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Resumen

El presente estudio se llevó a cabo dentro del marco de la teoría sociocultural, cuyo objetivo es identificar y analizar cómo los factores socioculturales influyen en las decisiones pedagógicas de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera de una universidad pública. Para ello, se establecieron diferentes niveles para examinar el contexto, los comportamientos, las materias y el rendimiento de estas clases en un contexto social (nivel macro), institucional (nivel meso) y de dinámicas interpersonales y del aula (nivel micro), lo que permite un enfoque sistemático para identificar los aspectos específicos y el panorama general del objeto de estudio. Este estudio es un diseño cualitativo de múltiples casos con muestreo intencional, elegido para seleccionar y obtener información pertinente. Se llevó a cabo con tres profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera, mediante una entrevista semiestructurada para investigar cómo los factores socioculturales afectan a sus decisiones pedagógicas, y luego la muestra se procesó en varias tablas de categorías que permitieron desagregar las entrevistas mediante una codificación de extractos, análisis y conclusiones. El resultado principal fue que los factores socioculturales están presentes y son determinantes en las decisiones pedagógicas de los profesores, de acuerdo con las particularidades de la sociedad ecuatoriana, lo cual evidencia un enfoque específico para aprovechar la diversidad, la institución y los antecedentes del aprendizaje y de la enseñanza del inglés.

Palabras clave: Teoría sociocultural, toma de decisiones pedagógicas, profesores internacionales, educación superior ecuatoriana, inglés como lengua extranjera

Abstract

The current study was conducted within the Sociocultural Theory framework to identify and analyze how sociocultural factors influence the pedagogical decisions of foreign English language teachers at a public university. To do that, different levels were established to examine the context, behaviors, the subjects, and the performance of these classes in a societal context (macro level), institutional context (meso level), and interpersonal and classroom dynamics (micro level), which allows for a systematic approach to identify the specifics and broader picture of the study object. This study is a qualitative, multiple-case study design with purposive sampling chosen to select and obtain pertinent information. It was conducted with three teachers of English as a foreign language, using a semi–structured interview to investigate how sociocultural factors affect their pedagogical decisions. The sample was then processed in several tables of categories that allowed for disaggregation of the interviews through codification of excerpts, analysis, and conclusions. The main result was that sociocultural factors are present and determinant of pedagogical choices made by the teachers, in line with Ecuadorian society's particularities, which show a specific approach to take advantage of diversity, the institution, and the background of English Learning–Teaching.

Keywords: Sociocultural Theory, Pedagogical Decision-Making, International Professors, Ecuadorian Higher Education, EFL

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

This study is based on the Ecuadorian EFL context from the perspective of different foreign EFL teachers at a public university. This university is attended by more than 4000 students. Particularly, 3 foreign teachers have been taken into consideration for the research, considering different criteria that will be explained in the methods section of the study.

In this context, some sociocultural factors influencing how people develop ways of seeing and doing in educational settings include social norms, cultural values, languages, and historical contexts. These factors shape how foreign faculty conceptualize their teaching contexts and determine pedagogical action (Zusho & King, 2023). Sociocultural factors serve to mediate international teachers' adaptation processes as they respond to the needs of students, power dynamics, and local academic cultures (Leask, 2015). In other words, not only can these factors condition the process of adaptability, but they can also have an influence on how the students' necessities are responded to in the dynamics of institutional power and in the local academic cultures. Therefore, the tension emerges when the imported pedagogical practices should have been adjusted to a specific context, which raises questions about the pertinence and efficacy of such choices in the training process of EFL students.

Recent studies suggest that to be successfully integrated, the capacity of foreign faculty to make sense of and adapt to sociocultural realities is equally important as academic qualifications (Freitag-Hild, 2018). Over the past 10 years, Ecuador's higher education system has undergone radical shifts, particularly with the passing of the Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (LOES) in 2010, mandating intercultural education, equitable access, and quality assurance (Pazmiño,

2018). These multidimensional reform efforts reflect subjective multicultural identity and a commitment to inclusive development (Ramírez, 2013). Learner-centered and culturally responsive pedagogies have gained popularity in Ecuadorian universities as a result of different developments in the educational area, which is why they are now included in this context (Macías et al., 2023).

1.2 Diagnosis of the Situation

Foreign English L1 professors in Ecuador face distinct challenges stemming from cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical differences as they adapt to the local higher education environment. Although the presence of foreign faculty can be one outcome of broader internationalization efforts, these processes are not synonymous. This phenomenon in higher education involves institutional strategies that promote cross-border collaboration, curriculum innovation, and global engagement (Knight, 2004); having teachers from other contexts can influence…similarly, it also includes the reasons why they left their country of origin, if coming to Ecuador was a way to solve their economic barriers (for example) or if it was indeed a national policy in Ecuador the reason why they arrived (internationalization). Within this evolving context, foreign professors must navigate barriers related to language use, teaching practices, and integration into local academic communities.

Studies in Latin America indicate that both foreign and local professors come from diverse educational backgrounds, which means that adaptation challenges depend largely on the match or mismatch between their prior experiences and the expectations of the host institution. Some foreign teachers, especially those who come from more lecture-based or traditional pedagogical cultures, report difficulties in implementing student-centered or dialogic learning

approaches, which are increasingly promoted in certain Ecuadorian universities (Salatin, 2018; Didou Aupetit, 2013). Conversely, professors accustomed to student-centered environments may also encounter obstacles when integrating into institutional contexts that maintain more conventional, teacher-centered methods—a situation that still exists in some segments of Ecuador's higher education system (Macías et al., 2023).

Reports indicate that between 2015 and 2022, the number of international faculty in Ecuadorian universities increased by approximately 25%, according to the Asamblea del Sistema de Educación Superior (ASESEC) (Cuadrado, 2023).

Nevertheless, despite this trend, there are still issues with foreign professors' integration and adjustment to local academic contexts. While sociocultural factors are thought to influence teaching practices and professional satisfaction (Trice, 2003), most of the existing research in Latin America has focused on institutional outcomes or student mobility, neglecting to consider foreign faculty members' individual experiences and decision-making processes (Rodríguez Ulcuango et al., 2022). Thus, there is a gap in the literature for research about English teaching as a second

language in Ecuador, as it has not been adequately explored, and the sociocultural factors that influence the pedagogical decisions of foreign EFL teachers. As a consequence, this absence of studies results in a lack of answers to key questions about what these factors are and how they influence the teaching decision-making in the Ecuadorian university context.

Ecuador is characterized by its rich cultural and linguistic diversity. The educational context is complicated further by 14 recognized indigenous nationalities and multiple languages in the context (Beltrán, 2021; Van der Ploeg, 2012; King & Swanson, 2013). To build on this,

foreign professors often lack prior training or institutional support they often need to work through preparation for teaching in a multicultural classroom while also navigating institutional policies and procedures (Cuadrado, 2023; Espinoza & Rivas, 2017). Studies have indicated that professional development is warranted for both foreign and local educators, specifically related to curriculum strategies that incorporate linguistic diversity, intercultural dialogue, and indigenous perspectives (Ramírez, 2013; Vallejo, 2014).

Ecuador's internationalization policies are in their early stages, with universities demonstrating varying levels of commitment and resources to support foreign programs (Gacel-Ávila et al., 2024; Cantor & Morocho, 2023). Although the Ministry of Education and higher education authorities promote interculturality and international cooperation, institutional mechanisms for the cultural integration and pedagogical adaptation of foreign professors are not systematic (Gacel-Ávila, 2000; Cuadrado, 2023). Subsequently, this inefficiency forces a greater reliance on the intercultural competency and agency of individual educators themselves to work around this lack of systematic support (Deardorff, 2006; Freitag-Hild, 2018).

Moreover, interculturality in the classroom is increasingly recognized not just as a challenge but as an opportunity to enrich teaching and learning. When effectively embraced, cultural diversity fosters critical thinking, broadens perspectives, and enhances students' global competencies (Deardorff, 2023; Gacel-Ávila et al., 2024; Leask, 2015). However, realizing these benefits depends on how well foreign professors understand and integrate sociocultural factors into their pedagogical decisions, and on whether institutions provide the resources and support needed for meaningful intercultural engagement (Knight, 2004; Salatin, 2018).

Overall, in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in an Ecuadorian

university, sociocultural factors can be decisive elements that orient the pedagogical decisions of foreign EFL teachers. Due to this, the necessity to respond to the students' characteristics, institutional dynamics, and local academic cultures can make foreign EFL teachers adjust their methodologies, generating tensions and demands in the context. This situation delimits the object of the study when centering the research on what these sociocultural factors are and how they influence the pedagogical decisions in EFL teaching.

1.3 Importance of the Study

The *Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior* (LOES), which was put into effect in 2010 and places a strong emphasis on internationalization, inclusivity, and educational quality, has significantly changed Ecuador's higher education system in recent years (Pazmiño, 2018). As a result, there are more implications in this context theoretically, institutionally, and pedagogically. Theoretically speaking, it allows for the analysis of how sociocultural factors mediate the pedagogical practice, connected with research frameworks about teachers' adaptability, interculturality, and critical pedagogy. Specifically, it opens the tension between global approaches and local realities in the teaching process. In terms of institutional process, it reflects internationalization politics, which search for alignment with prestige and competitiveness in higher education.

In the same line, it has some pedagogical implications in EFL, since international teachers bring methodologies and different approaches, which have to be adjusted to the necessities of the Ecuadorian students. However, as the literature points out, the majority of research has concentrated on institutional outcomes or student mobility, leaving a crucial gap in understanding how sociocultural factors affect foreign professors' pedagogical decisions in the

Ecuadorian context (Rodríguez Ulcuango et al., 2022). In other words, addressing this problem is key, as it enables the generation of evidence that can contribute to the retention of foreign EFL professors, the formulation of more inclusive institutional policies, and the improvement of students' learning outcomes. To illustrate this, there could be the possibility that if this aspect is not researched, the universities run the risk of producing tension between imported pedagogical approaches and local necessities, which can affect not only the stability of the training staff, but also the quality of the EFL formation.

By exploring the means through which sociocultural aspects inform the pedagogical choices of foreign faculty members working in Ecuadorian universities, this study fills this gap in knowledge. The population targeted in this study is international professors exclusively, and the aim of this study is to understand what informs their integration, adaptation, and teaching styles in the local academic context. This study is expected to fill that gap in understanding by generating data that can inform support services, institutional policies, and professional development opportunities for international faculty members.

In this context, as it has been reported by other authors, university administrators and policymakers may have a better understanding of sociocultural factors that may enable them to create more specialized training, support, and policies that promote an inclusive learning environment (Beltrán, 2021). While the study does not claim that these outcomes will be realized with certainty, it highlights the potential for evidence-based interventions that could contribute to the integration and pedagogical success of foreign professors, from knowing a reality to enriching our context by seeing where foreign L1 English teachers come from, areas where experiences enrich the English teaching, thus aligning with Ecuador’s broader educational goals as established by related frameworks.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 General Research Question

How do sociocultural factors influence the pedagogical choices of EFL foreign professors at an Ecuadorian university?

1.4.2 Specific research questions

- What sociocultural factors do foreign professors perceive as influencing their pedagogical choices?
- In what ways do the identified sociocultural factors steer the pedagogical choices of foreign professors?
- How do the identified sociocultural factors compare across different foreign professors?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 Main Research Objective

To explore how sociocultural factors influence the pedagogical choices of foreign professors at an Ecuadorian university.

1.5.2 Specific Research Objectives

- To identify the sociocultural factors that foreign professors perceive as influencing their pedagogical choices.
- To examine how the identified sociocultural factors influence the pedagogical choices of foreign professors.
- To compare among the cases how the identified sociocultural factors manifest across

different foreign professors.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous Research

Different studies have examined the impact of sociocultural factors on pedagogical decision-making in both international and regional contexts. However, there is still a dearth of research that focuses exclusively on Ecuador. The following three levels (international, regional, and local context) are used to organize the most pertinent studies and findings in this review of the literature, which focuses on how sociocultural factors influence teaching methods, especially when it comes to international professors working in a variety of educational environments.

On the whole, different reviewed studies show that the sociocultural factors significantly influence the pedagogical choices of international EFL teachers in both international and regional contexts. Even so, the majority of these studies have been developed in different contexts from the Ecuadorian context, which aim to describe methodologies or cognitions inside a unique cultural framework. Hence, there is a lack of examination on how international EFL professors, who are in Ecuadorian universities, negotiate and adapt their pedagogical practices in the face of local sociocultural demands. In this manner, this conceptual gap evidences the necessity of a study that specifically analyses the Ecuadorian scenario, contributing to clarity about the pedagogical adaptation processes in an environment where internationalization is growing and, at the same time, offering theoretical, institutional, and pedagogical input to improve EFL teaching.

2.1.1 International Context

Sun and Zhang (2021) carried out a qualitative study, in which the objective was to explore the cognition of English teachers as foreign language (EFL) regarding the instruction form (form-focused instruction, FFI) from a sociocultural perspective. The study was based on semistructured interviews and classroom observations made to three Chinese teachers, which allowed for an examination of how their previous beliefs and institutional contexts influenced their pedagogical decisions about the use of FFI. The results revealed that the teachers' cognitions were deeply formed by their personal experiences of learning, theoretical knowledge, and contextual demands, which generated stress between their beliefs and their real classroom practices. Among the limitations are the reduced sample size and the focus in only one cultural context.

In this sense, the study of Sun and Zhang (2021) implies that teachers would have likely been aware of the difficulties of focus-on-form, and would have preferred to use a simpler instructional method that simply taught grammar through forms included. Several sociocultural factors, such as institutional norms and traditional Chinese thought, are discussed to seek to explain these incongruities. In this context, this study contributes to our research idea because it examines the relation between some sociocultural factors and the way professors teach. So, as can be seen, understanding the cognitive processes of language instructors is essential to comprehending the way they were instructed.

In this way, the study of Sun and Zhan (2021) shows how the teachers' cognitions in EFL are strongly shaped by personal experiences, theoretical knowledge, and contextual challenges, which can result in tensions between practices and beliefs. However, it does not answer how these processes are developed when teachers work outside their cultural context, where they face dynamics of cultural adaptability. Regarding the objective of this study, this gap is crucial, since

while the core of the Chinese study concentrates on a unique national environment, this research addresses the experience of foreign EFL teachers in Ecuador, where the sociocultural factors can condition their pedagogical decisions. In other words, my study contributes to the evidence in a Latin context, which enriches the discussion about the relation among culture, cognition, and language teaching.

2.1.2 Regional Context: Latin America.

In the regional context, Philominraj et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review about methodologies for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Chile between 2011 and 2021, in which the objective was to identify the main areas of research and the gaps between what is taught in the curriculum and what is learned effectively. They used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) to do a systematic review of EFL teaching approaches. Their findings demonstrated that different viewpoints have been used to conceptualize and interpret the method and methodology constructs (communicative approach, natural approach, cooperative learning, and content-based approach). Furthermore, they also emphasized concerns and developments related to more efficient didactics and English teaching methods. However, among the limitations of the study are the exclusion of non-indexed literature and the restricted access to three databases, something that can limit the thoroughness and the external validity of the conclusions.

