, and especially as Indigenous women, also have power, we also have a voice, we also have a vote to express our feelings, to be able to express what we feel and believe" (Interview N2, 2025).* This is without a doubt linked to what she also comments, showing how convinced she is about the power and knowledge that Indigenous women have to express valuable ideas and express their feelings. This idea gives space to the way on how she has reinforced her identity building process. She comments that, *"I would describe this construction process as a challenge, a challenge that we experience day by day, depending on the different spaces where we find ourselves. I think it is a never-ending issue. Day by day, we are learning and improving, and also, above all, discovering new skills, trying to break this barrier that indigenous women have always lacked, in some way" (Interview N2, 2025).*

Having said the aforementioned, it was discussed the role those Indigenous women have in society. Ecuador is a country rich in terms of linguistic and cultural diversity where there are 14 nationalities and 18 Indigenous communities recognized by the State of Ecuador. As stated by, Unesco (2019) Ecuador defines itself as a plurinational and intercultural country with fourteen nationalities and eighteen indigenous, plus the mestizo, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples. Despite this recognizement, indigenous women continue facing social, cultural and gender barriers.

From our participant point`s view during the interviews, in most of the occasions the participant took as a strength her cultural roots considering her heritage identity as a source of motivation to challenge the typical stereotypes that surround these Indigenous groups. By embracing her cultural identity, she became an inspiration for other Indigenous women showing that her origin is not a limitation but a strength to achieve great goals in any social domain hand in hand with her cultural identity strengths. In addition, the strengthening of Indigenous women, who have a voice and the right to vote, was highlighted. Their involvement in politics is fundamental to influence the decisions of the community and sharing experiences promotes solidarity, essential to progress toward equity and the recognition of their rights and always having in mind the importance of motivation and self-esteem and always believing that their voices should be heard and taking into consideration. Moreover, as stated by Lux (2011), "The political participation of indigenous women in parliament is a true act of heroism, because while it is already very difficult for a woman to reach parliament, for an indigenous woman, it is a female odyssey" (p. 253).

However, that cultural roots can most of the times become a challenge as it was the case of her who comments about feeling uncomfortable when people used to ask her about her clothing which somehow would make her uncomfortable. She also mentions that it had an impact on her academic journey when her classmates used to make fun of her by joking about all of her indumentary, having this way challenges with her cultural identity. According to a study of Alvarez (2018) “The 45,33% of students believe that there is discrimination from other cultures which is the reason why students do not wear their own clothes of their community”. This study of Alvarez, shows that students from Indigenous areas do stop wearing their own clothes due to the discrimination from other cultures. However, there are still environments where indigenous women words are not accepted for being considered irrelevant and pointless

and these Indigenous have had to face some gender barriers. It was affirmed by our participant when she mentioned that in her own family men consider that men are the ones full of opportunities and who consider that women should be at home doing the chores. This links to Macaulay et al. (2017): who states the following

> Indigenous women face different obstacles, including the following: severely restricted opportunities to join the labor market; unique geographic and economic challenges to gain access to health and education services; limited access to social programs and services; high rates of illiteracy; low participation in the political process; and social marginalization. (p. 11).

This quote also highlights that not only have women been marginalized in their communities or families but also in the job market and when willing to get access to health and education services.

The confluence of languages, which is often seen as a challenge, can also be enriching. The experience of our participant highlights the importance of linking languages and valuing diversity in Ecuador, a country where Spanish and native languages such as Chuar and Kichwa coexist. This strengthens our conviction that managing cultural and linguistic intersection promotes understanding and appreciation of different cultures. And as our own participant mentioned. Since she also knew Kichwa, she always tried making a match when teaching English. In the case of teaching fruits for example, she says she always tried saying it in English and in Kichwa too. For our participant, this fosters cultural understanding, enhances retention and facilitates connections between concepts for deeper learning. Blommaert (2017, as cited in Dwivedi & Patel, 2024, p. 176) states that "language should be conceptualized as an integrated part of society, culture and the psyche." This quote highlights the importance of cultural and linguistic intersection when learning a language. Also, Shah and Shah, (2015),

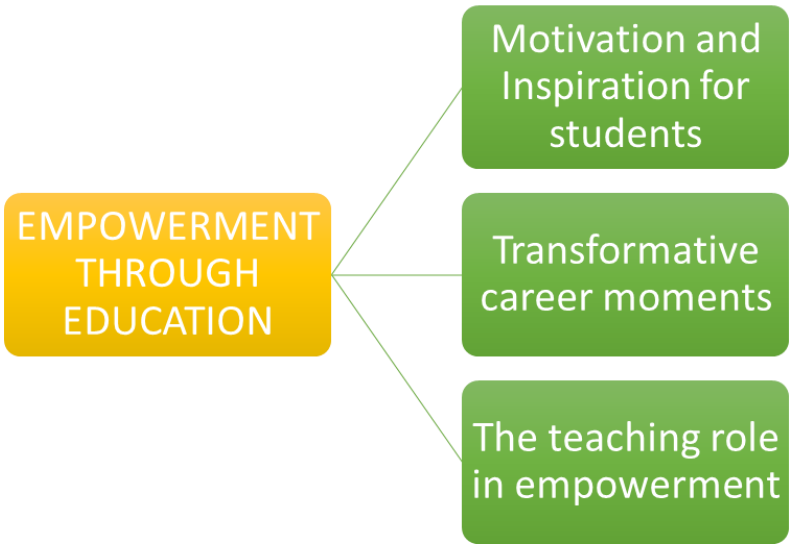
“The relationship between language and culture may be viewed as closely associated with a culture: language and culture are seen as inseparable phenomena” (p. 25).

Understanding and communication depend on the interaction of language and culture. In a multicultural society, it enhances interactions and promotes inclusivity by exposing a range of worldviews and cultivating empathy. As it is well known, academic resilience makes reference to the capacity that students possess to face and overcome the challenges and adversities encountered in their academic journey. This might help them to keep committed to achieve academic performance. This is the case of the participant of this study, who has been highlighted for the strengths she showed in any moments of adversity. As the participant mentioned, all the hard days she had to face at the University were the ones that took out her resilience side. And as stated by Meseguer Monfort, E. (2020), “Mental resilience is like a puzzle in which all the pieces have to fit together and in which self-confidence is a key piece” (p. 9).