Therefore, the researchers' goal to enhance English language instruction by sharing the findings of their study is one of the features that emerged from this review and reveals several facets of English language instruction, such as the common use of traditional strategies, and that there is no consensus about which methodologies are the ones that must be implemented in the

classroom. Following the limits and consequences of our current research, the study of Philominraj et al. (2023) indicates that there is a gap in the approaches employed in Chile to teach EFL, which are also common in Latin America and Ecuador.

That is to say that studies like Philominraj et al. (2023) evidence that EFL teaching in Latin America has been explored mainly from the methodological perspective, identifying diverse approaches and highlighting the necessity of didactics that can be more effective. Nevertheless, it does not answer how sociocultural aspects influence the pedagogical decisions of teachers, especially when it is about international professors who have to adapt to different contexts that they do not know. For that, this gap is relevant regarding the objective of this study due to the fact that in Chile there is a lack of exploration on how the local sociocultural factors influence the foreign EFL teachers' decision-making. In that way, this study adds to a broader discussion about the relation among methodology, culture, and language teaching, as well.

2.1.3 Local Context

Cuadrado (2023) presents a book in which the objective was to point out that Ecuador's higher education system is characterized by continuous internationalization efforts and reforms, as well as enduring issues with equity and diversity. The design of this report was mixed and cross-cutting, combining documental institutional analysis, surveys of institutional actors, and qualitative interviews with non-key informants. Therefore, the main findings presented discrepancies between strategic planning and operative execution, weaknesses in teaching and training for internationalization, and the absence of systematic mechanisms of monitoring and assessment. In this way, the authors concluded that even though there is evidence of efforts to develop an intercultural curriculum and employ more international professors, these efforts alone

have not resolved the core barriers to meaningful faculty integration among them. Even with progress, assessments have shown universities still struggle to implement systems for ongoing cross-cultural conversations, offer institutions sufficient opportunities for support, or address the divide between policy formulation and everyday academic realities (Cuadrado, 2023).

In light of this, the report of Cuadrado (2023) indicates that advancing the integration, retention, and pedagogical efficacy of foreign faculty in Ecuador rests on understanding sociocultural factors in relation to an academic perspective. To that end, she said that there is a clear need for applied research to investigate how these contextual factors interrelate in driving international faculty's daily decision-making and classroom interactions (Cuadrado, 2023). With this in mind, the current literature supports the importance of sociocultural factors being recognized as central contributors to pedagogical decision-making. It requires international faculty working in Ecuadorian universities to recognize the relevance of these factors and respond to them in order to promote inclusivity and effective, culturally responsive pedagogies.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

At first, this theoretical framework includes six major conceptual domains drawn from the sociocultural learning theory analytical framework, which are sociocultural factors, pedagogical choice, foreign teachers, intercultural competence, teacher agency, and teacher identity, as they have been ordered by the author of this thesis and will be explained in the next paragraphs and subsections. Sociocultural factors include cultural norms, language, institutional expectations, and broader social values (seen in macro- to meso- levels); they shape how foreign teachers view their academic workplace, their interactions with students, and their pedagogical choices. Sociocultural factors shape not only the curriculum and teaching practices within

universities in Ecuador, but also the teachers' responsiveness, meaning-making, and flexibility to students' various needs. This section establishes and explores the connections among these domains to show their dynamic interaction as well as analytical capacity for understanding the effects and direction of sociocultural factors on foreign teachers' pedagogical decisions.

In essence, this study acknowledges that not all the concepts have the same analytical significance. On that matter, the sociocultural factors and the pedagogical decisions constitute the core idea, since they allow for explaining the relation between context and teaching practice in EFL. Conversely, identity, intercultural competence, and teacher agency are considered mediated categories that show how foreign teachers interpret extreme conditions and transform them into concrete actions in the classroom. Accordingly, the analysis is organized hierarchically, since it places the main concepts as the core of the theoretical framework and the mediating ones as elements that light the adaptation processes and pedagogical negotiation.

2.2.1 Analytical Lens: Sociocultural Learning Theory

The current study is guided by the Sociocultural Theory (henceforth SCT), in which mediation is considered a crucial concept. SCT argues that human cognition develops from social interaction and that human thought arises from social connections and culturally generated materials and designs, which are often called semiotic artifacts, that mediate social connections (Lantolf, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Li, 2020). Thus, the interactive process of cognitive growth is dependent on social, cultural, and historical contexts. Humans gain the representational systems that at last become the medium or mediator of cognition from their evolving social environments, which mediate their understanding of the world.

According to Wertsch (1995), people have access to psychological techniques and tools

because they are a part of a sociocultural context where these techniques and skills have been and still are culturally transmitted. The goal of a sociocultural approach to mind is to construct an account of human mental processes that is sensitive to the underlying connections between these processes and their institutional, historical, and cultural contexts (Wertsch, 1991). The use of SCT in this study was justified by the fact that it examines instructors' perceptions of education and pedagogical choices from both their own mental processes and social settings, including the university and society.

SCT has been used to comprehend learners' or teachers' attitudes about teaching and learning languages in different circumstances. Yang and Kim (2011), for instance, investigated second language (L2) learning assumptions in study abroad settings. Mohamed (2014) examined pre-service and in-service teachers' epistemic views in the United Arab Emirates and how these beliefs could be influenced by their gender, place of residence, and subject of instruction (science vs. humanities). SCT is used in our study to explain how different foreign university instructors think about teaching English as a foreign language.

Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, utilized in this research project, reveals that teachers’ beliefs, practices, and decision-making are situated in and negotiated within aspects of institutional cultures, local communities, and broader social structures. Almuhammadi (2024, p.1) explains, "what happens within a language classroom cannot be divorced from its sociocultural context.” Thus, when foreign professors are tasked with making pedagogical decisions, they must also be familiar with and navigate a new sociocultural context that diverges from their initial frames of reference. Through the lens of this theory, participant narratives will be situated within the institutional and cultural contexts that mediate their practice. This theory

will guide the coding and interpretation of data in this research.

On the whole, the SCT turns out to be particularly relevant for this study because foreign EFL teachers in Ecuador work in the interplay of multiple sociocultural systems. Due to the fact that their decisions are not produced in isolation, contrary to this, they are influenced by the interaction with a new institutional, cultural, and political environment. In this way, the notion of mediation of SCT allows us to explain how external structures, such as national educational politics, institutional expectatives, and local social dynamics, transform professional internal reasoning as guidance in the teaching practice. As follows, SCT offers a unique framework to understand the pedagogical adaptation in this growing context.

For this reason, inside this framework, the pedagogical decisions are understood as mediated actions. This implies that foreign EFL professors interpret the external sociocultural influences before deciding what strategies they need to apply inside the classroom, which means that every decision is mediated by negotiation processes among previous beliefs, institutional demands, and different expectations from the students. Therefore, the SCT allows us to analyze how these influences macro (national politics), meso (institutional norms), and micro (classroom interactions) are connected and, after that, how they are traduced in concrete decisions of teaching. Thus, the theory not only illuminates the role of sociocultural factors but also explains how these factors are translated into specific pedagogical practices in the Ecuadorian context.

2.2.2 Conceptual Categories for Analysis

The mediation process from the SCT is displayed in different levels of the Ecuadorian system: macro, meso, and micro levels. In this way, the macro level constitutes the national politics, and the guidelines of the higher educational system establish positions and expectations

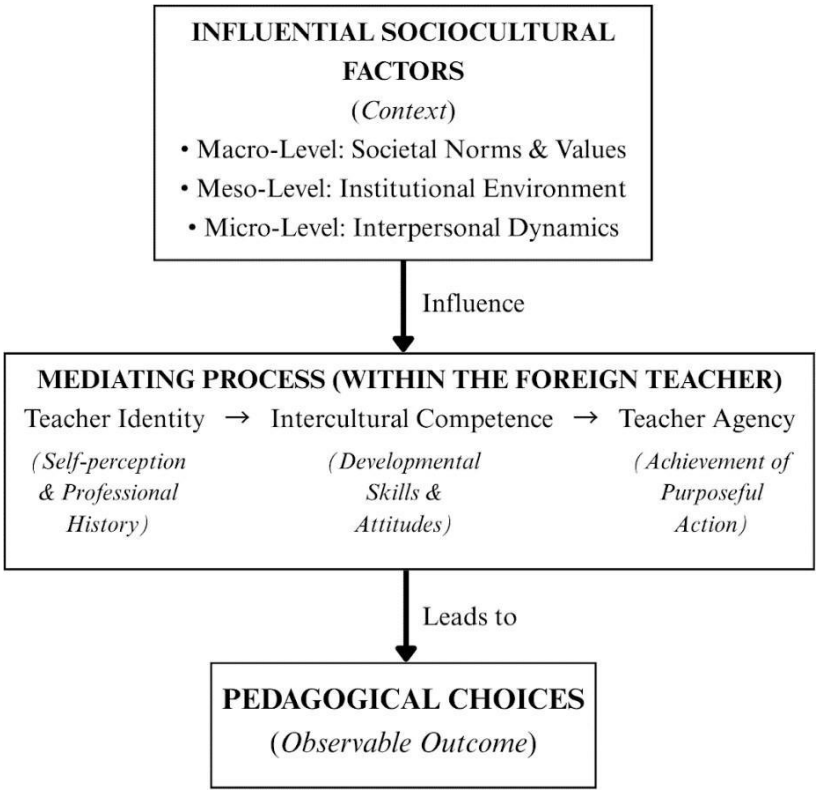
that influence the English teaching as a foreign language. Conversely, the meso level represents the institutional practices, the internal regulations, and the organizational culture of the university, which mediates the way of how foreign EFL professors interpret and adjust their pedagogical strategies. Finally, the micro level is formed by the daily interactions with the students and the classroom dynamics, which are immediate mediations that influence the decisions that teachers take at the moment of teaching. Hence, the mediation connects these three levels and allows us to understand how foreign EFL teachers transform the external demands into their professional reasoning, which is the guidance for their practice in the Ecuadorian context.

2.2.3 Primary Category: Influential Sociocultural Factors

The central analytical category for this thesis is sociocultural factors. These factors comprise the external environment in which the foreign teacher operates and are examined as significant influences on their pedagogical decision-making (Almuhammadi, 2024). To enable a systematic examination, this study categorizes these factors into three distinct yet interconnected levels of analysis, as visually represented in the analytical model in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Analytical Model of the Influence of Sociocultural Factors on Pedagogical Choices.



Note. This model illustrates the study's conceptual framework. It posits that external *Sociocultural Factors* exert influence on the observable *Pedagogical Choices*. This influence is not direct but is mediated by the *Foreign Teacher's* internal professional processes, which unfold sequentially from their *Identity*, through the development of *Intercultural Competence*, to the achievement of *Agency*.

Macro-Level (Societal Context): This level of analysis refers to the broad, overarching cultural, social, and historical forces of the host nation (Ecuador) that shape its educational paradigms. It includes deeply embedded societal values, historical traditions in education, and national policies and norms; also, it includes how the foreign countries (from which the teachers came) influence their teaching. As Almuhammadi (2024) states, classrooms are "socially constructed entities that were shaped by the values and norms of behavior that prevail in the

wider society" (p. 1, citing Tudor, 2001). In this case, norms and values relate, respectively, to written rules and to common social behaviors regarding what is considered good or wrong, which can vary at different levels, including the personal level.

Therefore, the macro level in the Ecuadorian context reflects national norms that promote interculturality and linguistic diversity, as set by the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (LOES).* For that, these guidelines, in the presence of indigenous languages and pronounced colonial eras, shape social expectations about English teaching and the teaching role in this context. Moreover, these national beliefs about teacher authority and the value of English as a foreign language's reputation influence how pedagogical practices are observed and evaluated. In this sense, for foreign teachers, these macro conditions represent sociocultural frames that they need to negotiate and reinterpret because they can differ from the educational and cultural systems of their countries of origin.

Meso-Level (Institutional Context): This level pertains to the specific organizational culture and structure of the university and how the professors can fit into them, and also how they vary from the institutional context in their own country. It encompasses the institution's formal pedagogical models, quality assurance policies, available resources, and the informal norms that govern professional relationships. The effectiveness of a teacher's practice is significantly shaped by this context, as professional development is heavily influenced by

“the prevailing teaching culture within their community [...], and societal and institutional expectations” (Almuhammadi, 2024, p. 2).

Hence, the institutional expectations regarding the design of the syllabus, evaluation formats, and participation norms mediate how professors adapt their teaching strategies. To illustrate this, the pedagogical models that guide institutions like this university, which are based on constructivist and connectivist approaches, provide frameworks for planning and teaching practice. Thus, these institutional dynamics reflect how the local educational politics and philosophies influence the pedagogical decisions of foreign EFL teachers in this context.

Micro-Level (Interpersonal and Classroom Dynamics): This level addresses the most direct and immediate influences within the classroom. It includes the established norms for teacher-student communication, expectations for student participation, and the interpretation of non-verbal cues. These classroom interactions are where broader sociocultural factors become tangible, as Almuhammadi (2024) states that "what unfolds within a language classroom is inseparable from its sociocultural context" (p. 1). So, the socioculture of both professors and students becomes one, being explained through the examples, choices, and methods that the professors opt to use.

2.2.4 Mediating Concepts in the Teacher's Professional Practice

The influence of the sociocultural factors described above is mediated by the attributes and enacted practices of the teacher. This section defines the concepts that explain this process, focusing on the professional practice of the central subject of this study.

First, the foreign teacher is conceptualized as an educator operating outside their native cultural and academic context. This condition shapes a distinct set of professional experiences related to adaptation and negotiation. As Trice (2003) highlights, the integration of international faculty introduces "complex dynamics that impact educational delivery, often requiring

adaptations at multiple levels, from institutional policies to classroom interactions" (p. 379). Through the interaction of identity, competence, and agency, this adaptation process takes place, leading to discernible pedagogical decisions, such as implementing one method or another, based on the differences of each classroom.

1) **The Mediating Process:** The teacher's internal response to the sociocultural context is understood through three interrelated constructs. First, a teacher's evolving sense of self, comprising their teaching philosophy, values, and fundamental beliefs, is known as their teacher identity. Through experience, this identity is actively created and reconstructed; it is not static. Identity is a "complex and dynamic process of interpretation and re-interpretation of our experiences" (Hanna et al., 2017, p.4). Teachers use it as a lens to understand their new surroundings and their place in them.

The development of intercultural competency is then influenced by this identity. This competence is the essential toolset that enables foreign teachers to function effectively in their new context. Deardorff (2023) defines it as a developmental process that includes:

> … the attitudes of respect and openness, knowledge of self and others, skills to interpret and relate, and the ability to see oneself and the world from other people's perspectives. These attitudes and skills lead to internal outcomes of adaptability and empathy, which in turn lead to effective and appropriate communication and behavior in intercultural situations. (p. 58)

Finally, this developed competence enables *teacher agency*. Agency is not viewed as a personal capacity that a teacher possesses, but as an achievement that emerges from the engagement with contextual factors. Priestley et al. (2015) conceptualize agency as something

that is "*achieved* in concrete situations... rather than a capacity that people *have*" (p. 2). This achievement emerges from the interplay of the teacher's individual attributes, the available cultural and material resources, and the structural factors of their environment.

2) **The Observable Outcome:** The tangible result of this entire process is the teacher's *pedagogical choices*. These are not simple actions but complex decisions that require professional judgment. Burridge (2018) defines pedagogical choice as a process where teachers must "make a conscious decision to choose one approach over another. In any lesson, many decisions need to be made, often in an instant, so this is no easy task (p. 4). These decisions, the specific strategies the teacher employs, the assessment techniques they use, and the effective ways of communicating, in other words, are the empirical evidence of how a foreign teacher has exercised agency within a particular sociocultural context using her identity and experiences.

Overall, this analytical model not only organizes the concept theory, but it also defines the structure that will guide the process of data analysis. In this manner, the macro, meso, and micro levels allow for the classification of the sociocultural influences that frame the teaching practice, and the categories of identity, intercultural competence, and teacher agency play the role of mediator factors that show how foreign EFL teachers interpret these situations and transform them into pedagogical decisions. Therefore, the frame states coherence between the theory and analysis, given that the categories offer a clear outline to examine how sociocultural factors are traduced in specific choices in the Ecuadorian context.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, it is presented the methodological framework employed to explore sociocultural factors that influence foreign professors' pedagogical decisions at an Ecuadorian

university. This section covers the research design and methodology, sampling plan and participants, data collection method, and data analysis procedures. Each component has been intentionally selected to ensure the study meets the validity and reliability standards inherent in rigorous qualitative inquiries, so that an organized and ethically conducted examination of the research questions is established.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

3.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach

In order to fully explore the participants' lived experiences and meanings, the study employed a qualitative research methodology. The research questions seek to understand the complex and rooted contextual processes that shape pedagogical decision making, which cannot be solely captured in quantitative measurement (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Seidman, 2006). For this reason, an interpretative paradigm was judged most appropriate. The "how" and "why" research questions raised by this study, which call for a thorough analysis of a current phenomenon in its actual environment, are best served by the design.

3.1.2 Multiple-Case Study and Replication Logic

The investigation was framed within a multiple-case study design. While the nature of the research questions is exploratory—seeking to identify emergent factors—the design itself provides a rigorous, comparative case framework to examine patterns across cases to strengthen interpretive explanations. The choice of this design aligns with Yin’s (2018) definition of a case study as "an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon

and context may not be clearly evident" (.38); as this study takes three different cases, it is a multiple-case study. In this research, each of the three participating foreign teachers was treated as a distinct case.

As conceptualized by Yin (2018), the design is guided by theoretical replication logic, whereby each case is examined for converging and diverging patterns that contribute to conceptual refinement. This framework treats each case as a separate experiment, where the findings of each case are subsequently compared. The purpose of this approach is to enhance analytic generalization and theoretical robustness by achieving analytic generalization, a process where the findings are used to refine, elaborate, or problematize the initial theory. In the context of this thesis, "theory" refers to the conceptual framework presented in the previous chapter, which posits a specific set of relationships between sociocultural factors, teacher agency, and pedagogical choices.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

The study was conducted at a public higher education institution in Ecuador. The university's philosophy is oriented towards the integral formation of education professionals who contribute to the transformation of educational quality in the country. As such, the institutional context values innovative pedagogical models and a strong connection with educational reality, providing a relevant setting to explore the experiences of its foreign faculty, particularly in the EFL teaching major.

To select the participants for this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed. As described by Patton (2002), this is a non-probability sampling method chosen to intentionally identify and select information-rich cases that could offer profound insight into the research

questions. The goal was not statistical representativeness but to maximize the depth and richness of the data obtained (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). To initially identify potential participants, institutional channels at the university were used. After this step, the researcher directly reached out to the potential participants to explain the study and to invite them to participate. Participants were selected using maximum variation sampling (Seidman, 2006) as the guiding sampling strategy. This strategy is of important value to the research questions, as the purpose and design of the study resulted in direct comparisons demonstrating how different sociocultural backgrounds might yield different pedagogical responses. By intentionally including participants with different profiles, the study is able to compare and contrast the impact of sociocultural determinants as it relates to their decisions in the classroom. The specific inclusion criteria are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Selection Criteria for Participants

Criterion	Justification for Inclusion
English was acquired during the first years of life	Creates a shared language base for controlling language proficiency as a variable. This means that the study can more readily attribute the identified pedagogical differences to sociocultural factors, which is a central aspect of internal validity in a comparative analysis (Yin, 2018).
Professional origin from different continents and distinct academic cultures	This becomes the primary criterion for enabling strong comparative analysis through theoretical replication. By choosing cases anticipated to yield contrasting results due to their contrasting sociocultural and academic contexts, the study can develop a stronger, more generalizable explanation of the phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

Varied personal and/or professional motivations for relocating to Ecuador	It adds a further dimension to comparison by examining teacher agency. Investigating how their personal goals and motivations mediate the broader sociocultural forces allows a more layered understanding of their pedagogical decisions by acknowledging that the teachers are not simply docile recipients of contextual influences; they are agents in their own professional work (Lai, Li, & Gong, 2016).
Sufficient longevity teaching within the university (more than 4 years of teaching experience in Ecuador)	Offers a way of ensuring that your participants are information-rich cases that have gone through substantial grappling process (Patton, 2002). This period of time allows them to have a rich "reservoir of experiences" to reflect on, which is methodologically critical for the depth of the interviews and reconstructive nature (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Seidman, 2006).

These criteria ensured that while participants had the shared experience of being foreign, native-English-speaking educators in Ecuador, their diverse backgrounds provided a strong basis for comparative analysis. It should be pointed out that each participant has a pseudonym to protect confidentiality, as observed in the ethical considerations (section 3.5).

3.3 Data Collection

The in-depth, semi-structured interview was the method used to gather data, as interviews allow access to interpretative accounts of pedagogical decision-making. The focus was not on observable behavior but on mediated perception and professional reasoning, like some other studies in the field have used it (such as Barahona & Ibaceta-Quijanes, 2024). The reason to choose interviews is that it was necessary to get deep and have a full understanding from a systemic perspective of how actors, factors, relations, hierarchies, incomes, and outcomes related to pedagogical choices establishes a frame to justify the choices.

Since the main goal of this study was to investigate how sociocultural factors affect foreign teachers' pedagogical choices, this approach was deemed the most suitable. In-depth

interviews create a systematic framework for reconstructing experiences and exploring personal perspectives that are important for understanding the complexity of the relationship between culture and pedagogy (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Yin (2018) refers to interviews as the main source of evidence when conducting case study research, and the interview process, which "is a guided conversation rather than a set of structured questions" (p.118). This conversational format was necessary in order to listen to the nuances of how participants view and interact with sociocultural aspects. To maintain focus on individual stories and interpretations, to minimize interruptions and scrutiny, feedback from the research supervisor recommended excluding some data collection methods, such as observation.

The interview framework was based on Seidman's (2006) three-part interview method, which provides a systematic framework for examining participants' experience in three ways: in context (focused life history), in detail (specific details of their professional experience), and in reflection (their reflection on the significance of their experience). It should be noted that, while the model does not dictate specific sessions, it allows a framework to organize the inquiry and its content. A semi-structured, open-ended interview guide was used to effectively explore all relevant inquiry areas while ensuring the pace of the conversation was maintained with consideration of the theoretical framework (Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2018). In order to foster a trusting and comfortable environment, the comfortable sessions were all audio recorded with consent, completed in English, and at a time and place of the participants' convenience.

The interview process for each participant was cyclical and proceeded until data saturation was achieved. Before is a common principle in qualitative research and is used to determine when to discontinue data collection of a case because any further data cannot be reasonably expected to provide new information (Saunders et al., 2017). This point is reached

when the researcher determines that new data are merely repeating what has already been expressed in previous interviews. Data collection continued until participant narratives demonstrated conceptual depth and coherence in relation to the analytical framework.

As Grady (1998, as cited in Saunders et al., 2017, p. 1896) describes, “in interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached... It is then time to stop collecting information and to start analyzing what has been collected" (p. 26). Therefore, data collection for this study ceased once the interviews consistently produced no new sociocultural factors, nor any new insights into how the identified factors influenced the participants' pedagogical choices. The interviews had a warm-up interview, and then, the other interviews proceeded (see Appendix A for the interview structure).

Data saturation was used to determine when data collection ended in this study, with appropriate justification included through a rigorous and careful approach. Following requirements that data saturation is adequately justified and not simply assumed, this was inductive and defined as when no new themes could be determined as a result of the new data (Saunders et al., 2017). Two key methodological decisions justified this claim. One, the sample was selected using a maximum variation sampling strategy, so the sample was intentionally checked for diversity as a part of the data collection process, and maximum variation sampling was used to strengthen the claim that data saturation was not the result of a homogeneous sample. Two, the recursive nature of analysis indicated that the researchers observed and tracked themes across multiple readings of transcripts, thus recording when themes became completely developed. While some studies suggest saturation can be reached within twelve interviews in homogeneous groups (Guest et al., 2006), this research continued the process until it was evident that a state of "meaning saturation"—a full and nuanced understanding of the themes—had been

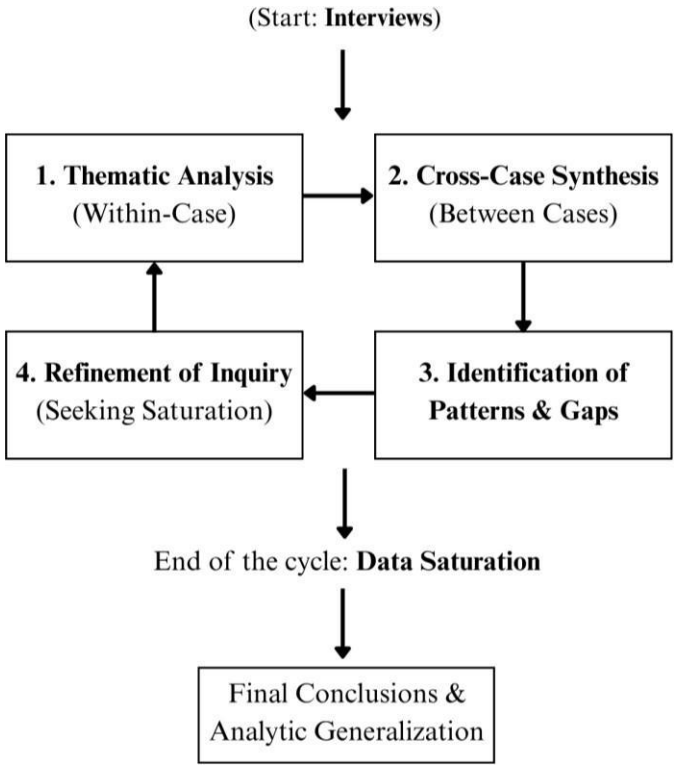
achieved, rather than just the cessation of new codes (Low, 2019).

3.4 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was employed to systematically identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data. The analysis was an iterative process conducted concurrently with data collection, allowing preliminary findings from one interview to inform the lines of inquiry in subsequent interviews (Yin, 2018). The process included a continual cycle of becoming familiar with the data, which involved reading through transcripts multiple times, the initial coding of meaningful excerpts that related to the research questions, and developing and refining themes from the excerpts that truly indicated participants' stories or lived experiences. The coding activity was carried out by selecting the excerpts, then examining the key factor or word that inductively reflects an attribution to the level category, and, accordingly, establishing the appropriate theme. In the last stage of analysis, a cross-case synthesis was conducted, a means of analyzing collective findings from multiple cases to identify strong and replicable conclusions (Yin, 2018).

Figure 2

Cyclical Process of Data Analysis



Note. This figure illustrates the cyclical and iterative process of data analysis. The thematic analysis of each case (Step 1) and the subsequent cross-case synthesis (Step 2) allowed for the identification of patterns and informational gaps (Step 3). These results informed and refined the subsequent rounds of inquiry (Step 4), in a cycle that continued until data saturation was reached. After finishing the cycle, the conclusions and analytic generalization were articulated.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The research was undertaken in accordance with ethical principles that protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants. The entire process was guided by the provisions of the Código de Ética de la Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE, 2015). Specifically, Article 9(b) requires the researcher to respect all regulations from the university that promote the

protection of human rights (see Appendix C). The main safeguard of ethics was the formal informed consent process. Each participant received a detailed information letter and was asked to sign a consent form before the interviews started, which explained the purpose, processes, and benefits of the study.

The consent form also explained the potential risks, including feelings of emotional discomfort when reflecting on their professional experiences. Participants were informed that the risks were lessened because participation was completely voluntary. Participants were assured they had the right to decline to answer any question they did not want to answer, they could stop their participation at any time without penalty, and they had the right to read the transcripts of their interviews to verify accuracy. To protect participant confidentiality, all data collected were stored on a password-protected device that was only accessible to the researchers. Pseudonyms (for example, Participant A, Participant B, Participant C) were used in this report to further protect the identities of the participants.

It was necessary to ensure trustworthiness by achieving credibility, which means a supported rigorous result directly founded on the findings of the investigation process. Also, it was important to get the replication attribute of the research in other similar studies and dependability because the information had to be reliable based on direct contributions of interviewees and supported theoretically by the authors. And that leads to the final attribution of the results being confirmed by the application of research methods and elaboration of tables and other instruments. So, this implies having a whole approach that develops ethical considerations for this research project.

According to individualization and characterization of the excerpts made by the three interviewed teachers and the subsequent coding activity, the result is a categorization on an inductive structure that generates the perspectives of how professors perceive sociocultural factors, and how that steers the pedagogical choices to end in how the sociocultural factors could be compared across the three teachers. Once that is done, the analysis was conducted by establishing a dialogue between findings and the contributions of authors (literature discussion), both related to this document, and founded on the consultation process. The contribution of the interviewees was located over the matrix of excerpts explicitly and systematically gathered in order to get the purpose.