This goes hand in hand with her identity construction as she commented on her narration, her process has been very challenging, a daily experience, sometimes learning better, being better, discovering new abilities and always trying to eliminate those barriers about Indigenous women. It is also trying that its history helps to form the identity not only of the people of his town, but of all the people who come from different cultures and contexts. As stated by Diaz et al (2018), “One of the fundamental and transverse purposes of history teaching is the identity formation of the students who are part of the school system school system” (p. 56).

Figure 5

Empowerment through education



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 5 shows the codes that become part of the theme of Empowerment through education. These were: motivation and inspiration for students, transformative career moments, and the teaching role in empowerment. Education is one of the most potent tools to individual and collective empowerment. As we know, knowledge allows us to obtain abilities, develop critical thinking, and as a result, strengthen students' self-esteem. However, in contexts of inequality, such as those faced by indigenous people, education becomes a changing factor that reduces economic, social, and cultural barriers.

Thus, when a person receives education and becomes a professional in this case an English teacher, they not only have better future opportunities but also influence the future of others, as they serve as motivation and inspiration for students. In the applied interviews, our participant described the role of the teacher as something that goes beyond teaching. She says that the teacher must be a support for students and an inspiration to them.

"I always like to motivate my students as someone did with me because I believe that the role of the teacher is not only to teach but also to guide and accompany them and to feel that you can be a friend to them" (Interview N2, 2025). In this part, we confirm that social affiliations can influence and shape the academic formation of the students. As this fragment shows, the empathy from the teachers can transform and inspire the academic life of students. This is the case with our participant when she mentions, *"I think that yes, the role of the teacher really should be focused on being a guide"* (Interview N2, 2025).

This fragment highlights the importance of the role of teachers, as they can significantly inform students about opportunities like scholarships, which can change their lives and even become transformative career moments in their successful journey. This was the case for our participant, as she considers obtaining these scholarships, thanks to her teachers, a transformative moment in her career. Moreover, she comments, *"I think the fact that my teachers, Diego specifically, and with teacher Hazel, shared this opportunity with me, right? There is a possibility of participating in this scholarship. Furthermore, it was specifically for Indigenous peoples, because it is not open to everyone. It is specifically for indigenous and Afro-descendant girls, leaders in the university. And knowing, I think they shared with me, even knowing that I was not t the best student, that I was not the most famous or the most popular, and nothing like that"* (*Interview N2, 2025).* This clearly evidenced the support she had from both of her teachers on these scholarships, where she met a lot of other indigenous and powerful women who inspired her and to whom she related instantly.

This way, we can indeed affirm that Teaching has a tremendous role in empowering students to strive for what they want and never give up. In this part, it is once more evident the role that teaching has when it comes to empowering students to become the version of themselves which can lead to personal growth and success. Moreover, the participant in our

study mentions, *"I always like to share this phrase that we are always here in this world to leave footprints, really to teach, to share, but always leave a smell, leave something so that when later at some point we may stop being in that world and say how, ay, yes this teacher"* (Interview N2, 2025) Having said that, it is evidenced how important is for her that teacher empower and inspire other people as it was the case of her where this external factor contributed to her future professional career.

Having mentioned all of the above. It is specifically for indigenous and Afro-descendant girls who are leaders at the university. Making use of this empowerment, the participant used her own experience to inspire her students to follow and pursue their own dreams by accompanying them with the everyday classes. She affirms that the role of the teacher is not only teaching but about creating special bones for them. As stated by Cain (2007) The teaching and learning processes in various schools produce varied results depending on the quality of teacher performance in the various schools. This makes emphasis on the extrinsic motivation that the participant received from her teachers, by sharing her the opportunity to obtain a scholarship and travel overseas for five weeks, this scholarship was explicitly designed for indigenous women, creating this way a significant connection between her teachers and her which she considers as transformative moments.

Based on this, the role of the teacher in empowering is essential as the teachers can create an environment that maximizes the extrinsic motivation in the case of our participant by having facilitated her to use her English abilities in genuine and significant contexts. According to Aacha (2010) and Benell (2004), teacher motivation is linked to teachers' attitudes towards their work, their willingness to participate in pedagogical techniques, and their preferences

regarding student discipline and classroom management. This motivation also depends heavily on how teachers motivate students. Not all students will feel as motivated as others

Figure 6

External factors and institutional support



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 6 presents the codes that shaped the main theme: External factors and Institutional support. These include, Family support, Need for intercultural training, Professional mentoring received, Indigenous educational accessibility and Socioeconomic factors. The development and success of individuals are often influenced by external elements such as socioeconomic, cultural and, familial and even governmental polices. These factors can either facilitate or hinder personal and academic growth.

However, institutional support plays a crucial role on in the decrease of the challenges imposed by those external factors. Among the external factors, the role of family emerges as one of the most influential elements in our participant´s journey toward obtaining her professional degree. Although, as previously mentioned, her father perceived English as a threat. Her mother played a crucial role as a source of encouragement. The participant described her mother as an open-minded person who always encouraged her to study any profession, she considered was best for her.

This is supported in the following fragment, "*And maybe of my parents, my mom was the only person who told me, honey, choose the career that you like, choose the career that makes you feel good"* (Interview N2, 2025). This affirmation highlights how, within her family nucleus, her mother was of the most significant pillars of support as she pursued her university studies in English. This directly relates to two fundamental aspects outlined at the beginning of this research: The influence of ethnic affiliation and the impact of the social factors on her process of academic formation. We can affirm then that ethnic affiliation and social factors definitely shape the formation of the participant to obtain her professional degree and to pursue her dreams.