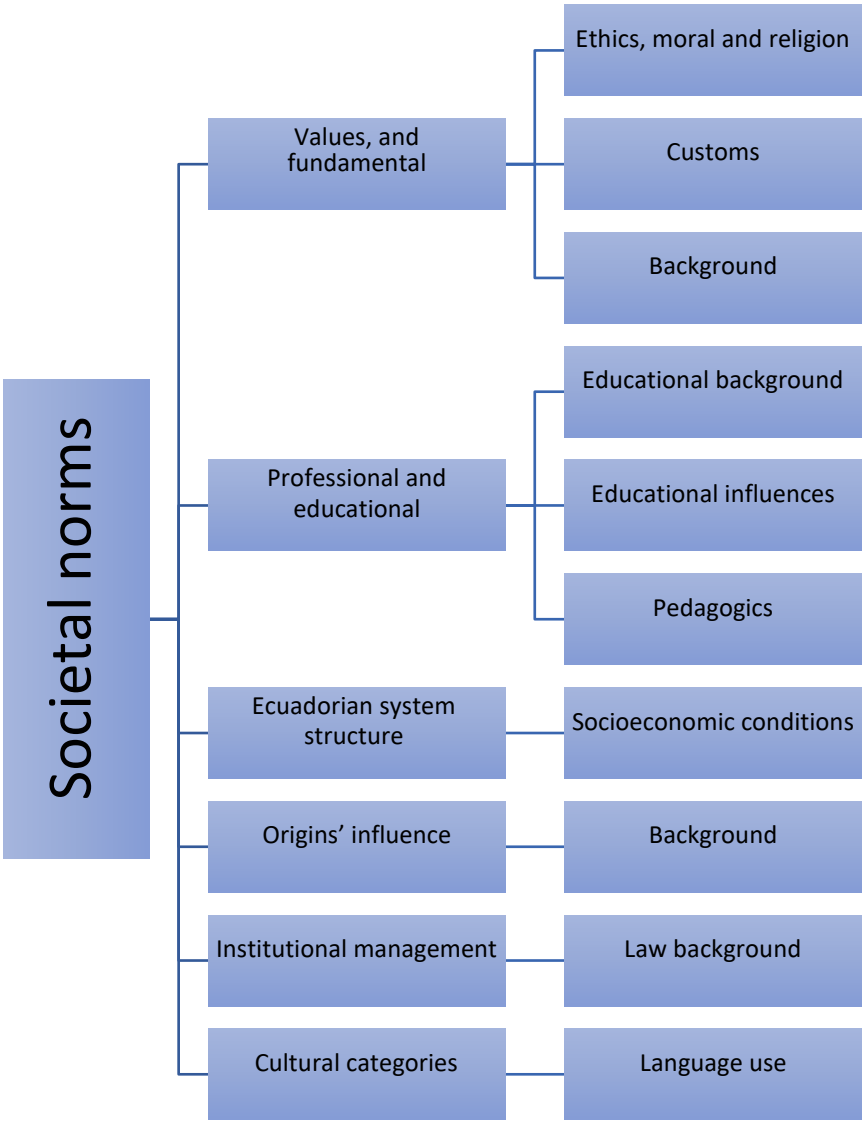
The contribution of this methodology lies in the fact that the particular experience and background, both from teacher origins and individual interaction experience over learning – teaching of EFL in Ecuador, forges the particular inputs of this document. Obviously, every step of the process is oriented to answer the research questions in the domain of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), in the societal norms and values categories as much as in the institutional environment and interpersonal dynamics, which means a structure of disaggregation from the broader spectrum to a singular one.

4 Results Presentation and Analysis

Next, the analysis development is presented, putting into dialogue the contribution of the methodological tool of the excerpt's matrix and the inputs, insights, and perspectives of the cited authors regarding the theoretical framework. First, the categorization graphics are presented, with the analysis based on a dialogue that concludes with the cross–case analysis.

Figure 3

Graphic: Societal Norms and Values (themes and codes)



Source: Self-elaboration

4.1 Macro – level: Analysis of Societal Norms and Values

Along with the cases, values and fundamental beliefs are highlighted as the dominant macro-level sociocultural influences, shaping how participants interpreted classroom authority,

student engagement, and moral expectations in EFL instruction. Participants' narratives reveal that societal norms regarding religion, morality, and interpersonal conduct serve as mediational means shaping their pedagogical adaptation. Among the teacher's statements, religion, ethics, and moral conduct emerge strongly at the macrolevel, which condition the pedagogical choices because of excessive respect for authority figures. For instance, the teacher N, according to her reply, is perceived as "too direct" for the Equatorian context in classroom interactions and feedback providing. Obviously, these situations deeply embed and determine the positions and choices of the professors because they have to interact with a very particular collective character and adapt the learning–teaching pedagogy to this scenario.

Regarding the macro – level, most of the excerpts of this study and the definition of the category are related to the code ethics, moral and religion that are important components of the Ecuadorian culture, explaining how the society´s character is mediated by strong behaviors and beliefs related to the development of a whole person; that is founded over the historic development of the country, Spanish influence and catholic Christian inheritance. Regarding that, teacher A emphasized that this is followed by customs, a strong component among the many sociocultural aspects of a nation. His answer ends with some contributions from the background as a manifestation of the importance that guests assign to their own society, or in this context, the host Ecuadorian society made by teacher A. Not only do excerpts develop some ideas and conceptions of the general background of the society, but also the influences that have a direct impact on the pedagogy used.

For teachers E, N, and A, they are very important as in every educational context, like the socioeconomic conditions, double mentioned by teacher E and less highlighted by teacher A, the

legal background, and the use of language as an expression of the idiosyncratic structure of the nation, is acknowledged and developed in a great explanation from teacher A.

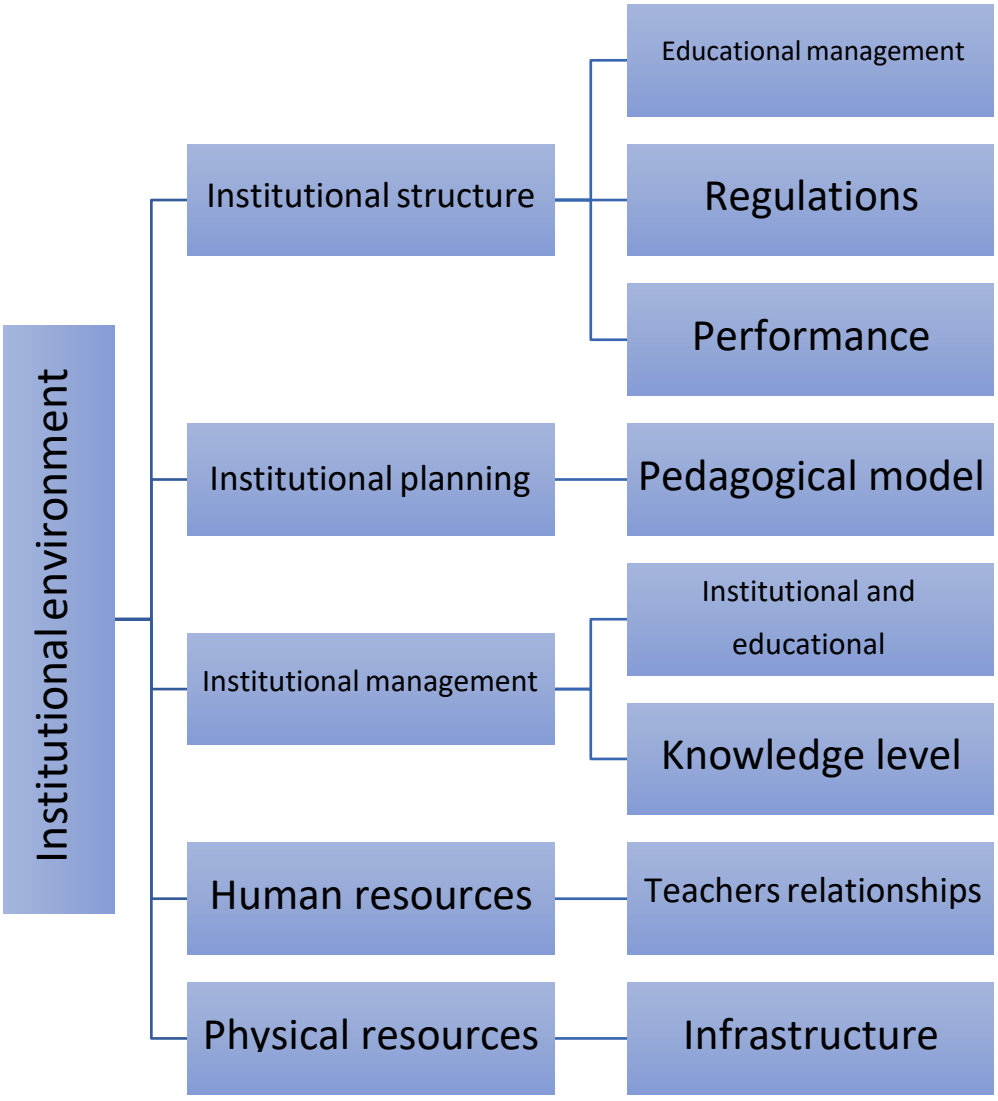
The prior findings reflect perceptions and positions related to how language is an expression of social values and beliefs, which is equally the point of view of Mekheimer (2025), who expresses that language is crucial for identity and interaction of individuals. In this regard, the contact with local speakers (teachers E, N, and A) modifies both the host society, specifically the students, and the teachers who are integrated into all the social dynamics (Mekheimer, 2025). Ecuador is a particular nation of the South American continent with historical, social, and cultural forces that have shaped the national character, attitudes, and behaviors in different contexts, materialized, expressed, and applied in environments such as the English Foreign Language class, as was repeatedly expressed by the interviewees (Almuhammadi, 2024). This factor is most acknowledged by teacher A, who details an approach from theoretically categories like culture, personality, and the consequences of a determined sociohistorical background with a decisive influence over the nation´s character.

The responses to the research questions are based on the prior development. It is true that teachers and students in a controlled and planned scenario, such as English Foreign Language classes, are transformed equally by the interaction itself, mediated by the force and presence of sociocultural factors (customs, educational backgrounds, Equatorian moral, ethics, and religion), which is remarkable, especially in relation to this national character. The teachers had to adapt themselves to the educational and living exchange in a constant construction of self-identification and constant reconstruction of knowledge, in which they made a huge effort to provide for the students. The teachers are completely conscious of these realities and try to act accordingly. In different aspects that in this case correspond to the codes, the outcomes of the

systematic review of the interviews highlight several differences between their original countries and communities and the host nation Ecuador, confirming the main framework of the theoretical framework developed here in subjects like values, fundamental beliefs, professional and educational performance integrated with the background of their origin communities.

Figure 4

Graphic: Institutional Environment (themes and codes)



Source: Self-elaboration.

4.2 Meso – level Analysis of Institutional Environment

Among the three study cases the meso–level, Institutional Environment, shows an explanation of realities and factors that reveal some strengths and advantages over organizational and structural aspects of the universities like educational management, regulations, infrastructure, knowledge level and the convenience of have god rapport with colleagues, obviously mediate the learning–teaching experience of EFL because they have to find new innovative disruptive methods of teaching, but also make easier the adaptation process for foreign teachers, that according to their previous experience, adjust their behavior and interaction with institutional factors.

The mediation in meso–level is generated mainly by the organizational structure and general alignments strategically conceived for the participants, constituted by teachers and professors, conditioning the performance level (qualified by teacher E, N and A as very basic and poor) their perceptions, reactions, agency (proactive by teachers E, N and A but negligence over most of the students) and behavior most of the times associated with discipline but lack of disposition of real learning due to several limitations of this meso–level. The pedagogical consequence even if the students sometimes reflect on passing the subject with good grades, it doesn't reflect real learning and endowment of competences for English Language proficiency. Institutionally, the university doesn't confront these realities.

Across the three teachers interview, the institutional planning, institutional structure and institutional management, reflects a systemic approach that consider higher education as a process, in which there are incomes such as educational management, regulations and the choice of the pedagogical models, that interacting with the curricula, institutional context, and the

teaching activities, generates the scenario of performance that are the other variables, equally with the knowledge level of the students as outcome of educational process. These findings are reinforced by Eggers' (2021) statement about how institutional flexibility is desirable in all educational and professional scenarios, because it is true that conditions of public universities are characterized by constraints in Ecuador require pedagogical improvisation all the time, not only in digital environments, but in infrastructure, as much as pedagogical problem solving (desirable competence) and the interaction among students, as much as interaction with the teachers, both in pedagogical and personal interaction, over a controlled scenario, such as a university.

Previously, performance and knowledge were recognized as very poor by teacher E due to several student-related factors, weaknesses in the Ecuadorian educational model, and socioeconomic conditions. She argued that the level 4 students cannot even form a sentence. The excerpts reflected the past categories repeatedly throughout the interviews, as well as excerpts related to the distribution across the institution, such as human and physical resources, thereby completing the whole structure of Ecuadorian foreign language education. The regulatory constraints have a severe impact on assessment: as teacher E recognized, she has to prepare two or three versions of the same test due to cheating, a structural meso–level condition that mediates learning.

It is clear that sociocultural factors are decisive over the pedagogical and even didactic choices made by the professors, especially regarding the codes such as the current conditions of performance and knowledge level, that explain the competence conditions related to the English language handling, recognized as very poor, especially by the teacher E, explaining how the existing competences condition the teaching model. In this way, these elements generate a mediation over educational management, regulations, and the selection of pedagogical models,

because in every case this has to be adjusted to the students' realities, once it is understood that even the Ecuadorian cultural resistance, the center of the teaching learning experience is student–centered. The codes explain conditions on both the students' and professors' sides that interact with the institutional context, which is the scenario. At the end, but no less important, there are the resources of the institutions that, like most public universities, have limitations, although it was recognized that the versatility and resilience of Ecuadorian culture don't agitate over a change of plans due to deficiencies in class logistics. Also, teachers E and N highlighted the outstanding, strong partnership among teachers, which was recognized as very motivating.

The professors indicate that, despite lower expectations for the Ecuadorian educational model and low EFL proficiency among students, the model has some effective components due to the decisive influence of sociocultural factors that differ from those of their origin communities (North America, Europe, and Asia). At the same time, they recognize that this influence is quite decisive over their teaching practices. This is articulated and aligns with Almuhammadi (2024), who highlighted that subject interaction with individuals from different backgrounds is determinant, taking into account context and professional development, which interacts very closely with the educational system and institutional expectations.

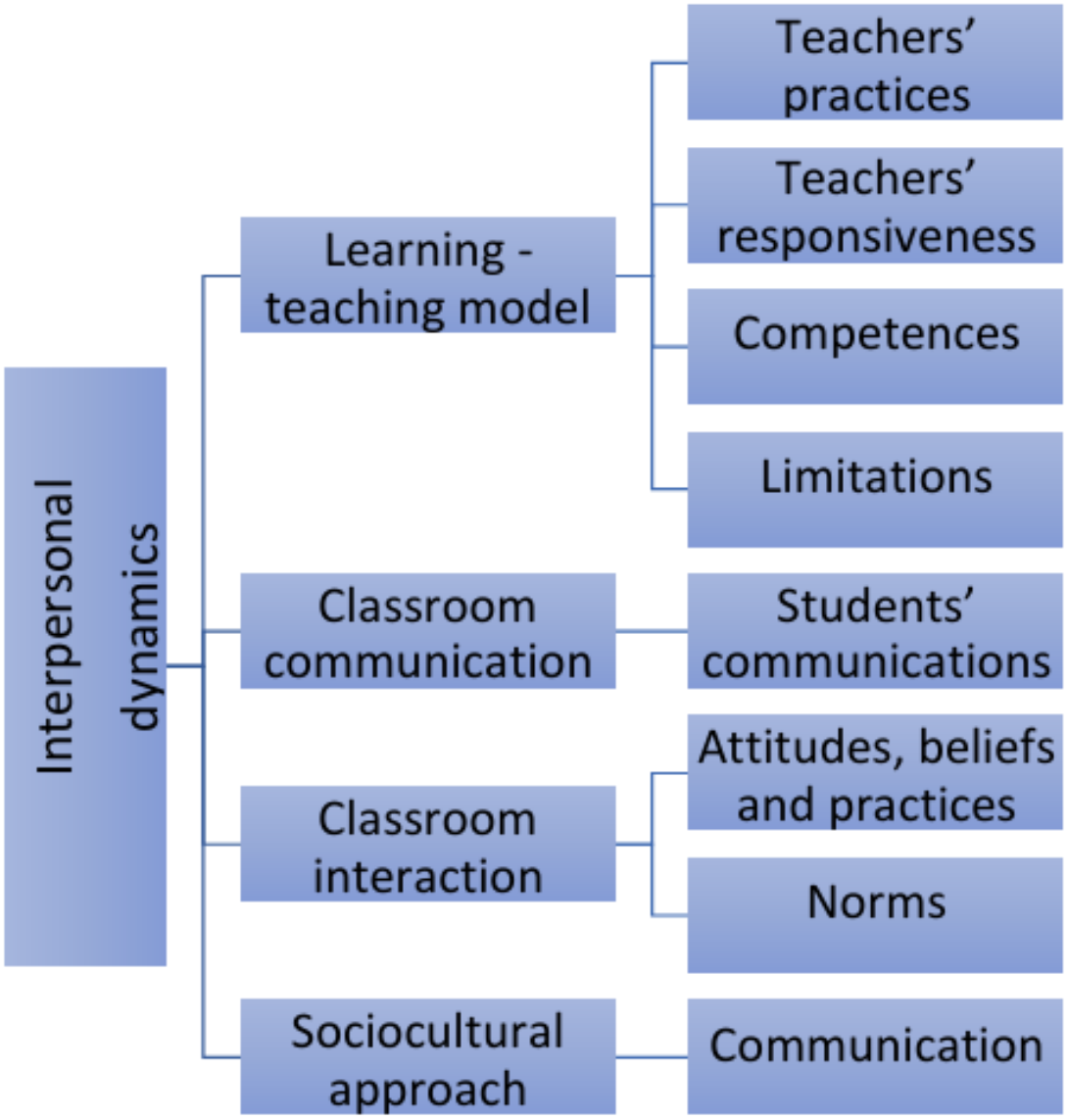
Professor A indicated that he had to understand and engage deeply with Ecuadorian culture, understand the value of the educational model, highlight Ecuadorian creativity, and that he is motivated to diversify didactics to achieve goals and expectations, and to develop the teaching model and practices. To illustrate this, it was a common factor, even when a teacher had to start teaching online, as noted by Eggers (2021), who emphasizes the importance of adequate interaction in the public's view. On the negative side, the teachers E and N talked about how the same versatility over the teaching methods is motivated by a change of schedule due to holidays,

which represents around 50% less classes, and the law restrictions on sanctions due to AI use of the students, which explains the low domain of the English level of the students and a teaching challenge.

In summary, institutional resource limitations mediate teaching by forcing teachers to be versatile and tolerant of changes in plans, which is a very useful attribute because it is a key competence in professional development. As before, regulatory constraints reshape assessment by the institution, mediating teachers' responses to specific scenarios, generating a new approach to learning–teaching sessions. The student competence levels condition mediates the professors' methodological adaptation. The teachers E, N, and A expressed that the cultural particularities of the Ecuadorian educational system are reflected completely in the institutional context, including the contract conditions, the institutional management, structure, and planning, being determinant over the pedagogical choices. This is because the student context conditions the institutional action over the lesson content and teaching, so universities must adapt to the existing realities presented in the ways indicated before, doing their best for the formation of students. In this way, it was determined that the institutions and professors do their best with what they have, and that this is the answer to the research questions, confirming the statements in the planning of this degree project.

Figure 5

Graphic: Interpersonal Dynamics (themes and codes)



Source: Self-elaboration.

4.3 Micro – level Analysis of Interpersonal Dynamics

Teachers E, N, and A recognize that, at the micro level, there is a consciousness that the pedagogical model must be centered on the student, not the teacher, and that this mediation category is recognized. Associated with the prior, the classroom communication and classroom interaction appear, including excerpts about the functioning, nature, actors, factors, contents, and behaviors over the EFL sessions identified by the teachers, which are considered very important

for the mediation on the chosen pedagogics, because, according to students' participation, for instance, teacher A picks the specific activity. The sociocultural approach includes excerpts related to communication, but is understood broadly as conduct and action during EFL classes.

The excerpts related to the first theme present teachers' (E, N, and A) practices, which were most frequent during the codification, highlighting the importance given to the guidance of pedagogy and didactics implemented by the teachers, in particular contexts such as Ecuadorian EFL students. Linked to the prior, across the three cases of study, there is the teacher's responsiveness that acknowledges that it was necessary to develop a particular work studying the culture and preparing the classes (especially highlighted by teacher A), to potentiate and motivate the competencies of the students; a code of the excerpts systematically acknowledges.

The four themes set were the limitations that are systemic elements of the teaching culture and are transferred to classroom dynamics. The student communication code is a particular one, given the nature of a foreign language class as a key and a central component of the sessions, because it is its vehicle and purpose; nevertheless, it had fewer excerpts than the previous themes. In this reality, among the cases (teachers E, N, and A), the micro–level category mediation is reflected in and applied to the learning–teaching planning and execution, conditioning the conduct of both teachers (E, N, and A) and the students' attitude and commitment. Teacher E recognizes that proficiency has not been acquired at a competent level due to diverse factors such as socioeconomic conditions, institutional management, and structure.

In the classroom interaction, across the three cases (teachers E, N, and A), the excerpts were mainly related to the beliefs that greatly condition the interaction and responsiveness of the students in a regulated environment, which is the associated code constituted by the norms of the

sessions, given both by the teacher and the institutions. Among the three cases (teachers E, N, and A), communication extends understanding of how language is a cultural expression mediated by students' composition and categories, and it is a repeatedly identified influence on how they teach EFL, in terms of pedagogy and didactics.

The key findings of the interviews on interpersonal dynamics highlight the importance of professors teaching how to teach in a socioculturally specific environment, as Almuhammadi (2024) notes, thereby broadening understanding of the mutual influence between teachers and students within a learning–teaching model. Due to different sociocultural characteristics, the teachers E and N acknowledge the importance of practical, fun, and interactive classes to create good rapport and attitude of the students, although the teachers recognize an initial difficulty with rapport building, considering it normal since they came from different backgrounds, which match the Almuhammadi (2024) position that the sociocultural component cannot be dissociated from context that it is sensitive to micro level conditions such personalities and knowledge conditions. It was found that teacher E, at different levels, develops some form of gamification for learning and achieves participation due to knowledge limitations and socioeconomic realities that are strongly related to the sociocultural context. In this way, a key finding was the establishment of norms and boundaries from the beginning of the course to maintain the integrity of the sessions and ensure attention to the content, although they noted that some students showed varying levels of motivation, depending on factors such as the institution and socioeconomic conditions.

It was a clear finding that independence is not easy, giving examples, like they don’t understand and they don’t ask the teacher, which develops the Almuhammadi (2024) contribution about how sociocultural background conditions the answer of the students because

these categories cannot be dissociated, as they mediate the whole learning experience. Another finding is the acknowledgment of teacher A that is needed and effective for teaching, to develop a structured approach over the classes to engage participation, openness for students, exploring, researching, and welcoming new ideas; critical for teaching and learning, because sometimes the students do outstanding work, but it is occasional, not the norm as recognize teacher E. So, summing up the regulations of the culture, the institution, and the classes, could be actual forms of getting detailed about the EFL learning experience, and that's why it is important to have a very broad culture spectrum to dictate the classes, because it helps to interact with the students' personalities and interests. These findings are consistent with Hanna et al. (2017) 's position that students' identity and the way the class is taught constitute a complex process of identification, reidentification, and knowledge resignification. It sets a constructivist dynamic over learning of EFL.

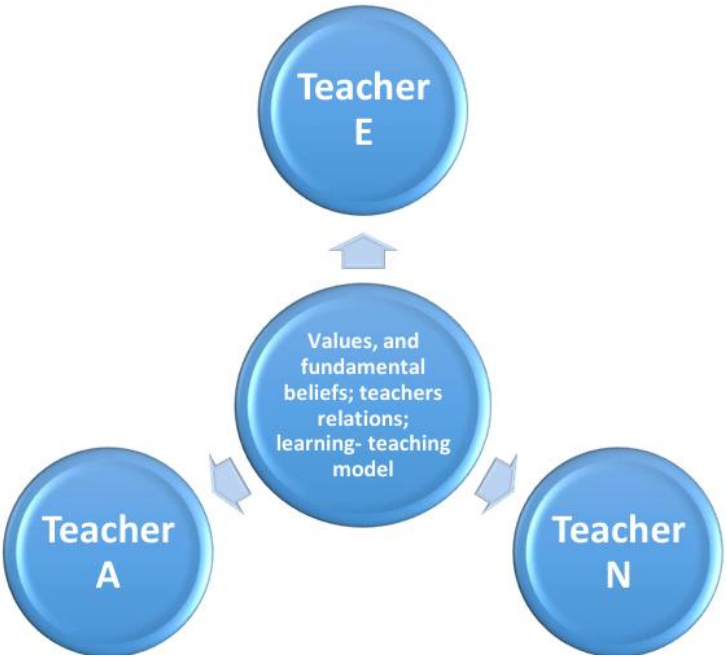
Conducting this exercise of analysis is an extension of the postures of the authors related, in the form that sociocultural background is critical in the determination of the classroom interaction and functioning in several ways, which can be tracked from the broader social norms and values, going through the institutional context, management, regulations, and landing on relations in the classroom. The interpersonal dynamics are an extremely broad and complex scenario to analyze and assimilate, because of the endless personalities and life experience of the students that can build his knowledge including all related to language, even more taking into account some contributions of the epistemic thinking that sets precisely that every person does build his own knowledge having as foundations his unique life experience, his interactions, and the socio–historical reality that he is deep in. In conclusion, the results of knowledge building are consistent within and apart from the two prior cases.

4.4 Cross–case analysis

The current chapter develops the cross–case analysis of this study, connecting the principal themes among the teachers across the codification activity, and after the disaggregation of the commonly identified comparison excerpts. Next, the graphic, then the relational table, and finally, the analysis.

Figure 6

Venn Diagram: central themes over interviews.



Source: Self–elaboration.

Figure 7

Sociocultural factors compared across the foreign EFL professors.

Teacher E	Teacher N	Teacher A
The decisive influence of the cultural background of the teacher is more autonomous, and independent learning	The decisive influence of the cultural background of the teacher, more autonomous and independent learning	The decisive influence of the cultural background of the teacher is more autonomous and independent learning

(Values and fundamental beliefs).	(Values and fundamental beliefs).	(Values and fundamental beliefs).
Shyness – Lack of self-confidence. Students see the teacher as an authority figure (Values and fundamental beliefs).	Scared of the teacher, authority position – No communication at the beginning (Values and fundamental beliefs).	Lack of willingness to communicate and shyness (Values and fundamental beliefs). They don't speak to the teacher. No communication at the beginning, genetic, environmental, and other factors. Negative feelings generalized. Feeling of not being good enough to talk to teachers. Conservative culture and parents are very protective. Excessive perception of the teacher as an authority position. Anxiety
"I want them to listen to learn'' (Values and fundamental beliefs).	Communication is very direct, so they pay attention (Values and fundamental beliefs).	Interpret the teacher negatively (Values and fundamental beliefs). The teacher makes direct feedback, but they feel embarrassed. No sensitivity of students in prior experience. Have to provide detailed instructions. "A lot of emotions down here".
On the negative side, point out that their emphasis is on grades rather than learning. Don't want to learn English. 50% don't want to teach. Students can´t speak a sentence in English (Professional performance).	"I just need to pass" (Professional performance). Not autonomous work. Most of them learn English because they want to leave Ecuador	"Just want good grades and not to learn" (Professional performance).
Some active and interactive students. If the students pay attention, the teacher´s methodology works (Learning–teaching model).	Students need more practice and definitely more independent work (Learning–teaching model). When they are introduced to research, there are some signs of interactive students.	The teacher promises in class that everything will be practical. He teaches research, creating interactive sessions. Promote participation, openness, exploration, welcoming new ideas, and "breaking the

		law" in didactics and pedagogy (Learning–teaching model). A more advanced proposal is to generate problem–solving and critical thinking.
Constant learning over the classes (Teaching – learning model).	Learning from mistakes (Teaching – learning model).	Break the learning frame every time (Teaching–learning model).
Good energy and good rapport. Teacher recognize herself as very serious. They listen; they pay attention (Teaching – learning model).	Setting boundaries from the beginning – Discipline sometimes - unit on rules and regulations – Working on a good rapport (Teaching – learning model).	Don't disturb the class. Student friendlier – What are the expectations– Respect (Teaching – learning model).

The key finding transversal to the whole experience related to category 1 consists in the fact that effectively, the sociocultural background of every teacher (E, N, and A) mediates decisively the pedagogical and even didactical approach, because it is undeniable that they face a cultural shock; after all, they come from very different societies, so the effects over pedagogical consequences consists over two or more versions of tests (E) or the gamification (teachers N and A). In this regard, the second finding related to norms and values, appear the shyness as a persistent characteristic of Ecuadorian students, expressed in attitudes like being afraid to speak to the foreign teacher and over place as an authority figure that difficult the communication, even when the courses are advanced, so E, N, and A professors had to adapt themselves, research culture and plan detailed classes. So the pedagogical consequence for teacher A was to conduct research to understand the sociocultural component.

Teachers recognize that being seen as a very serious person (E, N, and A) can have pedagogical consequences, namely being useful in maintaining discipline in the classroom and in paying attention to potentializing learning. For instance, teacher A conducts detailed research on Ecuadorian culture to improve his feedback, not interpreting it negatively but providing very

detailed instructions in classroom activities, which is a pedagogical consequence. The related findings include a perspective associated with the register that takes into account cultural norms, language, and broader social values in learning – teaching experience.