Related to this, the necessity for intercultural training is also seen as a key aspect of the academic formation of the new generation. When talking of interculturality, it relates to the coexistence of diverse traditions, values and ideals inside the educational domain, being intercultural means integrating and valuing the knowledge, language and cosmovisions of other cultures in the process of learning and teaching. Thus, our participant makes a call to teachers

to assess themselves and learn that being a teacher goes beyond only teaching. She considers that being a teacher implies getting involved with the community, considering their cosmovision as their knowledge and traditions. And as she states, "*Teachers have to be trained first, they have to be educated, don't they? Because, and it is not only the academic part, but also this part of leadership, this part of living with people, this part of living with the and within the communities and seeing the value they have"* (Interview N2, 2025). This reflection, narrated by her, allow to understand that pedagogical practices of the professors should not be limited to the academic field only but also to value and strengthen the identity of her different students focusing on an environment more contextualized.

This testimony about her teacher formation, connects somehow with the importance of professional mentoring received. The affirmation that not only teachers should be taught to teach but also coexist with the Andean communities place an insight by saying that teachers should be a role model, an example of life and overcoming. This is supported by the participant when she mentions the following, *"I was very grateful to talk to Professor Diego and Professor Hazel, because they were two incredible people, who I think, beyond being teachers, trusted me a lot"* (Interview N1, 2025), she also comments about another teacher who despite our participant being Indigenous, the teacher believed that she would go so far and be one of the best teachers. She also comments that her teacher told her that success in life not only is measured by a grade but also by who she is, "*I remember his words, he would tell me, my dear, you are going to go very far, and always, he had a phrase, and he would tell me, the note, or a note, really, does not identify you as a person, it is a note, it is the academic part, so you don't feel bad, and he motivated me"* (Interview N2, 2025).

The support of her teachers, as mentioned in the aforementioned paragraph is essential specially for Indigenous communities for whom the access to education is really a huge challenge, “For us, studying, or even going to university, is not so easy” (Interview N2, 2025). However, as education can be a challenge, education can also be accessible in some occasions.

In the case of our participant, she mentions that the fact of being Indigenous was an advantage to have access to scholarships directed to the Indigenous youth. This is supported when she says, “*I think it has been quite accessible, because I think one of the great requirements was to be indigenous and it is something that already counted, right? I am indigenous, so many of the times I have even felt privileged”* (Interview N2, 2025) . This led us to affirm that **these** scholarships have also been a key factor that have influenced and motivated our participant to continue preparing herself to become the professional she is today.

Additionally, to this, everybody knows that money also plays an important role when it comes to having access to education. Unfortunately, not everybody has the same economy to have access to different schools, resources and to even to a good quality of Education. This can affect significantly especially to those with a low income. Our participant also mentioned that for her, the low income of her family was always a challenge as she never had money for all of her expenses. She faced these challenges starting from her childhood in school, this is evidenced when she mentions that, *“I always brought my lunch, didn't I? My mom always made me something. I don't know, sometimes she would send me some canguil and stuff, right? Little things and the rest of my classmates would eat their rice, their chaulafan and things like that, right? So, for me, I felt ashamed, didn't I? That they see me eating my food, right? Because many times they even laughed at me”* (Interview N2, 2025).

Not only in her school she had issues for also in high school because she mentions that, “*Literally at recess, sometimes I would go inside and sometimes, since I never had enough*

money to go to eat, for example, to the school bar and everything like that, I think my mom would give me a few coins once a week" (Interview N2, 2025), and these issues accompanied her till her university, In the first semesters it was really challenging, *"I had to limit myself to many things. So, like my friends, let's go have some fries, so I couldn't even eat them. I had to think about whether to eat that weekend or go for the fries"* (Interview N2, 2025). This responds positively to our research question and main objective as socioeconomic factors do influence the formation of our participant in her journey to become an English teacher.

Taking all of this information into account, we can discuss how familiar support plays a crucial role in the personal well-being, academic performance and personal development of students as counting with the family support when talking of achieving any goal, which gives us security and motivation. However, in some cases this well-being support can be negative and positive depending on the context of the situation. Based on this, our participant received negative support from her father who considered English learning a betrayal to their race.

Unlike her father, her mother from whom she received a more positive support by motivating her to study a major she really liked, a major that as she mentioned would make her feel good. Studies show that family bonds can influence directly when students make decisions, as the study researched by, León (2021) entitled "Parental support for early school years and academic success", who affirms that "Family support is a fundamental pillar for students' learning and academic success, as pointed out in the research" (p. 3).

In the same way, the fact that training teachers trained in what interculturality really means was discussed. Thus, educating them to the value that all cosmovisions have in all cultures and students coming from different cultures. And as the own participant stated, it is not only about dominating the academic part but also about the different ideals from other realities.

This is linked with, “As well as the training and supervision of teachers, so that they integrate concepts of intercultural education, promote respect for diversity on the basis of pluralism and universal values such as human rights”. (UNESCO, 2015a, pp. 41-42; UNESCO, 2015b, p. 46).

She also made emphasis on the mentoring received by her teachers by mentioning that teachers should be a role model, an example of life and also inspiration for those who feel like not being represented by their teacher and classmates. Professors should be a support for students. In one of the interviews conducted, our participant mentioned the reaction of one of her teachers when she got a good grade. This teacher, unlike the others, showed empathy and even motivated her to continue studying by saying that life is not measured by a grade but for her effort and dedication. García et al. (2020) pointed out that university mentoring programs for pre-university students with high intellectual potential in Spain reveal a high level of satisfaction among participants; therefore, more work is needed to transfer and maintain the impact that this type of program can have on pre-university students with high intellectual potential.

She also addressed the issue of accessibility to education for Indigenous people. She told us that for her and from her point of view, the current models of education are very accessible. For example, by offering scholarships that are officially destined for students coming from Indigenous contexts. This, as she herself mentions, has been the key that opened the doors to a more global education.

The final contribution of this analysis refers to the economic influences present in the lives of many Indigenous people, and in this case in the trajectory of our participant. As she mentioned in her narratives, this has been one of the external factors that has most influenced her life.

According to Unesco (2019), "The violence with which Indigenous peoples have been treated is visible in their material deficiencies" (p.12). Since her beginnings in education, the participant has been experiencing this factor that has imposed considerable barriers on her academic training.