Teachers E, N, and A share the same opinion related to the student´s main focus on learning rather than on grades. Teacher E says most of her students don't want to learn English, and even in advanced courses, they can't form a sentence in English. Similarly, Teacher N says that her students just want to "pass" the subject, and maybe that is one of the reasons they don't do any autonomous work. On the same page, teacher A says their students just want to pass the subject rather than have a genuine sense of learning. The next similarity concerns students' proactivity: teacher E says she has some of her learners motivated, and when the students pay attention, her methodology works. Teacher N says that her class members need more practical learning and independent work, like when they are introduced to research. Finally, teacher A goes into great detail about his methods and themes, such as participation, openness, exploration, welcoming new ideas, and fostering innovation, which motivate deeper learning and new knowledge and meaning through critical thinking.

In this context, teacher E was more critical of the expectations, the current level of English proficiency, and the general intellectual level. Three teachers showed very good responsiveness and flexibility to students' various needs and were also willing to adapt to the current situation. All of them (teachers E, N, and A) set the bar for institutional expectations for a productive class. As it was said in the theoretical framework, they (E, N, and A) embraced and adapted themselves to the context of their students, taking note of pedagogical models, quality assurance policies, available resources that often mean difficulties, and the informal norms that govern professional relationships, which were acknowledged by three professors (E, N, and A)

as productive and harmonious.

Despite the difficulties, in the study across the cases (E, N, and A), they agreed that the sociocultural factor of learning speed motivates the selection and planning of the classes, and express that learning goes beyond mistakes and goes beyond the limits of teaching learning approaches used conventionally in English teaching, even the regulatory constraints have the effect to reshape assessment. Regarding the factor of interaction and communication in the classroom, three participants (E, N, and A) have similar opinions, like having good energy and rapport (teacher E).

To portray this, she set boundaries at the beginning of the courses, which include regulations units, but at the same time, teachers E and N recognized the importance of building a good rapport with students, which requires a specialized and structured approach over the classes, which is associated with the fact that the student competence levels lead to a methodological adaptation in the ways stated before. On the same page, teacher A indicated that he hasn't had discipline problems because he handles a very broad concept of pedagogy and didactics, based on deep knowledge of cultural categories, which, in this case, were the Ecuadorian character and personality aspects, that facilitate teaching the class. Three cases reflected difficulties in teacher-student communication as described.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

This project demonstrates that sociocultural structure completely mediates the structure of the learning–teaching model in macro–level (societal norm and values), meso–level (institutional environment), and micro-level (classroom dynamics), in such a dimension that the participant professors of the study acknowledge and reiterate this condition. The study fully

supports the contributions of Lantolf (2006), Johnson (2009), and Li (2020) on how the social articulation between students and teachers is decisively influenced by semiotic artifacts and cultural elements, such as language. Also, the findings confirm Wertsch's (1991) position: both students and teachers influenced each other within a systemic sociohistorical framework, including institutions, the broader culture, and its particular assets.

The interview processing activity indicates that, in every case study, the professors had to research, analyze, assimilate, integrate with Ecuadorian nationals, and communicate with students and other teachers. In this sense, as Burridge (2018) noted and as the teachers demonstrated, they made many conscious decisions about the approaches to lessons and curricula and decisively influenced institutional performance. This involved planning and modifying the content and class orientations to align with the curricula's expected outcomes. So, it was confirmed that classroom dynamics are directly linked to cultural realities, as Almuhammadi (2024, p.1) highlights, and that this relationship establishes conditioning communication and behavior in an intercultural scenario involving foreign teachers and Ecuadorian higher education students of EFL (Deardorff, 2023). It was identified that four actors are involved in a systemic approach that encompasses students, teachers, the institution, and the context.

At the macro-, meso-, and micro levels, the findings suggest that the sociocultural factors that condition pedagogy in EFL classes are: interpersonal dynamics, socioeconomic context, ethics, morals, religion, norms and values, English language background, and origin communities and identity. One of the contributions of this research is the deep and determining influence of national character on every one of the students in the classes, with the ethical and religious component as a transversal aspect of the whole learning–teaching experience. Also, the

study indicates that sociocultural factors that influence the pedagogic choices, by adaptation to context, by studying teaching and learning in Ecuador, planning classes, analyzing the context of the country and the city, interacting directly with colleagues, directives, and students, using specific methodologies and didactics that are used to achieve objectives and overcome critical limitations. So, for the professors, the intercultural competence was tested over the classroom sessions and modifying the teacher identity, all of which was made through the teacher agency.

The analysis indicates that this path is ridden with cultural shock across categories such as norms, values, behaviors, limitations, ethics, educational environment, academic realities, knowledge base, curricula, motivation to learn, and institutional context. About the institutional environment, the findings clarify that a good colleague and direct rapport, and factors like competence and autonomy are decisive ones to perform the didactics and pedagogics correctly, getting multiple benefits for both students and teachers, because the good practices could be extrapolated to different EFL levels, establishing a virtuous circle of feedback. A central contribution consists in the fact that these mere difficult conditions enrich the dynamics and the rapport in the classroom in all three cases of study, but in particular ways according to factors like origin communities that operate like an educational catalyst, and the study helps to affirm that this context is very positive and productive for learning a language, even with the modest results from the students. Related to the prior, another key contribution is that the particular background of the teachers placed over EFL interaction with Equatorian nationals generates a very particular form of being, understanding, and learning the English language, in a very unique structure that could not be reproduced the same way with other teachers from different backgrounds.

About the third specific objective, this research allows us to establish that in the three

cases of foreign professors of EFL, there are deployed interacting structures of categories mediated by the educational and pedagogical context, in which one of the foundations is the students with cultural similarities, who interact and generate feedback with the professors, and all of that is catalyzed over English Language courses. The fact that each of the teachers comes from different continents is a factor to take into account because of their different backgrounds and personalities. For instance, teacher E had a more serious and distant personality because she came from Bulgaria and the UK, so she was more inflexible. While professor N, as an Ecuadorian descendant and coming from Canada, and because of being younger, was more open but also direct, which constituted a factor of misunderstanding and interaction issues in her classes. And A had a particularly scientific approach of categories like culture, personality, and interaction that make his classes more open to innovation and deregulation.

So, as it is seen there are a good level of intercultural competence but performed with emphasis in different aspects of the classes and of course that is influenced and feedback by the identity, what it has very similar reality and performance is the motivation and agency by the three teachers, showing how the intercultural environments develops a higher performance over the pedagogical choices, made by dozens in every class according to their statements. The study highlights the cross–case patterns related to the convergence structure that benefits anyone involved. As a limitation, the study did analyze a small sample size of just 3 cases, and also it was performed in a single institution, by only one qualitative method, which was a semi–structured interview, in a specific context, such as a public university with all the constraints and specifications, so this establishes a research model restraint by a very specific conditions that originates the recommendations.

Although this study could be a key factor in overanalyzing the learning–teaching

structure of EFL in Ecuador, there are recommendations, such as developing a mixed-methods approach to obtain more representative and larger sample sizes, more suitable for knowledge building across both pedagogy and the content of foreign language learning. It is desirable to select a more representative group of foreign-language teachers at universities to obtain a more representative sample that corroborates the results of the current study. But also, increasing the sample size has the potential to complement recommendations to optimize EFL results in the future. Another recommendation is to study the sociocultural factors that influence pedagogical choices in other foreign languages, such as French or Portuguese, to extrapolate the results of this study, understand and apply the findings to other curricula and pedagogies, and broaden their application. The final recommendation is to analyze other higher education institutions of Ecuador, beyond Cuenca, to establish patterns and obtain more accurate and generalized results, at the same time, that are studied in private and public schools to incorporate the best practices, structures, and dynamics of each other.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interview Guides

These interview guides are based on the three-party inquiry of Seidman's 2006 model

Interview Guide 1

Warm-up

1 Can you please share your name?

2 Where are you from?

3 How long have you been teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?

4 What motivated you to come to Ecuador?

5 Why did you decide to teach at this Uni?

6 How would you describe your initial impressions of Ecuadorian culture?

7 How could you describe the university environment when you first arrived?

Thanks for the initial answers. We are going to go deeper into your professional journey, understanding that this is leading to understanding the context of your pedagogical choices. In this case, we will understand the professor's identity based on self-perception and professional history; the intercultural competence in developmental skills and attitudes; and teacher agency based on achievement of purposeful action. Also, the sociocultural factors include macro to micro level, the macro level consists of societal norms and values; the meso level in the institutional environment, and the micro level in interpersonal dynamics.

Life story questions

1 Can you describe any significant experiences or challenges you faced while adapting to the Ecuadorian educational context?

2 Can you tell us about your journey to becoming an EFL professor?

3 What experiences shaped your decision to pursue this career?

4 How has your upbringing and cultural background influenced your teaching philosophy and methods?

5 Can you give an example of a classroom practice that reflects this influence?

6 How do you perceive the relationship between your cultural identity and your role as a foreign educator in Ecuador?

7 Have any pivotal moments in your teaching career significantly impacted your pedagogical choices? If so, can you elaborate on them?

8 In what ways do you think your personal values align or clash with the norms of the Ecuadorian educational system?

9 How do you navigate cultural differences in the classroom, especially when it comes to student engagement and participation?

Interview Guide 2

Professional experience:

1 Can you describe your previous teaching experiences before coming to Ecuador? ´

2 How do they compare to your current role?

3 What specific factors, such as national norms, institutional rules, or a very different environment, have you noticed that influence your teaching practices here in Ecuador?

4 How do you adapt your lesson plans or teaching strategies to accommodate the local students' cultural backgrounds?

5 In what ways do you think the educational expectations in Ecuador differ from those in your home country?

6 Can you discuss any particular challenges you've faced regarding language barriers or communication with students and colleagues?

7 How do you perceive the role of local customs and traditions in shaping students' attitudes toward learning English?

8 Have you collaborated with local faculty or other foreign professors? If so, how have those interactions influenced your pedagogical choices?

9 How do your interactions with students outside of the classroom impact your teaching style and methods?

10 What resources or support systems have been most helpful for you in adjusting to the Ecuadorian educational landscape?

11 Can you share any success stories or positive outcomes that resulted from your pedagogical choices in this context?

Interview Guide 3

Reflection Questions

1 Reflecting on your experience, how do you believe sociocultural factors have shaped your development as an educator in Ecuador?

2 What lessons have you learned about the importance of cultural sensitivity in teaching English as a foreign language?

3 How do you think your experiences in Ecuador will influence your future teaching practices,

whether in Ecuador or elsewhere?

4 In what ways do you feel that your presence as a foreign professor contributes to the broader educational landscape in Ecuador?

5 Looking back, what advice would you give to future foreign EFL professors coming to teach in a culturally different environment like Ecuador?

Appendix B. Consent Form

Informed Consent Letter

Title of the research project: Exploring the Influences of Sociocultural Factors on Foreign EFL Teachers' Pedagogical Choices at an Ecuadorian University

Researchers: Veronica Moran**,** María Mercedes Silva **Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Universidad Nacional de Educación**

Thesis Supervisor: Jorge Mauricio Villavicencio Reinoso Dear Participant,

You are hereby invited to participate in this multiple-case study, which aims to explore the sociocultural factors that foreign university teachers perceive as influencing their pedagogical choices at an Ecuadorian university.

In this research, *sociocultural factors* refer to the external environment in which the foreign teacher operates and are examined as a significant source of influence on their pedagogical decision-making (Almuhammadi, 2024).

Pedagogical choices refer specifically to a process where teachers must "make a conscious decision to choose one approach over another. During any lesson, a lot of decisions must be made, frequently in a split second, so this is not an easy process" (Burridge, 2018, p. 4).

The study will be carried out during academic period II, 2025. Your participation will involve taking part in semi-structured interviews designed to explore the matter described above. These interviews will be conducted until data saturation is reached—a principle in qualitative research that is met when we, the researchers, using pre-set criteria, determine that new data becomes redundant and merely repeats what has already been expressed in previous interviews.

All information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Your identity will be protected using codes or pseudonyms, and your data will not be shared with third parties. We will also highly appreciate your collaboration in agreeing on a suitable schedule for the interviews.

Participation is voluntary, which means you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researchers at the following email addresses: vrmoran@unae.edu.ec, mmsilva3@unae.edu.ec

Consent

I**, _____,** declare that I have read and understood the information presented in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all of them have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researchers' Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C. Signed Consent Forms

Appendix B. Consent Form

Informed Consent Letter

Title of the research project: Exploring the Influences of Sociocultural Factors on Foreign EFL Teachers' Pedagogical Choices at an Ecuadorian University

Researchers: Veronica Moran, María Mercedes Silva

Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Universidad Nacional de Educación

Thesis Supervisor: Jorge Mauricio Villavicencio Reinoso

Dear Participant,

You are hereby invited to take part in this multiple case study, which aims to explore the sociocultural factors that foreign university teachers perceive as influencing their pedagogical choices in an Ecuadorian university.

In this research, *sociocultural factors* refer to the external environment in which the foreign teacher operates and are examined as a significant source of influence on their pedagogical decision-making (Almuhammadi, 2024).

Pedagogical choices refer specifically to a process where teachers must "make a conscious decision to choose one approach over another. During any lesson, a lot of decisions must be made, frequently in a split second, so this is not an easy process" (Burridge, 2018, p. 4).

The study will be carried out during academic period II, 2025. Your participation will involve taking part in semi-structured interviews designed to explore the matter described above. These interviews will be conducted until data saturation is reached—a principle in qualitative research that is met when we, the researchers, using pre-set criteria, determine that new data becomes redundant and merely repeats what has already been expressed in previous interviews.

All information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Your identity will be protected through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and the data will not be shared with third parties. We will also highly appreciate your collaboration in agreeing on a suitable schedule for the interviews.

Participation is voluntary, which means you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researchers at the following email address: vrmoran@unae.edu.ec, mmsilva3@unae.edu.ec

Consent

I, Omid Sahranavard Kalantar, declare that I have read and understood the information presented in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all of them have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: 29/09/2025

Researchers' Signature: _____

Date: _____

All information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Your identity will be protected through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and the data will not be shared with third parties. We will also highly appreciate your collaboration in agreeing on a suitable schedule for the interviews.

Participation is voluntary, which means you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researchers at the following email address: vrmoran@unae.edu.ec, mmsilva3@unae.edu.ec

Consent

I, Agnes Oroz, declare that I have read and understood the information presented in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all of them have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: 30.9.25

Researchers' Signature: _____

Date: _____

All information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Your identity will be protected through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and the data will not be shared with third parties. We will also highly appreciate your collaboration in agreeing on a suitable schedule for the interviews.

Participation is voluntary, which means you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

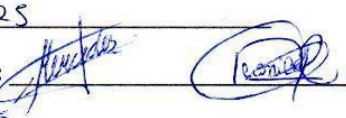
If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researchers at the following email address: vrmoran@unae.edu.ec, mmsilva3@unae.edu.ec

Consent

I, Janina Quito, declare that I have read and understood the information presented in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all of them have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

Participant's Signature: 

Date: 07/21/2025

Researchers' Signature: 

Date: 07/21/2025

Appendix D. Code of Ethics of the National University of Education (UNAE)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PojTblDFJVODlYPSXnTvo-pf7ABULUyf8WHrOuatgro/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix E. Code Book

Category	Definition	Interviewee	Excerpts	Code	Theme
Societal norms and values (Macro level)	Broad, overarching cultural, social, and historical forces of the host nation (Ecuador) that shape its educational paradigms. It includes deeply embedded societal values, historical traditions in education, and national policies and norms; also, it includes how the foreign countries	E	People are very kind, and smiley, and friendly, and thoughtful, and people are nice to you. I don't like that people are not punctual	Ecuadorian moral	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I would say, no, this is not spelled correctly, this grammar isn't correct, and I would enjoy doing that, so I thought I would. So I would enjoy being a teacher.	Background	Professional performance
			The background knowledge is limited	Background	Professional performance
			Punctuality, and I think that's still an issue. I'm always early	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I think Ecuadorian culture is much friendlier than my culture, and I really appreciate that. So I think everybody is, I think, less stressed and more kind	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I think that girls are especially shy. So it seems to me there is something in the Ecuadorian culture where parents make their girls shy.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I don't know if there is a difference between what parents do when they are raising boys and what parents do when they are raising girls that makes a difference to the self-confidence of boys and girls	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs

	(from which the teachers came) influence their teaching		And we told the groups, choose a leader for your group. All the groups chose the boy as their leader.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Cheating is a big thing. And that is cultural here. So, in the UK, students don't cheat. And there is more emphasis on learning and much less emphasis on grades.	Ethics	Values and fundamental beliefs
			The teacher caught me cheating. Oh, well, never mind. Next time, I'll be more careful. I will cheat in a different way. It's very much a part of the culture here.	Ethics	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I want to learn English, let's say. I don't understand my students who don't want to learn English.	Education	Professional and educational performance
			The values that are different are, I think, punctuality and academic dishonesty.	Ethics	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I tell my students that they have to be punctual. And they lose points if they're not punctual	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
		N	I feel like everything is cheaper, you know. And I like the fact that you can go to the beach on the weekend, and you can change the scenery. There's a lot more social stuff going on.	Socioeconomic conditions –	Ecuadorian system structure
			About the culture, I really like that there's always support. There's always someone that you can ask for help.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			It's not as easy to ask for help as it is here.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Or if you go to the I really, I don't know how to do this for the admin staff. Okay, don't worry. This is what you do	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Like, I know I don't like	Educational	Professional

			teaching little kids.	background	performance
			When I was in the language center, it was very, like, let's teach them what they need to know, and then students would be like, I just need to pass.	Educational background	Professional performance
			I learned this here, and now I'm using it in this context as well. Just because I feel like people need to see why you're learning these things	Educational background	Professional performance
			I think I've learned how to be more creative, and I think I've learned that being around or talking with other people is the only way that you're going to get something to work	Educational influences	Professional performance
			The thing is that we used to go around the bush. So, English is direct.	Educational background	Professional performance
			I don't like to say that I'm from Canada to the students, because I feel like sometimes they get scared. They get scared to speak. So if it comes up in conversation, then fine, but I never, ever start my first day of class, I never, ever say I'm from Canada, ever	Educational background	Origins influence
			Yeah, local traditions we talk about a lot in class, just because there's always a holiday for it	Custom	Values and fundamental beliefs
			In education, I value that the student continues working, right? Okay, you know what, you made a mistake, let's re-evaluate.	Educational background	Professional performance
			I think this thing with libertad de cátedra that we have here, at the university, at least, I can see how I want to evaluate you guys	Education	Professional performance
			Some people think that students should pass just	Equadorian moral	Values and fundamental

			because		beliefs
		A	I thought everyone was weird. Like, super strange. How? Because they did not speak to me.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			When I asked them questions, they were just looking at each other or just staring at their desk. There was no possibility for interaction. Like, zero possibility for interaction. And you guys actually were one of my first classes here at the university.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I said, hello. No response. Nothing. I said, hello again. No response.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Because the shyness is...	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			They said, yeah, sure, of course, and then we'll do it later, and then nothing happened. And then I asked again, yeah, later, and then nothing happened. Which brings us back to the issue of culture shock.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			More straightforward.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I never liked the environment that I was in, and I never liked the conservative culture that I was raised in.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			When I see a shy student, I actually think of my childhood when I was shy.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			When we talk about shyness, it's not only shyness, it's willingness to communicate, and shyness.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			When we talk about shyness, there are so many factors that affect it. The first one is genetic. The second one is the	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs

			environment. The third one is how you are raised in a family. All of these factors that I just mentioned are influenced quite heavily by the culture.		
			They control every aspect of my life, from what I should wear to what I should do in the house, what I should not do in the house, when I should talk, when I should not talk, to whom I should talk, and to whom I should not talk. Cultural beliefs dictate that you're not supposed to talk to your elders, you should talk whenever you are talked to, and when they ask you a question.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			He's had to ask permission for everything. If you have to ask permission for everything, then you think you're not good enough to make your own decisions.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Because if you're not confident enough to go out and explore, then you're better off staying home, being shy, to protect yourself.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			We have the genetic factors, we have temperament, which are the traits that you are born with, and then we have the personality traits, which are the traits that you acquire in the environment. So my DNA, I guess it was like being shy. My environment was making me shy.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I gained confidence. And that was the first step. And then, you know, there were a lot of other things that I think contributed to me not being	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs

			shy and basically coming out of my shyness.		
			This led me to do a lot of research. I learned about culture, for example, like what I just explained about shyness, culture, temperament, and personality traits	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			And because I studied English, I was introduced to a new culture, which was the American culture. So I quickly adopted that culture as my main way of thinking and my main way of being	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I was open to a new culture, to the American culture. I was able to adapt and let that new culture in. And it has had a profound effect on me as an English language teacher.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			You could consider me an American living in Ecuador, even though I'm not an American.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			The dominant culture in my country is the Islamic culture. And I hated it from the very beginning. And then I had the American culture that I endorsed. So, I consider myself more an American than a Persian.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I started researching, and now I understand that the Ecuadorian culture, that it has a lot of parallels with the culture that I was brought up in	Custom	Values and fundamental beliefs
		E 2	And so, that's great, because the students are very motivated. Here in the university, in this major, I don't find that all the time.	Educational background	Professional performance
			I would say sometimes it feels	Educational	Professional

			like 50% of my students don't want to be English teachers.	background	performance
			I have 50% of my students who should not be teachers.	Educational background	Professional performance
			In B1 English, again, I would expect them to be able to formulate a sentence and to be able to speak English. And still at B1, in my level 3 class, I have a lot of students who can't do that.	Educational background	Professional performance
			One minute. Came back in one minute. In that minute, they took a photograph of the exam and sent it to the whole group. So, again, some students got higher grades than they should have. And this happens every time. This happens every semester, every test, every time in every subject. That's hard because it's not part of my culture. It's really not part of my culture.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I like a lot of things about this culture because people are much more relaxed and flexible. So if I need to go and have breakfast, it's okay.	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Then I learned to smile more and relax a little bit. But I think some students still find me intimidating. I think there's nothing I can do about that, and actually, I don't mind because sometimes I want them to listen.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			A cultural difference here is that, for example, when people don't want to say no, they don't like to say no, so to us it sounds like lying. Because when I first arrived, I used to say to people I knew, are you coming to the party? And they were like, yeah,	Cultural background	Values and fundamental beliefs

			yeah, yeah, I'll see you there. And they never showed up. I was like, they lied to me. Why didn't they just say they're not coming?		
			Most of my students are religious, and I am an atheist. So sometimes that is interesting, because sometimes they will say things that they think are obvious, but it's not obvious to me	Religion	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Teachers here still see their role as being the authority figure	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I elicit the information from the students using examples. I use inductive grammar teaching, so there are always examples. The other things that my students do that I don't like are that they talk about the structure without an example	Educational background	Professional performance
			I like how I feel like I am friendly with some of my students. One year, we had a Christmas party at my house with a group of students with whom we had a very good rapport, but it only happened once.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I have a student who was accused of murder.	Law background	Institutional management
			It was a mess. There are students dealing with domestic violence. There are students dealing with sexual abuse. There are students with anxiety. There are students with panic attacks. There are a lot of serious students who don't have 10 cents to get on the bus sometimes.	Socioeconomic conditions	Ecuadorian system structure
			Ecuadorians are really good at	Customs	Values and

			that. Ecuadorians are really good at not freaking out. Europeans freak out. Like, if a European came to class and they had no classroom, or no projector, or no internet, and they planned their class that way, they wouldn't know what to do. They would just sit in a corner and cry.		fundamental beliefs
		N 2	In Canada, for example, there is a lot more autonomous work	Educational background	Professional performance
			The amount of hours that we have face-to-face, the amount of hours that you guys have to practice, blah, blah, blah. All of that stuff is something that I have to keep in mind when I'm planning,	Educational background	Professional performance
			Sometimes I've been told that I'm very direct. Or I'm too direct, and people don't... Not that they don't like it, but they take it differently than what I mean. You know, because if, let's say, you make a mistake, say, oh, hey, Vero, can you maybe be careful with that next time	Language use	Cultural categories
			I feel that a lot of students are like, I'm learning English because I want to leave Ecuador. I'm learning English because I don't want to do anything here in Ecuador again. You know, they see like, English is the door to the United States	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
		A 2	Every single person has a very high level of negative feelings, without exception	Ecuadorian moral	Values and fundamental beliefs
			And because students have a lot of negative emotions, they interpret your teaching, your method, your reactions, your	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs

			facial gestures, body language, what you do, what you say, in a negative way.		
			When you provide corrective feedback, they get offended. They feel embarrassed. They feel they're not good enough.	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			They interpret it negatively, and then they feel bad. They get nervous, anxious. They feel embarrassed.	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			They felt that they were not good enough to speak to a teacher.	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Before coming to Ecuador, I did not experience any type of sensitivity, any type of negative feelings, or negative emotions in my classes. Here, I experience it all the time.	Educational background	Professional and educational performance
			Generally speaking, in my country, you're supposed to get yourself educated. You're supposed to have some sort of education. Now, education can happen by going to a university, or it can happen by taking other classes, like professional classes.	Educational background	Professional and educational performance
			In my country, if you are going to a university, it is your responsibility to learn something at the university. Here, I feel everybody is pressured to, first of all, go to university, to graduate, and to get good grades	Educational background	Professional and educational performance
			But at the university, the expectations change. It is the responsibility of the person, of the student, to educate themselves. And when I say education, I don't mean getting good grades. I mean learning.	Educational background	Professional and educational performance
			In a context-sensitive way, by	Educational	Professional

			that I mean how to teach in this Ecuadorian context. In this context, you know, this major, here at the university. So, I have been giving a lot clearer instructions.	background	and educational performance
			As I said, I never felt this in my home country or in Turkey. I never felt this. I've taught all over the place in online classes. I've never felt this.	Educational background	Professional and educational performance
			Cheating, academic dishonesty. We have a lot of problems here, because basically, you cannot catch a student cheating, and there's a lot of tendency toward cheating.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			At the very bottom of the pyramid are the cultures, the customs, traditions, and the culture. And then, something called temperament. Temperaments are the traits you are born with. So, let's say you are born as a person. Let me explain temperaments first. Some people are born more sociable, and that's a fact. Some people are born more logical, like me. Some people are born timid, more hands-on, sensitive, like you.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			So you could be a little bit shy, you could be a lot shy, you could be a little bit sensitive. Anyway, temperaments, traditions, and customs affect that person's upbringing. Because, if it is considered, let's say, bad by the culture, by the people, to let the child experience, let the child go out, have friends, make mistakes, get hurt, then	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs

			you will overprotect that child to save him from getting hurt, because experiencing a lot of things, not experiencing social interactions, not making mistakes, not experiencing anxiety in the environment, outside home, deprives the child of being able to self-regulate		
			The culture leads the parents to be very strict, very protective, overprotective, and that will lead them to have a very strict child education, and then the child, even though was born as a logical person, will develop fear of making mistakes, fear of a lot of things, and will have difficulties self-regulating.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Well, you have to fix the culture. Yeah.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			But communication, yes. Because of what is commonly known as shyness.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
		E 3	So they would have to become more relaxed about punctuality because in our culture, that's very important, and it causes a lot of stress for teachers from cultures like mine to come here, and when everybody is late, it causes us a lot of stress and frustration	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Also, expect the unexpected all the time. Things go wrong all the time. Things change last minute	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Things are very flexible here	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			So things are very fluid and fluctuating here, so you have	Customs	Values and fundamental

			to be ready for anything.		beliefs
			They wouldn't know what to do. Whereas here in Ecuador, you just look for solutions.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I saw my father; I had never met him before. He left when I was a baby; he went to the United States because he needed money for our family.	Socioeconomic conditions	Ecuadorian system structure
			But this is a public university, so most of our students are from public schools. So there are a lot of things about their lives that are difficult.	Socioeconomic conditions	Ecuadorian system structure
			I think I'm more understanding	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			The students here do have serious issues. And a lot of them don't have any money.	Socioeconomic conditions	Ecuadorian system structure
		N 3	They have to look at the culture before coming and make sure that they know what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, especially with the way that you speak to authorities, with the way that you speak to parents in Spanish	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			I would like to think that it helps, giving students a different view of how things are. I don't know because sometimes I hear here as if you make a mistake, it's bad	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Learning how to speak to people or how to get things done, as well as how to ask for things	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
		A 3	Where I come from, people are less emotional than here	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Being emotional can be both good and bad. Because if you have positive emotions, you experience positive emotions	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs

			more intensely. But also, if you have negative emotions, the negative emotions are experienced more intensely as well		
			Read a lot about culture and personality	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Foreigners who come to Ecuador are going to enter an alien world. Okay? Everything is going to be different.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Read as much as you can about cultural dimensions. There's a theory, there are various theories about cultural dimensions and how cultures are different from each other.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			In terms of positives, I come here with a higher proficiency level compared to the average Ecuadorian. I'm not saying like I'm better than all Ecuadorians, no	Educational background	Professional performance
			I also bring my knowledge that I have acquired throughout the years through reading and studying in different contexts.	Educational background	Professional performance
			Negatively, I have come to the realization that foreigners, as foreign teachers, are considered authorities by the Ecuadorian students.	Ecuadorian moral - Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			You feel more comfortable when you are taught by an Ecuadorian English teacher. Because there is less authority. Not that there is no authority. There is less authority. We are talking about an Ecuadorian teacher being here, a foreign teacher being here. There is still anxiety, but the anxiety will	Customs	Professional and educational performance

			be more when you have a foreign teacher.		
			We have a certain class of people who take classes at CEDEI. They're usually rich. They have good socioeconomic levels. And the more money you have, the more situations you are exposed to, therefore, the more interaction you've had, therefore, the less anxiety you experience.	Socioeconomic conditions	Ecuadorian system structure
			It led me to read a lot about culture, personality, psychology, and these are the things that I like to read about. So, in a sense, I can say I myself have grown by as much as 20 years in the span of 6 years that I've been here.	Customs	Values and fundamental beliefs
			Body language is very important. Facial gestures, how you react to the students speaking, is very important to them because they are very sensitive. So, recently I've been trying to show positive reactions in my classes.	Educational pedagogics	Professional performance