She told us that since school, bringing money to eat something during recess was almost impossible, usually her mother used to prepare bags of popcorn or some light food for her, she mentioned that there were very few times that she gave her some coins, because her mother did not have a job. According to López and Pérez (2017), opportunities for professional and academic growth, and even access to school resources such as materials and technology, are most of the time influenced by people's economy.

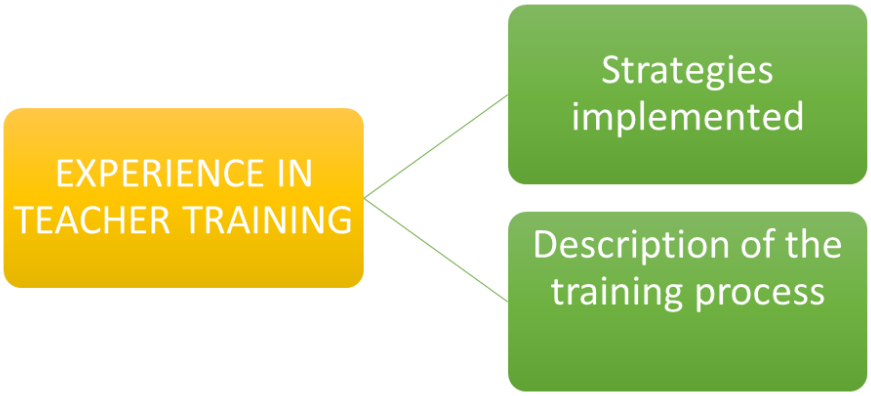
This reality even accompanied her to university. She told us that before entering university, she dedicated herself to working for a whole year, to save some money and be able to help with the rent, and some other university expenses. Even though the money saved in that year helped her in her first semesters at university, she had to limit herself to other expenses during her first academic periods, since she told us that she had to think about paying the rent and food each month. As researchers, we have been able to see how socioeconomic factors influence the education of many Indigenous people in our country. According to UNESCO (2019), "Despite the decrease in indigenous poverty in the country, gaps in education and other areas continue to mark a trend. The Indigenous population aged 15 years and older registered 16.8% illiteracy in 2016, while in the national population illiteracy is present in 5.6% of the population" (p. 17).

The same inequalities are expressed in employment and income figures." Such is the case of our participant, but here we want to emphasize that despite these external factors, she sought her own means to access the educational system, since she firmly believed that by

accessing the educational system her life would have a different course. And according to UNESCO (2019), "The field of education, knowledge and learning has been a space of formalization, correction and indoctrination of indigenous peoples, a place of uniformity and homogenization of differences" (p. 12).

Figure 7

Experience in teacher training



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 7 shows the codes that framed the theme "Experience in Teacher Training." These are "Strategies Implemented" and "Description of the Training Process. However, "Reactions to Cultural Integration" and "Integration of Cultural Elements" were also part of the theme but will not be discussed because we, as researchers, believe that they are similar to codes already discussed. Teacher training refers to the set of learnings, practices, and acquired knowledge during a teacher's professional studies. When it comes to teacher training, it involves acquiring new strategies that can help learners master this global language.

It was the participant in this study who adopted new strategies that helped her enrich her knowledge of English. As the own participant mentioned, "*For me, Lyric Training has helped me a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot, which is an application on your phone that helps you a lot to develop, I do not know if it helps you develop, to improve your, I do not know how to say it, like your listening skills"* (Interview N3, 2025). This evidences the use of new strategies she used for personal growth and for practicing her English listening skills. She also comments, "*I think that has been my way of improving my English in a more autonomous way"* (Interview N3, 2025). This also emphasizes autonomous learning, which was part of her journey. Along with this, she also comments on the importance of a more conscious education.

She also says that she used to assist congress and conferences and sometimes to clubs where she could express her opinions and work on real projects that benefited society and the community. *"I think I started to take advantage of that. If there was a congress or things like that, I was there, even if I was alone, I was there. If there was going to be a meeting about this or that, I do not know, or if there was a new club, for example, sometimes they opened conference clubs at some point, I went there."* (Interview N3, 2025). This is a clear example of her willingness to learn English and how autonomous she was in learning to become an English teacher, which ultimately influenced her development into the great professional she is today.

Part of the participant's training process has been full of challenges, overcoming obstacles, and motivation. However, overall, school exchanges highlight once again the advantages of being Indigenous. As stated by the participant, "*Really, the description of this whole process would be in challenges, in overcoming, in motivation, and I think above all, well, this exchange, right? How one adapts or develops new skills to learn a new language.*

In my case, well, I think the fact of being indigenous and having my own language, apart from Spanish, which is specifically Kichwa, has been, I think, a vital tool, I think, in my life because, and above all, motivating" (Interview N3, 2025). These external factors, which are considered part of cultural identity and institutional support, have also shaped our participant's journey in becoming an English professor.

Having said the aforementioned, the participant discusses the importance and use of the strategies she implemented throughout the whole process of learning English and to become an English teacher. She considers the use of strategies such as technology and collaborative work to be key in this process of formation as an English teacher. This is linked with Ryan and Deci (2000), who say that, "the construct of intrinsic motivation describes the tendency toward mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration, which is essential to cognitive and social development, and represents the primary source of joy and vitality throughout life." This affirmation highlights how the internal impulse to learn, explore new things, and develop new skills can help improve both professional and personal performance. In this case, our participant felt somehow motivated to make use of technology to develop her listening skills through the use of an app called Lyrics training. In this way, her academic formation process was not only marked by the acquisition of academic abilities but also by continuous professional growth. Yas" This quote highlights the important role of the different strategies used by learners to continue developing as teachers, enabling them to encourage their students to keep growing academically.

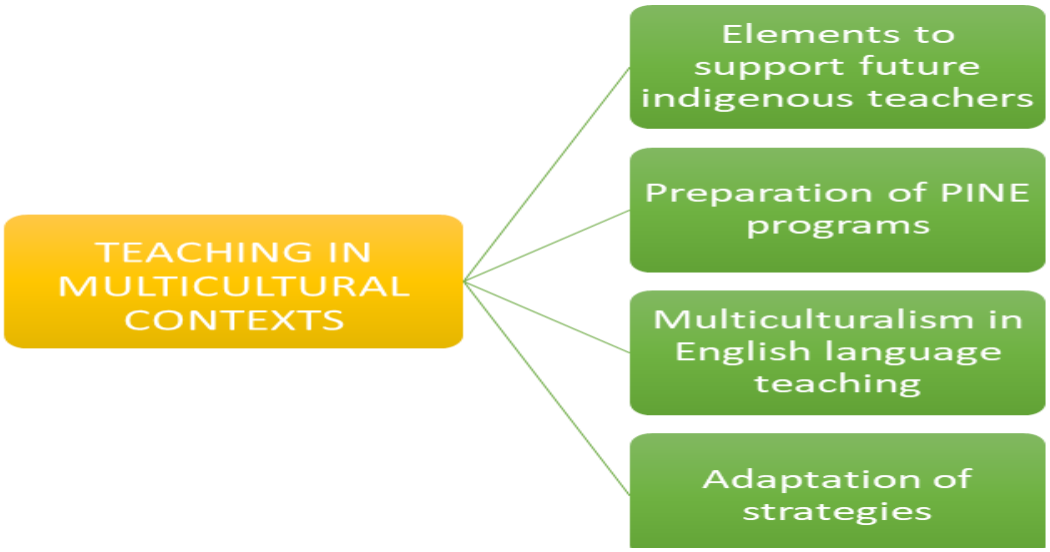
It was also emphasized on the training process of our participant, which she describes as full of challenges, overcoming, motivation, but overall school exchanges. All of these aspects also shaped the formation to become an English teacher.

She mentions that she had to overcome many barriers, such as the language; for example, besides Spanish, Kichwa was also her language. The participant also mentions the importance of attending different fruitful meetings, clubs, and conferences in order to express her opinions. This reflects the autonomous learning our participant experienced by attending these extracurricular spaces, which were also designed to foster students' academic and personal growth.

Furthermore, as stated by Nunan (1997) argues that learner autonomy may occur in different situations and states that a fully autonomous learner has the competence to make and implement all decisions. This idea, stated by the author, also supports the notion of how capable learners can be in implementing and making decisions in life. It suggests that learners have their own willingness to learn, which can lead to future fruitful academic goals.

Figure 8

Teaching in multicultural contexts



Note. Created by the authors

Figure 8 is composed of four codes, the same that created the theme of Teaching in multicultural contexts. These codes are: “Elements to Support Future Indigenous Teachers,” “Preparation of ‘PINE’ (Pedagogy of Foreign Languages) Programs,” “Multiculturalism in English Language Teaching,” and “Adaptation of Strategies.”

Intercultural Education not only focuses on recognizing cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences; it also implies adapting teaching strategies to provide learning opportunities that are fair and inclusive for everyone. This approach encourages students' empowerment to embrace cultural diversity, think critically, and contribute to a more inclusive society. Consequently, it emphasizes the importance of motivating teachers to acquire the necessary elements to foster a more multicultural, conscious, and fairer development.

The participant in this study considers that professors should opt for other learning methodologies. For instance, “Making any significant change in the educational system would be through cultural exchanges” (Interview N3, 2025). This deeply implies the importance of including these cultural exchanges as a way to expose teachers to a more comprehensive environment that surrounds them. This, in turn, can contribute to the formation of more empathetic professors, motivating them to take on roles as leaders and problem solvers at the same time. This is supported by the participant, who says, “To have that cultural exchange in other communities would really be very advantageous for us because we would be, maybe, there in such a real context and feel so, perhaps, taking on new roles as problem solvers” (Interview N3, 2025).

The participant in this study also mentioned that the PINE program, of which she was part, is well-prepared. She adds that there are not any changes to be made. Moreover, the participant mentions, “*The PINE program is super prepared and many things I could not say to improve because I think it is fine, but to add and of course some things that I had already*

mentioned before" (Interview N3, 2025). Having said this, our participant always had the opportunities to assist at different seminaries and congresses, which she considered as inspirational. "*In large seminars, really of three, four days that have been given online, components from other countries that are English teachers and how they have worked, how they work from their educational space in projects that are of social benefit, have always been for me especially a source of inspiration"* (Interview N3, 2025). *S*he comments.

However, she considers that something that would be key to this would be the integration of immersion programs in which PINE students can go and immerse themselves and see things from a different perspective. Encouraging these students to consider reality from different perspectives, taking into account the various ethnic groups that exist in our country. "*I think that these immersion programs will be very enriching to work on more research projects, to investigate a little deeper and then come up with innovative ideas, new strategies, to redesign new learning models because you will be there in that real context"* (Interview N3, 2025).

In addition, our participant emphasizes the multicultural perspective of the teachers, as she highlights the key role of teachers when it comes to motivating students to know their classmates, to make them understand the different realities of where their classmates come from, and also their different cosmovision's, this way there all students could coexist and respect each other at the same time that they all learn together. Furthermore, the participant stated, *"But, I think that there is the role of the teacher, to take advantage of this multiculturality and make the rest of the classmates know, inform themselves, and know more closely about the importance of it"* (Interview N3, 2025). This leads us to affirm that teachers

should look at multiculturality as an advantage for the whole class to get to know each other and learn to see the world from different perspectives.

In regard to the new technological advancements, we all use today, the participant in this research believes that technology should definitely continue to be integrated into all classes, as she believes that everything we know today should be included. This would also promote significant learning and a practical environment in the classroom. Moreover, as participant mentions, *"We are so focused on technology, so rather our teaching strategies or our activities, because it also has to be linked to what we are living today, everything that has evolved, that the students we have right now do not think like the students our teachers had 30 years ago"* (Interview N3, 2025). Furthermore, the participant mentioned that an effective strategy that can foster students to be more productive is through the application of scholarly projects as she stated in the following fragment "*I think that through, and I think I am going to emphasize again the theme of projects, I think, I still, I am a firm believer that really school projects, learning through projects, students learning through projects, is a strategy for them to learn more about everything around them"*(Interview N3, 2025). Therefore, we can define our participant as a supporter of the idea that students learn by doing, which is supported by the following fragment: "The best way is to learn by doing" (Interview N3, 2025).