Category	Definition	Interviewee	Excerpts	Code	Theme
Institutional environment (Meso level)	Specific organizational culture and structure of the university, and how the professors can fit into the,m and also how they vary from the institutional	N	I always wanted to come to the major. But at the university where I was working, it was impossible.	Educational management	Institutional structure
			Because at the university where I was working, they were going to lower our salaries, and they were going to do it a	Educational management	Institutional structure

	context in their own country.		lot. So I didn't like that.		
			I started online, and what I really liked is it was super efficient. Like, I think my first meeting was half an hour, and that was it.	Pedagogical model	Institutional planning
			But here it was efficient. It was concrete. This is what I need	Pedagogical model	Institutional planning
			I think, like I said, like this whole trajectory of coming here and then seeing how other teachers do things, talking with teachers, and everyone here is very creative.	Teachers´ relations with each other	Human Resources
		A	At the University of the near city, they didn't pay me for about 6 months or so. And then at UDL, when I was there, they didn't need a lot of English teachers. So, I taught there for like 2 months, and then they discontinued with me. And I never had a contract. But this university offered me a contract.	Educational management	Institutional structure
			If you're working under Servicios Profesionales,	Educational management	Institutional structure

			there's no opportunity for advancement.		
			I started teaching online, basically, I would say, 14 hours a day to be able to make a living for about 1 year or so.	Pedagogical model	Institutional planning
			So, here was a nice experience, actually, compared to other experiences, my previous experiences. When I arrived here, at the time, Marcos was the director of the major, so he actually matched me with teacher María, and she basically taught me everything.	Teachers´ relations with each other	Human Resources
			Everything else with the colleagues was excellent	Teachers´ relations with each other	Human Resources
			I normally have classes in the afternoon. When I have class, I come here, I go to my class, and after my class, I go home. And this is a problem for everybody. So, it has nothing to do with the culture; it has nothing to do with individual differences. We	Pedagogical model - Teachers´ relations with each other	Institutional planning - Human Resources

			don't see each other, and we don't have the chance to socialize.		
			Because again, here I have a contract, I have sick days, I have vacation days, my teaching hours are only a maximum of four hours a day. And then in the rest of the day, I have the time to do research. So I had the opportunity here	Educational management	Institutional structure
		E 2	In the UK, it is not possible to teach at a university if you don't have a PhD. So, for me, it would not be possible to teach in a university because I do not have a PhD. So, that's nice, that I can teach at a university, because in the UK, I can only teach students up until age 18. So, I actually prefer teaching adults	Regulations	Institutional structure
			Expectations are much lower here, much lower, both in schools and in universities. So, in	Institutional context	Institutional management

			the UK, at all levels, there is a very high expectation for students to intellectually perform at a very high level		
			I am surprised at the level of discourse, the cognitive, intellectual level of some of the students at the university.	Pedagogical model	Institutional planning
			That means to me that they didn't have science class at school, or they don't understand science.	Knowledge level	Institutional management
			I think I always need to have a plan B in my head, because you never know what's going to happen. Like, the other day I came to class. My classroom was really dusty because they were fixing something, and they hadn't finished fixing it, so I didn't have a classroom. I needed to change a classroom. Sometimes I get to work, but I don't have a projector because	Infrastructure	Physical Resources

			the projector is suddenly gone. Or it doesn't work, or we don't have electricity, or the computer doesn't work, or we don't have internet.		
		N 2	Well, in this major, we work together based on the level. So, for example, I'm in English four right now. I'm working with Moni, I'm working with Caro	Teachers´ relations with each other	Human Resources
			Some of them. I mean, the ones that are from the Dirección de esta carrera, esas sí me han ayudado. But hay otros que no. Because they haven't asked us what we need	Teachers´ relations with each other	Human Resources
		A 2	We have a lot of holidays here, and there are a lot of days that are not holidays, but then they get announced as holidays by the government, and then we have the same thing by the university.	Institutional context	Institutional management
			And then the use of AI. Basically, we cannot prove that the person used AI in their essay, for	Educational management	Institutional structure

			example, or in their article, even though we're sure that the person used AI.		
			Legally speaking, at least according to the laws and regulations of Ecuador, you cannot prove, no matter how accurate that platform is, that the person used AI.	Educational management	Institutional structure
			So in terms of teaching, well, we don't teach collaboratively, so I don't think that can happen. We have talked about our expectations, our goals, what should happen, generally speaking, in the class, very loosely, basically	Teachers´ relations	Human Resources
			I've also collaborated with my colleagues in doing research.	Teachers´ relations	Human Resources
			My expectations are very high, and they all come easily to me. I mean, it's something that looks very obvious to me and clear. It does not look the same to other people. They don't see it.	Performance	Institutional structure

			yeah. And I want to publish at the highest level possible. They don't feel confident to do so.		
			Absolutely Teachers here at the university are the best	Educational management	Institutional structure
			When you say the best, that's an all-encompassing word. It covers everything in terms of sympathy, in terms of teaching method, in terms of the activities they use, in terms of interactiveness, everything. They're really good.	Pedagogical model	Institutional planning
			I have learned because they are really good I have learned a lot of things from them, and I have been told that they have learned a lot of things from me as well.	Teachers´ relations	Human Resources
			Yes, we have to go to that building to the auditorium and listen to people rant about meaningless things for hours. These people, they are teachers as well.	Performance	Institutional structure
			Last semester,	Pedagogical	Institutional

			teacher Anne organized a workshop on how to improve students' motivation.	model	planning
			Absolutely second in broader terms. Here in Ecuador, whichever is the part you can think about, so In Ecuador, I don't think I have received any type of support basically	Institutional context	Institutional management
		E 3	Imagine a child in Ecuador trying to learn English who misses 50% of their English classes. And imagine another child in Denmark, Switzerland, or Germany trying to learn English who always has 100% of their English classes.	Institutional context	Institutional management
			If you only teach 20 minutes out of a 40-minute lesson because you're late, because the teacher is late, because the projector doesn't work, because we have to move rooms, because blah, then the students are going to learn less	Infrastructure	Physical Resources

			English, and it has a consequence.		
			If they are trained in England, for example, if they come here straight away, they will be shocked by some things that they have to deal with	Institutional context	Institutional management
			In Ecuador, in this situation here at the university, where many students are from public schools, not everything in the textbook is relevant for the students.	Educational context	Institutional management
		N 3	That would be the biggest one and like learning how to talk to people how to talk to parents especially because you can't be direct no you can't be direct	Institutional context	Institutional management
			I've learned a lot from my co-workers because we all have different levels of experience and we all have different focusses different things that we like to do, so I really, really appreciate the uniqueness of the team	Teachers´ relations	Human Resources
			Those were new because we don't have those, so I think appreciating	Institutional context	Institutional management

			the culture and seeing, like, oh this is new for me, and showing that appreciation for this culture also helps because you know, typically you hear students saying like, oh it's solo Ecuador, I'm like no, but it's so cool we have all of this stuff		
			sure because learning from other people, learning from other teachers, ok, let's try this, let's try this, and I can see what works for me.	Teachers´ relations	Human Resources

Category	Definition	Interviewee	Excerpts	Code	Theme
Interpersonal dynamics (Micro level)	Direct and immediate influences within the classroom	E	Teaching how to teach, and at this university, I can teach how to teach English.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I don't like teaching younger children. That's very difficult.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			Students must be active and interactive, and the lessons have to be fun, and that's my philosophy since then.	Students´ communication	Classroom communication
			Bringing good energy, having a good rapport with the students, and having participative activities. Sometimes my students are very shy, and they don't want to participate too much.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			So it's difficult, because I	Teaching	Learning -

			also teach didactics, and the person who is at the front of the class should be confident, should be smiling, should be happy, should be energetic, but they are not. They are dying inside because it's so uncomfortable for them	practices	teaching model
			I'm always learning from those experiences.	Teachers' responsiveness	Learning - teaching model
			If there is a situation where there are some students who already know the correct answers, I would give them some extra work to do, or I would give them something to do, differentiate, instead of going through the answers with everybody	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I think the main challenge is that students are shy. They don't participate as much. And also, they don't know very much about the world in general.	Students´ communication	Classroom communication
			I use popsicle sticks to make sure that students participate. I try to be friendly and smiley.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I'm always in my classroom 10 or 15 minutes before the class starts.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
		N	You practice. You can be more independent.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			Especially this with the independence. It's not that easy.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I'm telling you something important. You should pay attention now.	Students´ communication	Classroom communication
			Their grades are too low at this point. But I can say, you know what? You're not	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model

			going to pass. Because if I said it, they'd be like, oh. But I have to find a way to say, like, you know, what we would like is for you to have a 3.5, but you have a lower grade, so I need you to do this, this, and this, and you can try, or these are your options, mathematically		
			I think setting the boundaries at the beginning is key. Because I always tell them, like, look, we're going to be here every day for two hours a day. And if I'm just the one talking, you're going to be really bored. Okay, you're going to be really bored, and my throat's going to hurt, so we can't do that. And I have another class that's three hours. It's Intro to Research.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			So, to have an outstanding grade is because you did more than what I asked you to do. Right? So if you only do what I asked you to do, then yeah, a 7, an 8, right?	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
		A	They were all adults who wanted to immigrate to Canada. So, they were quite motivated. They were, like I said, adults. They were not shy because they were from the coast.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			Of course, I make everything practical	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			There is nothing for the students to interact with. It's not practical. So I saw this gap, and I decided to take the steps and write the book, because it didn't exist. Principles of Language	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model

			Acquisition. It's a book about applied linguistics.		
			Research. When I teach research, I teach it in a quite practical way.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			If I'm talking about a questionnaire, how to construct a questionnaire, I explain it. They do an activity in the class. They make a mini-questionnaire in the class, so that I can see it, see their work, provide feedback, and then, as their project, as their homework, they have to come up with the whole questionnaire	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			They also, they always follow instructions. They don't disturb the class. They don't make noise. They don't ask questions. They just want to memorize, pass the exam, and get it over with.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			I always try to get them out of their comfort zone, break that frame that they have created for themselves to operate and live in.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			A lot of tolerating, a lot of coping, and a lot of research. So, at first, it was just tolerating and coping.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			If you want participation in Ecuador, it has to be tied to a grade.	Communicati on	Sociocultural approach
			Student-friendlier.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			So, we're talking about personal values forming the identity of the teacher, and then that identity, that teacher teaching in the class.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			My personal values are all about participation,	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching

			openness, exploring, researching, welcoming new ideas, and breaking the law. Not, like, being a criminal. Like, breaking the regulations, the social norms.		model
			You have to operate outside the fixed framework of your mind, and you have to try new things and explore	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			The English curriculum that is used in public schools in Ecuador. I'm talking about high school. It all talks about flipped learning, critical thinking, communicative language teaching, and the use of technology. Right? So, it's all about exploring. It's all about problem-solving and critical thinking. Here, the curriculum of the university	Competences	Learning – teaching model
		E 2	They listen; they pay attention.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			The other day, I gave 10 out of 10 for a demo to María Paula. I don't know if you were there. Yes. But she did an amazing job. She did everything she was supposed to. Erica and Ricky, who usually don't pay attention, did an awesome demo yesterday. They did awesome. They knew everything.	Teachers' responsiveness	Learning - teaching model
			I feel like sometimes if the students put in the effort, then my methodology works	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			We have one colleague, Katy Chicaiza. She has amazing energy. Amazing energy. She comes in, and	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model

			she just gives love to her students. She loves her students all the time. I learned from that. I learned from that. I can be a little bit more smiley. A little bit more affectionate		
		N 2	But the private school, that was with adults. So that connects a lot, a lot with what I'm doing here because now we're working with adults, right, all the time.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			If you come to class, bien. Si no, no pasa nada. We didn't use to take attendance, ever. So it was a lot more like, it's up to you.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			Maybe we're talking about ethics or something, I will take something that is ethical, that people are more comfortable talking about in class.	Norms	Classroom interaction
			Because, you know, puede que haya un majadero por ahí, but you have to figure out how to talk to each student. Because I can't talk to you the same way I talk to another student.	Norms	Classroom interaction
			Because there have been times when I have to tell students, stop it right now. And there are other times when I say, you know, like, would you mind for next class not doing that anymore	Norms	Classroom interaction
			This semester, we had to do, we had a unit on rules and regulations. Okay. And so we had students teach traditional Ecuadorian games in English. And that class, they had so much fun. They had so much fun. We	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model

			were outside, they were laughing, they were using English, but they were happy		
		A 2	Where I come from, I just ask people to talk about a topic in my English class. Like, talk about, I don't know, this topic. And then they start talking. Here, if I just say, talk about this topic. They don't know what to do. It takes them like 15 minutes just to figure out what to do and what to talk about.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			Clear instructions. So I explain the task, I say what the expectations are, what they should do, and what the end goal is	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			If they don't have that information, they get nervous, they get anxious, they get confused, they don't know what to do, they get lost. They talk to their partners in that group; they try to figure it out.	Limitations	Learning - teaching model
			I don't plan my classes rigidly. I have a concept of a plan, like a structure, and then I follow the structure, and then in the class, I adapt. So that has not affected my teaching.	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I believe it's shyness coupled with a lot of other things. But my students basically don't want to talk to me.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			I can see my students running away from me just not to say hello.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			Our students don't like to read in general, and that tendency gets even more	Attitudes, belief,s and practices	Classroom interaction

			negative when they read academic texts		
			They don't like to read, and because of that, I have had to basically change my methods	Teachers' responsiveness	Learning - teaching model
		E 3	hopefully the fact that I am a native speaker helps the students with their pronunciation, and I can give them a little bit of my perspective about things	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
		N 3	I hope that I can help them to reflect on what they're doing and be more autonomous	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			Think I would be seen maybe more as a softer teacher, as you know, I feel like here I've worked on a lot of building my rapport with students and stuff	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
			I feel like just telling students like hey you know what I learned Spanish I still make mistakes in Spanish, and that's okay so I think that helps them feel more comfortable, or you know, if someone makes a mistake	Teaching practices	Learning - teaching model
		A 3	You have to make sure your class respects all styles and all types of personality.	Attitudes, beliefs, and practices	Classroom interaction
			The student listens and does not talk. The student does not express their opinion. When the teacher asks a question, the student is less likely to answer that question in the classroom	Students´ communication	Classroom communication

Source: Self – elaboration