Based on all of the above, this analysis leads us to affirm that education in a diverse environment fosters respect for different perspectives and also facilitates students' acquisition of the necessary abilities to perform in unfamiliar spaces. As our participant mentions, by adopting a multicultural approach to education, classrooms can become spaces that foster a fairer environment, where students from different cultures feel that their cultural identity is taken into account. This aligns with what Civitillo and Juang (2019) note: teachers trained in

intercultural methods can use their students' cultural perspectives as learning resources, thus promoting an enriching and collaborative classroom that supports English language learning. The participant also mentioned the key role that has opted for other innovative strategies that help teachers to prepare themselves as Indigenous teachers who can see things from different perspectives and realities from an authentic context for example. |

These elements to support future Indigenous teachers are key as the participant also adds about the importance of cultural exchanges in which these indigenous teachers can see other realities and take those spaces to solve problems and understand the different cultural identities. Moreover, as stated by Tran (2018), training in inclusive strategies, such as using culturally specific resources, fosters more effective and meaningful learning in culturally diverse settings, which is crucial for success in the EFL classroom. Tran also puts emphasis on training teachers from diverse settings in which these professors can be part of a more effective and meaningful teacher training to gain experience them and use them for future teaching.

The participant in this study mentioned that the preparation for the major in Pedagogy of Foreign Languages and multiculturalism in English teaching are both linked, as both aspects are relevant for training teachers who can respond to the needs of diverse contexts. She also mentioned that PINE teachers are well-trained to provide opportunities. As she commented, they always create clubs or meetings that include people from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, which, according to her narrative, were fruitful because they not only provided her with academic knowledge but also with personal insights into more globalized information. Emphasizing this, as researchers, we are convinced that this type of program, which allows interaction with people from different cultures and backgrounds, also influences the acquisition of knowledge that goes beyond academic purposes.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that teacher training is directly related to student achievement across various academic areas, and this finding also applies to English teaching in multicultural environments.

As stated by this author and our participant in this study, multiculturalism in English teaching promotes cultural and linguistic diversity, leading to a more inclusive approach that values and respects the prior knowledge of indigenous communities and different contexts. Walker and Schafer (2019) emphasized that an intercultural approach to teacher training enables educators to integrate students' cultural experiences into learning. To achieve multiculturalism in the classroom, as mentioned by the participant, the adaptation of teaching strategies is a key aspect of the learning and teaching process. Each of her words highlights that teacher should be in constant training, adapting methods and strategies to meet the different needs of their students. Teacher training and supervision are important to integrate intercultural education concepts, promote respect for diversity based on pluralism and universal values, such as human rights (UNESCO, 2015a, pp. 41-42).

V. Conclusions

The findings of this study provided valuable insights into the journey of an indigenous young Saraguro woman in becoming an English teacher. This section outlines how the objectives were achieved. The first objective was to investigate how ethnic affiliation influences the formation of an indigenous female English teacher, focusing on the integration of cultural values and aspects from her cultural cosmovision in her teaching training. The second objective aimed to examine the influence of socioeconomic factors, particularly the lack of financial support from family, on the educational journey and success of indigenous female English teachers in completing their training programs.

This study demonstrated how ethnic affiliations have played a crucial role in shaping the participant´s process of formation as a teacher. Throughout her journey, she encountered cultural resistance and misconceptions within her community, where English was often perceived as a threat to the mother tongue, an irrelevant language, and a symbol of dominant cultures. Rather than discouraging her, these challenges became a source of motivation. She saw an opportunity to break new ground, as no one in her community has studied for being an English teacher before. Her determination to challenge these perceptions and introduce English as an additional tool for growth reflects her resilience and commitment to both heritage and professional aspirations.

Embracing this challenge, the participant remained deeply rooted in principles such as solidarity, reciprocity and cultural awareness, which were fundamental aspects of her cosmovision. These values became the cornerstones of her academic journey, fostering discipline, resilience and perseverance which were key elements that enabled her to overcome obstacles along the way. At times, her costumes and traditions posed challenges for those unfamiliar with her culture, particularly regarding her language, clothing and beliefs. However, rather than seeing her identity as a barrier she took it as a strength. This led her to valuable opportunities, including being awarded a scholarship to study overseas for future personal and academic growth.

Socioeconomic factors have also influenced the journey of the participant, especially the lack of financial support from her family, the same that represented a big challenge from her childhood to her adulthood. These limitations could have hindered her journey to success; however, her desire to show that indigenous women can overcome any challenge motivated her to access higher education. To do so, she initially resorted to jobs to pay her rent and living

expenses. Later, thanks to the support of some of her teachers, she had access to a university scholarship which allowed her to continue her training as a teacher.

To conclude, this research highlighted how ethnic affiliations and socioeconomic factors can have an impact in this case in the formation of an Indigenous woman in her journey of formation as an English teacher. Despite the cultural and financial challenges, her cultural pride was the one that helped her to overcome. Her story highlights the importance of integrating elements of the Andean cosmovision in education as well as the importance of inclusive educational programs that foster diversity and promote academic success among Indigenous students.

VI. Recommendations

It is essential to fuse the instruction of English with Andean language and culture to establish an inclusive environment that values cultural identity and enhances the self-confidence of indigenous professors. Educational entities should establish policies that guarantee the coexistence of both languages, enhancing this way the learning process. It is also crucial to implement pedagogic training programs that train teachers to support indigenous women in their professional growth. Establishing spaces for teacher exchange will enhance backup networks and will contribute to the training of new educators. Additionally, it is necessary to develop teaching methods that include components of indigenous cultures, allowing students to perceive English as a cultural bridge. Educational programs should represent indigenous culture and apply interactive techniques that promote active participation, such as community projects, which will turn the learning process into a relevant experience.

According to this analysis, it is suggested to carry out additional studies that focus not only on the Saraguro indigenous communities, but also on other indigenous groups in Ecuador such as Otavalos, Kañaris and Puruhaes, among others. This would facilitate a more extensive analysis. In addition, this analysis can serve as a basis for recognizing analogies and discrepancies in the challenges faced by these indigenous communities in learning English and preparing as English teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Guides:

Three in-depth interviews were created, divided into three sections. These were focused on three different topics to explore, to gather information from a participant of Saraguro ethnicity. The purpose of this was to explore how ethnic and socio-economic affiliations influenced her training process as an English teacher.

These questions are standard interview questions, however, as this is a case study that needs to be explored in depth, there were questions that arose from the participant's accounts.

Interview 1

Good evening, dear participant, welcome to this interview, in which we will explore a very relevant topic. This conversation is part of a larger study that investigates how, in this case, the cultural perspectives and traditions of indigenous communities influenced the formation of an English teacher, especially in the context of a young indigenous girl from the Tuncarta community in the Saraguro canton of the Loja province of our country.

During this interview we will focus on understanding how the indigenous worldview, which encompasses their worldview of the world, values and cultural practices, can affect the process of learning a foreign language such as English. In addition to that, we will seek many reflections on the participant's beliefs and experiences that may enrich our understanding of the impact her cultural identity has on language acquisition.

We thank you in advance for your participation and for your willingness to share your thoughts and experiences on this important topic. We hope that this conversation will help us illuminate the intersections between indigenous worldview and English language learning.

It is important to mention that at some point in the interview, if any question is unclear or confusing, you feel free to express and ask for the question to be repeated. The approximate time of this interview is two hours. So, dear participant, good evening.

Topic: The Indigenous Cosmovision

Section 1: *Introduction and indigenous cosmovision*

1. How would you define the Indigenous worldview from your personal perspective?

- From this definition, how does it apply to your community in particular?

2. What values or principles of this worldview have influenced your educational and professional path?

- Do any of these value's conflict with the principles of teaching English?

3. How do you think the Indigenous worldview can enrich the teaching of English to your students?

Section 2: *Cultural Perceptions about English*

1. What expectations does your community have about the career choices young members make?

-What career expectations did your family have for you?

- In your community, how is the English language perceived?

- Is it considered useful, necessary, threatening, or neutral? Why?

2. How do you relate the expectations of your community to the external demands of learning English?

- For example, have you faced criticism or resistance for teaching English?

3. Do you feel that teaching English has the potential to strengthen or weaken your students' cultural roots?

- What strategies do you use to balance both perspectives?

Section 3: *Bilingual Education and the Future*

1. What is your opinion about the current models of bilingual education in Ecuador?

- Do you think they are sufficient to preserve and promote indigenous languages?

2. Do you think it is important to teach English in bilingual education in Ecuador?

3. If you could redesign a bilingual education program, how would you do it?

- What role would English play in this model?

4. Looking to the future, how do you see the learning of English in the context of indigenous communities?

5. What role do you think English plays in the lives of indigenous community members?

Interview 2

Good evening, dear participant. It is a pleasure to welcome you again to this second interview. We thank you in advance for your participation, we are eager to hear your story, to hear your perspectives. Your experience is super valuable and will contribute a lot in this study. Well, my dear participant, as you know, in the current context, gender and cultural identity play a fundamental role in the life and trajectory of indigenous women.

Throughout this series of questions, we will explore how these identities are intertwined with the educational and professional experience of those who teach English, in this case, speaking in an Indigenous women's context.

As such, we hope that these questions serve as a starting point to reflect on these unique experiences and the needs for systemic changes that promote equity and recognition of Indigenous voices in the educational setting. That said, this second interview will focus on being an indigenous woman and an English teacher in Ecuador.

Topic: Being an Indigenous Woman and an English Teacher in Ecuador

Section 1: *Gender Identity and Challenges*

1. How would you describe the process of constructing your identity as an Indigenous woman?

2. How does this identity manifest itself in an educational setting teaching English?

- What aspects of your identity do you consider to have been a challenge or a strength in your profession?

3. What role does your identity play in the community's expectations of you as a teacher?

- Are there any cultural or gender barriers that you have had to overcome?

4. How do you manage the intersection between your cultural identity and the demands of teaching a foreign language?

Section 2: *Empowerment Through Teaching*

1. How has your role as an English teacher contributed to your personal and professional empowerment?

- Are there any moments in your career that you consider especially transformative?

2. Do you think your academic background and professional situation can inspire other Indigenous women?

Yes, why?

Section 3: *External factors and institutional support*

1. How did your family's socio-economic conditions influence your academic formation?

2. How accessible has the educational system been to support you as an Indigenous woman?

- Have you received any mentoring or guidance in your professional career?

3. What systemic changes would be necessary to improve opportunities for Indigenous women in careers as teachers of native and foreign languages in the teaching of English?

Interview 3

Dear participant, welcome back to this third interview. Thank you for your participation again in this space, which has as its title, teacher training in a multicultural context. Throughout this conversation, we hope to explore how your experience and preparation as an English teacher have been influenced by cultural diversity in indigenous communities.

The purpose of this interview is to examine or explore in depth how teacher education can impact the teaching of English in multicultural contexts, and what changes could be implemented to improve teacher education.

Throughout the following sections, we will address relevant topics such as your experience in teacher education, the integration of cultural elements in the classroom, and strategies for improving teacher education programs to support future indigenous teachers. We appreciate your willingness to share your perspectives and experiences, as they are crucial to better understand this important topic.

Teacher Training in a Multicultural Context

Section 1: *Teacher Training Experience*

1. How would you describe your training as an English teacher?

- What aspects do you think were helpful or limiting in your preparation?

2. Did your training include elements related to Indigenous culture?

- If not, how did this affect your confidence and preparation?

3. How do you integrate elements of your culture into your English classes?

- What reactions have you had from your students or colleagues?

Section 2: *Multiculturalism and Teaching*

1. How do you adapt your teaching strategies to address cultural diversity in your classrooms?

2. How important is multiculturalism in teaching a language like English?

Section 3: *Suggestions for Improving Teacher Training*

1. If you could redesign a teacher training program, what elements would you add to support future indigenous teachers?

2. How prepared do you think the current NIPE training programs are to address the needs of indigenous students?

Appendix 2

Authorization letter for the execution of the study:

Consentimiento Informado: Entrevistas

Título del proyecto: Explorando el trayecto de formación como profesor de inglés; un estudio de caso de un indígena hispano-Kichwa hablante.

Categoría de Participante: Docente Universitario (x), Directivo de Centro Universitario de Idiomas ( ), Experto Nacional en Educación en Inglés ( ), y Experto Internacional en Educación en Inglés ( ).

Introducción

El presente proyecto fue aprobado por el tribunal educativo, designado por el comité de titulación de la Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE). En este estudio se emplea un enfoque cualitativo basado en un estudio de caso para analizar en profundidad el fenómeno investigado. Actualmente, nos encontramos en la segunda fase del proyecto, para lo cual cordialmente le solicitamos su colaboración como participante.

- Concretamente, se le solicita de la manera más comedida formar parte para el segundo componente del proyecto antes mencionado, en calidad de participante de entrevistas individuales.
- Usted fue seleccionado como un participante para el segundo componente de la fase cualitativa por ser considerado una profesional o un profesional de muy alto nivel quien conoce muy de cerca el proceso de formación docente desde un contexto indígena y por su capacidad de dialogar críticamente acerca de cómo los factores de afiliación étnica y socioeconómicos influyen en el proceso de aprendizaje del idioma inglés.
- Si usted está de acuerdo en participar en las entrevistas individuales planificadas, cordialmente se le solicita proporcionar sus ideas, puntos de vista y/u opiniones acerca de temáticas relacionadas a la motivación en el aprendizaje de inglés en el nivel universitario.

Propósito General del Estudio

- El objetivo de esta investigación es explorar las formas en que las afiliaciones culturales, socioeconómicas y étnicas influyen en el desarrollo académico y profesional de las maestras de inglés indígenas.

Descripción de Procedimientos de Investigación en Relación a las Entrevistas Individuales (planificadas)

Para la realización de las entrevistas se aplicarán los siguientes aspectos:

- En todo momento se fomentará un ambiente de cordialidad y de confianza.
- El o la participante brindará su tiempo únicamente para una entrevista.
- El entrevistador/a presentará las preguntas de manera gradual, las cuales serán proyectadas durante la entrevista, y permitirá al entrevistado/a proporcionar sus puntos de vista y explicar de manera detallada lo que se considere necesario.

- Las entrevistas se realizarán de manera virtual por medio de la plataforma Zoom y tendrán una duración de 2 horas.
- Las entrevistas serán grabadas para luego proceder a transcribir la información y realizar el análisis respectivo.
- Cabe recalcar que las grabaciones serán cuidadosamente guardadas para precautelar la información brindada por los participantes; la información recolectada exclusivamente será utilizada para el presente proyecto de investigación.

Riesgos (o Incomodidades) por Participar en la Investigación.

- La investigación no tiene ningún tipo de riesgos y no pretende causar ningún tipo de incomodidades entre los participantes. Además, los participantes como los investigadores no serán objeto de ningún tipo de intervención que incluya procesos que puedan afectar su bienestar físico o sicológico. Así mismo, la presente investigación no tiene implicaciones éticas que puedan afectar a seres humanos o animales de ninguna manera. Cabe recalcar que los resultados derivados de las entrevistas *no afectarán a su desempeño profesional* en la institución educativa a la que usted pertenece o afuera de ella a futuro.

Confidencialidad

- En general, la documentación y expedientes de este estudio de investigación son resguardados estrictamente de manera confidencial.
- Los grabaciones y transcripciones de las entrevistas (a ser realizadas) serán codificadas y protegidas con claves de seguridad en un sistema de almacenamiento electrónico de información, al cual únicamente tienen acceso los investigadores del proyecto.
- Adicionalmente, le aseguramos que ningún tipo de información será incluida en los productos científicos (e.g., artículos y ponencias) con resultados de las entrevistas, que haga posible la identificación personal de los participantes.

Derecho a Oponerse a Participar y Retirarse de la Entrevista

- La decisión de participar en las entrevistas es voluntaria; además, usted puede oponerse a participar sin afectar su relación con los investigadores de este estudio o la Universidad Nacional de Educación. Así mismo, usted tiene derecho a no responder ninguna pregunta y/o a retirarse durante el desarrollo de la entrevista si así usted lo desea.

- **Derecho a Realizar Preguntas y Reportar Preocupaciones**

  - Usted tiene derecho a realizar preguntas acerca de la presente investigación y que sus preguntas sean contestadas antes, durante, y después de las entrevistas individuales planificadas. Si usted tiene alguna inquietud, preocupación o duda acerca de esta investigación o de las entrevistas, por favor comuníquese con Estefanía Cristina Benítez Ruiz a la siguiente cuenta de correo electrónico: benitezcris123@gmail.com o al número de celular :099 427 1319, o con Jonnathan Fernando Ortiz García a la siguiente cuenta de correo electrónico ortizgarciafernando@hotmail.com o al número de celular: 099 513 2307

Consentimiento

- Su firma abajo indica que usted ha aceptado voluntariamente participar en una sesión de entrevista individual y ha leído la información proporcionada en este documento.

Nombre del o de la participante (por favor escriba su nombre completo):

[redacted]

Título académico más alto obtenido hasta el momento:

Lic. Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Firma del o de la participante:

[redacted]

Appendix 3

Link to the transcript of each interview:

Interview 1:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vKLqYb9z1iRk0Qv00pQ4jAnt_gzMtMg7/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=116679483830550731335&rtpof=true&sd=true

Interview 2:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VzqXpfXqZHsSDPhFBVrU8hlTWhDWkArX/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=116679483830550731335&rtpof=true&sd=true

Interview 3:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15WdHFjLg9-Cung4oCDecHuTXwfCg-dqP/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=116679483830550731335&rtpof=true&sd=true

Appendix 4

Link to the recordings of each interviews:

Interview 1:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTwn-s-rW3mvrwrZt4QvYh4AQL2e3-eG/view?usp=sharing

Interview 2:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19L0gvc4f7pr5XwEfvZ_R2Imm50_5-sbV/view?usp=sharing

Interview 3:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BKTrzvAek9bV5Kb4bkjr6Zo0IhkX3SSL/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 5

Screenshots of the use of MAXQDA:

