

# UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

# "EXPLORING CONNECTIVISM IN TEACHING ENGLISH CONTENT SUBJECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS"

#### RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

# BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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#### **Advisor's Approval**

In my role as Advisor of the research paper under the title "EXPLORING CONNECTIVISM IN TEACHING ENGLISH CONTENT SUBJECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS" prepared by MALAVE TOMALA XIMENA ANDREA and ROSALES BONE DARIAN DESIRETH undergraduate students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career, Faculty of Educational Science and Language at Peninsula of Santa Elena State University, I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

## Sincerely,



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#### **Declaration**

The information and content in this degree and research work are the responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena.

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-Ximena Andrea Malave Tomala

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-Darian Desireth Rosales Bone

#### **Dedication**

I dedicate this project to my family who has inspired me to achieve my goals all these years, and especially to my uncle Vicente Tomalá, whose wisdom continues to encourage me.

-Ximena Andrea Malave Tomala

#### **Dedication II**

I dedicate this work to my beloved family and friends whose sacrifices have been the reason for my perseverance. This project is a reflection of all the encouragement they have provided me.

-Darian Desireth Rosales Bone

Abstract

The present research aims to identify the Connectivism learning theory to explore ways

of teaching English content subjects on high school students. The qualitative method

was utilized through one-on-one interviews to gather the necessary information from the

perceptions of six teachers on how connectivism works to teach various contents related

to other subjects merging them with the English language. The findings of this research

revealed that the practices of this theory are currently presented as a viable alternative

for English teachers due to its innovative approach that tends to create a critical

character in young students and foster collaboration among them through technology.

Therefore, the mode in which educators utilize digital tools will depend on the skill they

will focus on. This research will contribute essential information to educators who seek

to broaden the basis of this theory to teach different contents in the target language from

an avant-garde perspective.

**KEY WORDS:** Connectivism, technology, teaching, high school students, qualitative

research

#### Resumen

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo identificar la teoría de aprendizaje del conectivismo para explorar maneras de enseñar contenidos de materias en Inglés a estudiantes de colegio. Se utilizó el método cualitativo a través de entrevistas uno a uno para recopilar la información necesaria de las percepciones de seis profesores sobre como el conectivismo funciona para enseñar diversos contenidos relacionados a otras materias fusionándolos con el idioma inglés. Los resultados de esta investigación revelaron que actualmente las prácticas de esta teoría se presentan como una alternativa viable para los docentes de inglés debido a su enfoque innovador que tiende a crear un carácter crítico en los estudiantes jóvenes y promover la colaboración entre ellos a través de la tecnología. Por lo consiguiente, la manera en que los educadores utilizan las herramientas digitales dependerá de la habilidad en la que se estarían enfocando. Esta investigación proporcionará información esencial a los educadores que buscan ampliar las bases de esta teoría para enseñar diversos contenidos en el idioma desde una perspectiva vanguardista.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Conectivismo, tecnología, enseñanza, estudiantes de colegio, investigación cualitativa

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#### Introduction

The constant growth of the educational landscape complemented by technology has transformed how information is accessed and utilized. This leads to reconsidering how the English language is taught, specifically, when it is necessary for a broad context to acquire the main skills. Connectivism is based on an interactive approach during the learning process, contrasting the nature of using traditional textbooks, where the presented contents are limited.

The present research arises from the demand for innovative pedagogical strategies since regular teaching methods tend to be impractical in instructional forms of teaching the English language and fail to include digital resources as a main option. Furthermore, high school students constantly use different networks to connect with people and use them for their academic development as well.

In a qualitative methodology, this research will obtain perceptions or experiences from English teachers through interviews that permit a proper understanding of this theory in real-time learning environments. It will identify which patterns highlight the effectiveness and challenges of the principles of this theory.

Through exploring connectivism as a learning theory, this project seeks to identify how its practices could be an engaging alternative for teachers to review content in English at a high school level forming a concept of this theory in a bilingual environment and reflecting how beneficial its principles are in teaching English.

#### Chapter I

#### The Problem

#### 1.1 Research Topic

Strategies and English content subjects

#### 1.2 Title

Exploring Connectivism in Teaching English Content Subjects on High School Students.

#### 1.3 Problem Statement

Nowadays, English language teaching is widely significant in any part of the world since it allows young people to find professional development and growth opportunities. Therefore, second language learning is fundamental for the development of globalization and has great relevance in educational, cultural, economic, and political fields (Espinar, 2021). In the educational aspect, it is necessary the innovation of teaching methods to enhance the acquisition of knowledge of English as a foreign language.

High school students are deprived of the opportunity to engage deeply with the material and develop essential critical thinking skills due to several factors inherent in traditional teaching methods and the limitations of poorly translated or interpreted textbooks which fail to stimulate students' curiosity or encourage them to question and analyze the material critically (Girsang et al.,2023)

Currently, Ecuador is ranked 80<sup>th</sup> out of 113 countries about English proficiency which makes the country a place with a low level of English language proficiency, although it has improved over time. Therefore, Ecuador ranks 18<sup>th</sup> out of 20 countries in Latin America (Education First, 2023). These challenges are related to the lack of

innovative approaches to teaching English which is important to overcome not only for providing high-quality education but also to adapt the society in this country to the advancement of technological tools in education teaching English.

The integration of English language knowledge within the boundaries of topic subjects still needs to be developed in the contemporary education system. Most educational organizations struggle to provide a meaningful approach through the usage of traditional textbooks. Despite the trend of translating or interpreting the materials into English, many institutions share a limitation of failing to introduce an optimized experience in associated areas such as mathematics, social sciences, chemistry, and others, which hinders students' understanding, retention, and participation; moreover, traditional teaching methods may overlook the integration of digital resources and fail to foster critical thinking, collaboration, and other essential skills needed for success in the digital age.

The contrast in familiarity with technological advancements and tools and the lack of systematic training initiatives increases this problem. In many educational institutions, educators may continue to focus on rote memorization and textbook-based instruction (Sevy-Biloon et al., 2020). Instead of adopting the dynamic and interactive learning environments facilitated by this approach which evidences a gap between its potential benefits and the ability of educators to utilize it optimally.

This research aims to investigate the complex interactions between topic subjects and English language training to contemplate the incorporation of connectivism as a guiding pedagogical paradigm. As a modern theory of learning, it emphasizes the importance of networks and connections in the learning process in addition to recognizing the interdependence of information.

#### **1.4 Problem Question**

#### 1.4.1. General Question

 How can the Connectivism theory be a proper option for teaching English content subjects at a high school level?

#### 1.4.2 Specific Questions

- How does the Connectivism theory optimize teaching English content subjects?
- In what ways does the Connectivism theory enhance the integration of digital resources in teaching English literature or any other English content subjects?
- How does the Connectivism theory foster collaborative learning among students in digital environments for English content subjects?

#### 1.5 Objectives

### 1.5.1. General Objective

To identify the Connectivism learning theory to explore ways of teaching
 English content subjects at the high school level.

#### 1.5.2. Specific Objectives

- To explore the basis of Connectivism learning theory and understand its operativity.
- To conceptualize the connectivism theory for teaching English content subjects in bilingual high schools.
- To reflect on the benefits of using this approach to ease English content subject teaching.

#### 1.6 Justification

This research describes how connectivism theory influences the development of teaching English content subjects among students in high school which holds a significant capacity for enhancing educational outcomes. By examining the principles of connectivism within the specific context of digital environments, educators can unlock a multitude of benefits.

Learning English in bilingual high schools is a process complemented by learning different subjects such as math, social studies, and natural sciences while students practice the target language. Considering how the material is presented and concepts are explained can significantly influence student comprehension and engagement with the subject matter. This allows students to develop essential language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Firstly, recognizing connectivism in digital environments empowers educators to influence the massive resources available online to enrich their teaching materials and approaches. Through digital content, interactive platforms, and collaborative tools, teachers can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Furthermore, connectivism approaches emphasize the importance of fostering connections and networks among learners. In digital environments, this translates to facilitating online communities, discussion forums, and collaborative projects where students can actively participate, share ideas, and learn from one another (Alam, 2023). Such collaborative learning experiences not only deepen students' understanding of English content subjects but also cultivate essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and teamwork.

It is essential to develop the motivation of teenage students in a foreign language to make it easier for them to understand the topics covered in the different units. To try

to achieve this, educators should adopt innovative teaching methods with a clear purpose of teaching. Different strategies can transform language learning into an interactive and meaningful experience such as project-based learning or gamification. Educators should have the initiative to create learning environments in which students can develop their interests and learning styles by integrating factors such as technology, authentic materials, and peer collaboration (Doston, 2020). Integrating language, content, and technology can unleash advantages in the teaching and learning process and enhance student communicative skills.

Moreover, by integrating connectivism into teaching practices, educators can promote lasting learning skills essential for success in the digital age. Likewise, students learn to navigate and evaluate information in digital spaces, develop digital literacy skills, and adapt to new technologies and learning environments. These skills help prepare students for future academic pursuits, careers, and constant learning efforts.

Additionally, incorporating connectivism in digital environments can foster a sense of empowerment and ownership of learning among students. By providing opportunities for self-directed exploration, inquiry-based learning, and personalized pathways, educators can provide to individual interests and learning paces, promoting intrinsic motivation and a deeper engagement with English content subjects.

Overall, the investigation into connectivism in teaching English content subjects to high school students within digital environments promises to revolutionize educational practices and elevate student learning experiences. By harnessing the power of digital technologies and networked learning, educators can create dynamic, inclusive, and transformative learning environments that prepare students for success in the digital age and beyond (Utecht & Keller, 2019).

#### **Chapter II**

#### Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1 Background

Originally, as an idea but not as a theory, connectivism and networked learning first emerged in the 1970s when Ivan Illich introduced his ideas about "deschooling" education and encouraged a movement towards socialized learning opportunities centered on the student (Peña, 2022). Siemens (2004) presents a theory of learning that diverges from traditional models by asserting the inherently chaotic nature of the learning process. Central to this theory is the emphasis on the significance of connections, both between learners and between learners and information sources.

The concept of connectivism describes the nexus between human learning and the ubiquitous access to knowledge enabled by the current technological environment (Corbett and Spinello, 2020). In connectivism, knowledge is not solely contained within individuals but is distributed across networks of connections, including digital platforms, social interactions, and informational resources.

According to Siemens (2007), connectivism is the integration of principles explored by chaos theory, networks, complexity, and self-organization theories. Connectivism offers a contemporary perspective on learning that aligns with the dynamic nature of information and communication in the digital age, challenging traditional notions of education and knowledge acquisition.

Guerrero (2022) asserts that connectivism is a real trend proposed as the obligatory path toward the quality of educational processes, our school system still faces many difficulties from the point of view of technological access, as well as regarding the infrastructure and pedagogical processes required for the implementation of these

models. Since the pandemic, there have been significant advancements in infrastructure, nevertheless, the efforts are not good enough to run these learning theories.

#### 2.2 Pedagogical Basis

In the field of instructional design, there are three prominent learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism, which serve as foundational frameworks for understanding how individuals acquire knowledge and skills within educational settings.

#### Behaviorism

Graham (2023) states that behaviorism believes in studying behavior scientifically. It concentrates on observing the actions of individual organisms, like people and animals, rather than looking at social groups or cultures. Behaviorism emphasizes observable behaviors and the influence of environmental stimuli on learning outcomes, advocating for structured repetition and reinforcement mechanisms.

#### Cognitivism

Cognitivism shifts the focus on the internal processes of the mind, delving into how learners perceive, organize, and encode information. Cognitivism involves internal processes of the mind, focusing on how learners perceive, organize, and process information through cognitive mechanisms and organs like attention and sight (Michela, 2020). Drawing from cognitive psychology, this theory highlights the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through processes like attention, memory, and problem-solving and the teacher's adaptation to learning approaches.

#### Constructivism

Constructivism, on the other hand, underscores the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through social interaction and engagement with their

environment, promoting autonomy and collaborative learning experiences. Shah (2019) highlights that constructivism is a useful way to understand how knowledge is made and how students learn. It suggests that learners are actively involved in building their understanding through interactions with others and their environment, which encourages independence and working together.

While behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism have significantly influenced instructional design practices, contemporary discourse in education has expanded to encompass newer perspectives such as connectivism.

#### Connectivism

Connectivism, proposed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes, acknowledges the transformative impact of digital technologies on the way we access, share, and create knowledge. Connectivism presents a model of learning that acknowledges the tectonics shift in society where learning is no longer an internal, individualistic activity. (Siemens, 2004). In the digital age, learners no longer rely solely on traditional sources of information but instead navigate complex networks of online resources, communities, and social media platforms to construct their understanding of the world.

Reflecting on connectivism, it challenges traditional notions of learning as an independent interest, instead embracing the interconnected nature of knowledge in the digital era. As educators handle the implications of this paradigm shift, they must reconsider their roles as facilitators of learning within expansive digital networks.

#### 2.3 Theoretical Basis

#### **English Language**

The immense importance of English as an international language cannot be emphasized enough, especially in regions where it is considered foreign. Hermida (2019) advocates for the early introduction of English to children. English serves as a vital tool for communication, bridging gaps between languages and fostering understanding across cultures.

Moreover, proficiency in English opens up avenues for economic opportunities, education, and access to a wealth of online resources. It is the language of choice in fields such as science, business, diplomacy, and global relations, facilitating international trade and collaboration. Beyond its practical benefits, English also holds significant cultural value, granting access to literature, cinema, and the arts from English-speaking societies, thereby enriching cultural diversity.

#### English as a foreign language teaching

English as a foreign language plays a vital role in today's connected world.

Beyond mere communication, proficiency in English opens doors to a plethora of opportunities, both academically and professionally. In academic settings, English serves as the lingua franca for research, enabling scholars to access knowledge and collaborate with peers worldwide. Sadoughi and Hejazi (2022) agree, saying teachers help students grow in many ways. In language classes, teachers are crucial. They create a friendly environment that helps students learn better. Teachers help students become more skilled in the language.

Similarly, in the professional sphere, English proficiency is often a prerequisite for career advancement, especially in multinational companies and industries with global reach. Moreover, English proficiency facilitates cultural exchange, allowing individuals to immerse themselves in diverse cultures and appreciate different perspectives through literature, media, and interactions with people from around the globe.

#### **Information And Communication Technologies (ICT)**

In essence, ICTs represent not just a collection of tools, but a method for societal transformation, shaping how we learn, communicate, and interact in the new age.

According to Poudel (2022), ICTs, or Information and Communication Technologies, constitute a diverse range of modern tools shaped for the storage, manipulation, and transmission of information or other interests.

Going from tangible hardware like laptops, smartphones, and projectors to intangible software applications such as email, Skype, Facebook, and YouTube, these innovations collectively form the backbone of our digital age. Their integration into various sides of society, specifically in education and communication, has indicated a new era of accessibility and efficiency.

In classrooms, ICTs facilitate interactive learning experiences, enabling students to engage with course material in dynamic ways. Similarly, in the branch of information spreading, these tools have developed how knowledge is shared, allowing communication and global connectivity. They empower individuals to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and participate in online communities regardless of their location or background.

Despite these great pros and benefits, the Ecuadorian educational system does not have the proper structure to provide internet service to schools due to different political and budget issues, which makes it difficult to use it and offer quality education for the population.

#### **English Skills and Subskills**

Parupalli (2019) describes the difference between passive and active language skills, emphasizing that listening and reading are passive or receptive skills because

they involve absorbing information without the need for direct language production. On the other hand, speaking and writing are categorized as active or productive skills, demanding learners to actively generate language. Moreover, this active engagement necessitates extensive practice and learning across various linguistic elements such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction, and linguistic approaches. Therefore, while passive skills facilitate comprehension and understanding, active skills enable learners to effectively convey their thoughts and ideas, underscoring the essential balance between receptive and productive language abilities in language acquisition.

#### Bilingualism

Cambridge University Press (2020) states the context of bilingualism in schools, diverse approaches are implemented to serve the needs of learners in different settings. This also includes educating young learners in English within non-English speaking countries, particularly in international schools where students may already possess proficiency in two languages. Furthermore, several curricular subjects are taught in English, emphasizing bilingual education across various academic areas. These initiatives aim to provide comprehensive language instruction and support to students in bilingual environments.

#### **Teaching methods for English content subjects**

Teaching English content subjects holds importance for numerous reasons.

English provides students with an important international communication tool, enabling them to exchange information, advanced scientific and technical knowledge, and explore cultures, in that way of leading to intercultural understanding and promoting a sense of global citizenship, contributing to the development of personal qualities and competencies (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018)

According to Cambridge University Press (2020), these initiatives are driven by different groups, including governments at national and regional levels, school leaders, teachers, and parents. While any primary school subject can be chosen for teaching, common subjects typically include science, geography, math, computer science, art, and physical education. Furthermore, teaching English content subjects helps students develop language skills in context, making learning more relevant and engaging. It also promotes critical thinking and analytical skills as students engage with complex texts and ideas in English.

#### **English as a medium of instruction (EMI)**

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is a teaching approach where English is used as the primary language for delivering academic content in educational institutions where it is not the native or primary language. In EMI settings, subjects such as math, science, history, and others are taught in English rather than the student's first language. EMI has been defined as 'the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English' (Dearden, 2014; Cambridge University Press 2020).

#### Connectivism

Using information from Estrada the author analyzed the properties such as how learning occurs, influencing factors, the role of memory, how transfer occurs and the adaption of learning approaches, also it extracted the posture of connectivism for every learning mainstream.

**Table 1**Evaluation of properties and the connectivism basis of operation

Property	Connectivism  Distributed within a technological network that improves	
<b>How Learning Occurs</b>		
	recognizing patterns and interpretations.	
Influencing Factors	Diversity of the network, strength of the connections.	
Role of Memory	Adaptive patterns representative of current statistics are	
	present in the network.	
<b>How Transfer Occurs</b>	Connecting to add nodes.	
Types of Learning	Complex learning, rapidly changing core, diverse sources	
Mostly Explained	of knowledge.	

Note: (Estrada, 2018)

#### **Principles of Connectivism**

Analyzing connectivism principles provides insights into their applicability in classrooms. It advocates for student-centered, inquiry-based approaches that foster collaboration and critical thinking. Educators play a facilitative role, guiding students in navigating diverse information networks and developing lifelong learning skills.

Embracing connectivism principles prepares students for success in an interconnected world by empowering them to construct knowledge through active engagement with digital resources and peers.

#### Siemens' Eight Principles of the Connectivism Learning Theory:

- 1. Learning and knowledge rest in diversity of opinions.
- 2. Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.
- 3. Learning may reside in non-human appliances.

- 4. The capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
- 5. Nurturing and maintaining connections are needed to facilitate continual learning.
- 6. Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
- 7. Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivism learning activities.
- 8. Decision-making is itself a learning process.

Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision (Utecht & Keller, 2019).

#### **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

Corbett and Spinello (2020) connectivism is most evident in distance education or online education, through the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Invented by Siemens and Downes in 2007, MOOCs were designed to gather a large community of learners and facilitate connectivity for learning purposes, effectively implementing connectivism principles. Since then, various MOOC designs and outcomes have further illustrated and confirmed the key principles of connectivism.

Connectedness: Encourages collaboration through digital platforms, fostering sharing and interaction.

Diversity: Promotes seeking diverse perspectives beyond traditional sources of knowledge.

Openness: Highlights the accessibility and inclusivity of MOOCs, attracting a global audience.

#### **Limitation of Connectivism in Ecuador**

According to Ramírez (2016) cited by Guerrero (2022), The shortcomings leading to failure in education can be attributed partly to inadequate implementation of pedagogical models, including connectivism. While connectivism initially embraced the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as an optimal tool for knowledge construction, its practical application often falls short. Despite the theoretical openness to innovation, many educational practices grounded in connectivism principles end up resembling traditional methods rather than embracing innovative approaches.

In Ecuador, access to reliable internet connectivity and digital resources remains unequal, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Limited infrastructure and socioeconomic disparities can hinder students' ability to fully engage with online learning platforms and collaborative tools, thus impeding the realization of connectivism principles. Additionally, disparities in access to technology and digital literacy skills may exacerbate existing educational inequalities, widening the gap between students who can effectively navigate digital learning environments and those who cannot.

Moreover, the traditional pedagogical landscape in Ecuador may pose resistance to the adoption of connectivist approaches. Established educational practices often prioritize teacher-led instruction and rote memorization, which may not align with the collaborative, inquiry-based learning encouraged by connectivism. Educators may face challenges in integrating connectivist principles into their teaching methodologies, particularly if they lack training or support in leveraging ICT for educational purposes.

Furthermore, cultural attitudes towards technology and education may impact the receptiveness to connectivist approaches. While younger generations may be more comfortable with digital tools, older generations of educators and stakeholders may be hesitant to embrace change or may perceive technology as a distraction rather than an educational tool.

#### 2.4 Legal Basis

The mentioned articles emphasize the law enforcement implications of education for all individuals along with the government as well as the appropriate regulation for teaching English according to the Ministerio the Education which contributes to the tailor national curriculum.

#### **Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador**

Art. 26.- La educación es un derecho de las personas a lo largo de sus vidas y un deber ineludible e inexcusable del Estado. Constituye un área prioritaria de la política pública y la inversión estatal, una garantía de igualdad e inclusión social y una condición indispensable para una buena vida. Individuos, familias y sociedad tienen el derecho y la responsabilidad de participar en el proceso educativo (CRE., 2008, Art. 26).

Art. 27.- La educación estará centrada en el ser humano y garantizará su desarrollo integral, en el marco del respeto a los derechos humanos, el medio ambiente sostenible y la democracia; será participativa, obligatoria, intercultural, democrática, inclusiva y diversa, de calidad y calidez; promoverá la equidad de género, la justicia, la solidaridad y la paz; estimulará un sentido crítico, el arte y la cultura física, la iniciativa individual y comunitaria, y el desarrollo de competencias y capacidades para crear y trabajar. La educación es indispensable para el conocimiento, el ejercicio de derechos y la construcción de un país soberano y constituye un eje estratégico para el desarrollo nacional (CRE., 2008, Art. 27).

Art. 343.- El sistema educativo nacional tendrá como fin el desarrollo de capacidades y potencialidades individuales y colectivas de la población, facilitando el aprendizaje, la generación y uso de conocimientos, técnicas, saberes, artes y cultura. El sistema estará centrado en el estudiante, y operará de manera flexible y dinámica, inclusiva, eficaz y eficiente. El sistema educativo nacional integrará una visión intercultural de acuerdo con la diversidad geográfica, cultural y lingüística del país, y el respeto a los derechos de las comunidades, pueblos y nacionalidades (CRE., 2008, Art. 343).

The importance of education is spotlighted by many government systems, which aim to accomplish a well-educated population to look after the nation's needs and the next technological advancements ahead in the future. The Ecuadorian constitution properly elaborates its responsibility along with the citizens and education,

Through these articles, it can be reflected the right to Education and its quality to carry out a proper educational process, also integrate social equality to enforce civil engagement. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of this right because it is recognized globally by all countries around the world.

#### 2.5 Variables of the Study

#### **Dependent and Independent Variable**

Shukla (2018) defines a variable as any attribute of an entity, whether animate or inanimate, that has the potential to change in value. These variables play a fundamental role in research studies, where they are referred to as variable characteristics. In the context of research, variables encompass a wide range of factors that can be observed, measured, and analyzed to understand their impact on different phenomena.

Understanding variables allows researchers to explore relationships, make predictions, and draw conclusions based on empirical evidence.

The independent variable is the variable whose value can affect the value of another variable. It is a key element in scientific research because it represents a factor that the researcher can manipulate or control to study its effect on the dependent variable. On the other hand, dependent variables are the variables that are measured or observed in an experiment and are believed to be influenced by the independent variable. They represent the outcomes or responses that are being studied in an experiment.

#### **Dependent Variable**

#### **English content subjects**

Cambridge University Press (2020) relates the globalization of the English language where educators are instructing school students in various content subjects, ranging from science, geography, mathematics, and computer science to art and physical education, using English as the medium of instruction. However, numerous teachers require assistance in comprehending the most effective methods for delivering content in this language.

#### **Independent Variable**

#### Connectivism

Connectivism is a paradigm for learning theory envisaged as a connectivity pattern among nodes in a network. It refers to the view that knowledge is constructed primarily in the learner's mind (Mosquera, 2022).

#### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodological Framework**

#### 3.1 Method

#### 3.1.1 Qualitative Methodology

According to Vizcaino and Castiblanco (2019), a qualitative methodology focuses on interpreting in depth the experiences, viewpoints, and meanings of people or groups. This approach involves collecting systematic data, organizing information through observations, interviews, and analysis of documents to examine and generate new ideas or theories from complex social phenomena.

This study utilizes a qualitative approach, whose aim is to explore the perceptions of educators in teaching English content subjects by implementing connectivism on high school students which is essential to demonstrate transparency and clarity through a broad view of the phenomenon being studied to produce valuable research outcomes

#### 3.2 Type of Research

#### 3.2.1 Phenomenological Studies

As argued by Williams (2021), highlights that a phenomenological study is a specific design placed on the strong philosophy of understanding people's lived experiences. This type of research concentrates on participants' subjectivity, giving as a result a better comprehension of their context.

Based on this design, will lead to knowing how professors perceive this determined way of teaching, including its significance in their practices. From those experiences, the phenomenological design helps to extract and contribute to discovering key components of this study from a professional's perspective in the

educational field.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Techniques

#### 3.3.1 One-on-one Interview

According to Stofer (2019), one-on-one interviews are used to collect essential information from a select group of individuals providing different insights into their experiences, beliefs, opinions, or attitudes. Moreover, these interviews lead to an exploration and understanding of a specific topic being a valuable tool for the search for actual information.

For this research, the one-on-one interview will be the data collection technique since it allows participants to express their opinions having a personal dialogue in a comfortable environment and the researchers can gather crucial information including the perspectives about connectivism to teach English content subjects of interviewees that will be useful for this investigation.

In accordance with Stofer (2019), the standardized interview consists of questions that the interviewer asks in the same order to all interviewees without adding more questions at the moment of the data collection. This type of interview will be used to conduct an adequate organization and structured collection of information from the English teachers.

#### 3.4 Instruments

#### 3.4.1 Questionnaire

The instrument in this research project will be a well-structured questionnaire and therefore will only consist of nine questions to be asked to each interviewee. A questionnaire is an essential instrument in this research since it provides a convenient and cost-effective means of collecting information from the presented sample.

According to Bhandari (2021), a questionnaire is a valuable tool for designing and creating reliable and precise questions in a research project that can be useful for ordering and selecting the appropriate information aligned with the research objectives. Questionnaires allow the comparability of the data collection from different respondents facilitating the analysis of the information gathered.

#### 3.4.2 Type of questions

Open-ended, or long-form, questions will be used to collect the information for the investigation. According to Bhandari (2021), this type of question allows respondents to provide answers in their own words by expressing themselves without predetermined options. As a consequence, researchers gather insights that may not have been anticipated.

The questions are aligned with the topic of the exploration of connectivism to teach English content subjects in high schools, which aims to identify the perceptions of experienced and bilingual teachers. Additionally, the interview will be carried out in a presential modality by using a questionnaire previously printed on an A4 sheet, a voice recorder, and a cell phone to take evidence and support the information provided by the interviewed teachers.

#### 3.5 Data Collection Processing and Resources

The interview will be conducted at high schools Unidad Educativa Nuestro Mundo and Unidad Educativa Walt Whitman in Santa Elena Province in May 2024 through a questionnaire of nine open-ended questions. The purpose of this interview is to identify the Connectivism learning theory to explore ways of teaching English content subjects at a high school level.

The questionnaire is the following:

- 1. Are you familiar with the applications of connectivism theory in education?
  Could you explain why?
- 2. From your perspective, do you consider connectivism a valuable theory for improving how the English language is taught nowadays?
- 3. What is your opinion about using the tools of connectivism theory in a bilingual environment?
- 4. How do you focus on adapting connectivism to diverse English content subjects in your classes?
- 5. In what ways does connectivism contribute to the development of skills among high school students in English content subjects?
- 6. What challenges have you faced with high school students implementing technology in class with your subject content in English?
- 7. How can this theory help other teachers adapt their subjects for bilingual English teaching?
- 8. How do you think teacher training and support could be improved for effective connectivism implementation in High school students?
- 9. What are your thoughts on the future of connectivism in teaching English content subjects?

#### 3.6 Population and Sample

For this study focusing on the analysis of the connectivism theory to teaching English content subjects within bilingual institutions, the target population comprises teachers with experience in teaching English content subjects in Santa Elena province. The sample consists of six teachers from different bilingual high schools

such as Unidad Educativa Nuestro Mundo and Unidad Educativa Walt Whitman in the 2024-2025 academic period. Selecting a representative sample of these experienced teachers will enable the researcher to gather comprehensive insights into the efficacy and challenges of employing connectivism in teaching English content subjects within bilingual educational contexts.

**Table 2**Description of population and sample

Description	Number of teachers	Percentage
Unidad Educativa Nuestro	4	100%
Mundo		
Unidad Educativa Walt	2	100%
Whitman		
Total	6	100%

Note. Data collected from High schools in Santa Elena Province

### **Chapter IV**

## **Analysis of Findings**

# 4.1 Brief explanation of the findings

In the data interpretation, the interviewees' responses emphasized the role of connectivism in exploring ways to teach English content subjects and how it enhances academic performance in a bilingual environment. The interviews involved six high school English teachers, four from Unidad Educativa Nuestro Mundo and two from Unidad Educativa Walt Whitman, who described their backgrounds working with teenagers naturally familiar with technology. They highlighted their strategies to apply connectivism in the classroom and their opinions about the implementation of technology with high school students.

The findings highlighted the potential of connectivism in the learning process where interviewees shared their experiences and perceptions about its possibilities including all the challenges that educators have faced, shedding to explore the practices based on this theory. The open-ended questions to professionals allowed a space for them to share their ideas freely where most of them agree with the idea that implementing these practices is becoming essential and might replace some traditional methods due to the constantly changing world and how it is associated with technology in the education area.

Additionally, they mentioned some reasons why a unique way of teaching diverse English content subjects could not be ideal for high school students due to the constant interest in interactive tools, that is why they recommend keeping a balance.

### 4.2 Interpretation of data from the interview

Question 1: Are you familiar with the applications of connectivism theory in education? Could you explain why?

**Figure 1**Familiarity with the applications of connectivism theory



The comments from participants indicated that most of them know the meaning of connectivism theory and how to apply it in their classes. By using technological tools such as web pages or applications, they find innovative ways to teach new content.

They also affirmed that technology is exceptionally necessary to enable students to acquire knowledge in this modern era. Furthermore, some participants explained that the applications of connectivism theory are useful for students to broaden their vocabulary. Some applications could be applied in the classroom such as Canva or Genially, for this reason, some interviewed teachers try to implement them.

Question 2: From your perspective, do you consider connectivism a valuable theory for improving how the English language is taught nowadays?

Figure 2

Connectivism Value in English Teaching



Most participants agreed that connectivism is a valuable theory for teaching the English language, allowing students to connect with the world. They emphasized that this theory contributes to obtaining meaningful learning from different parts of the world and enhances the practice of the four different skills of the English language, consequently, it is important to have this kind of technology in the classroom. Some respondents also highlighted the application of connectivism theory can positively intervene in the motivation of high school students. Technology increases their attention and interest in classes, as teenage students are familiar with it.

Question 3: What is your opinion about using the tools of connectivism theory in a bilingual environment?

Figure 3

Connectivism Tools in a Bilingual Environment



The findings of this question highlighted that the tools of connectivism theory give the opportunity to enhance teaching in a bilingual environment through visual resources. Most participants mentioned that the different tools including social media, videos, or blogs allow students to express themselves and be more participative in the classroom. They also mentioned that connectivism is a great tool that combines social learning with online resources, especially in a bilingual environment, by leveraging technology and fostering connections that improve the comprehension of different themes in English.

Question 4: How do you focus on adapting connectivism to diverse English content subjects in your classes?

Figure 4

Adapting Connectivism to English Content Subjects



All participants notably mentioned that adapting connectivism depends on the subject, theme, or unit in which they are working and the complexity of it. When they plan their classes or lessons, they think about all the resources to utilize and how to implement them according to the expected learning outcomes. Some respondents mentioned that they adapt connectivism through implementing projects, showing videos, creating online resources that foster collaborative learning, and enhancing communicative skills. Overall, participants highlighted that they focus on interactively doing their classes for students reach significant learning and put into practice their knowledge and academic progress.

Question 5: In what ways does connectivism contribute to the development of skills among high school students in English content subjects?

Figure 5
Skills Development in High School Students



There is a strong agreement among teachers that connectivism contributes to the development of all main English skills which are reading, listening, writing, and speaking. This theory empowers students to connect and express themselves with greater confidence. Additionally, these teachers believe that connectivism provides access to resources like recordings of native speakers which leads to students improving their pronunciation skills.

Question 6: What challenges have you faced with high school students implementing technology in class with your subject content in English? Figure 6

Challenges with Connectivism in English Content Classes



The professionals revealed that the limitation of technological resources such as laptops, projectors, and tablets which the institutions are supposed to bring to teachers is one of the biggest challenges when they are trying to integrate the theory of connectivism into their English teaching content subjects in their classes. Some of them also mentioned that this issue leads to a lack of interest among students and not finding online materials to improve their understanding of a certain content subject.

The second challenge that is emphasized is the lack of responsibility from students to upload the homework on the platforms such as "Idukai" or "Moodle". This could be due to unclear instructions or sometimes students simply do not check the content.

# Question 7: How can this theory help other teachers adapt their subjects for bilingual English teaching?

Figure 7
Subjects Adaptation to Bilingual English Teaching with Connectivism



There is a mention that in a bilingual context, English teachers can provide a wealth of materials to teach various subjects like science, history, and math while strengthening English language skills. Teachers highlighted the idea of offering students engaging resources by integrating multimedia like videos, podcasts, and social media. This could be due to the interactive nature of the activities and the opportunity for students to connect with the material in different subject content in comparison with traditional methods where is common to use a book as a limited guide for teachers.

Question 8: How do you think teacher training and support could be improved for effective connectivity implementation in high school students?

Figure 8

Teacher Training and Support for Connectivism



The interviewees emphasized that is essential to be trained on specific resources because even though there are several options on the Internet. They also suggested regular workshops focusing on the content of the subject they are teaching, and which tool is imperative to integrate in that content subject in English.

There is a general belief that teacher training needs improvement for effective connectivism but still, in existence some different perspectives on the specific focus training because some of them prioritize understanding learning styles and preferences for the student's immersion.

# Question 9: What are your thoughts on the future of connectivism in teaching English content subjects?

Figure 9

Predictions of Connectivism in English Content Teaching



Most of the answers expressed positive perspectives and excitement about the potential of this theory and how it could transform the way students learn. Teachers recognize the need for training with responsibility to maximize the benefits of this theory. As the importance of connectivism grows, the practices of this theory will become essential in a few years leaving some traditional methods behind that are not precisely necessary.

While there are optimistic perspectives, some other interviewees mentioned that are concerned about the excessive use of technology and its impact on mental health. These teachers believe educators in the area need a guide to find a balance for the proper use of the connectivism applications. This includes support for using existing resources and even creating materials based on this learning theory.

### 4.3 Analysis and discussion of the interview vs bibliographic review

By conducting the interviews and considering data from the bibliographic review, it was found that high school teachers have enough knowledge about the connectivism theory and its utility for teaching English content subjects. This enhances collaboration and participation among students, besides the acquisition and comprehension of the different themes related to other subjects such as natural sciences or history in the English language. In their classes, teachers seek to get the most out of their students, allowing them to develop their skills, and for this reason, they focus on finding the best online resources that motivate them to participate and facilitate the learning process.

According to the principles of connectivism theory by Siemens (2005), learning is facilitated by the connection nodes and information sources that match with the provided data from teachers, as they mention that connectivism tools allow them to connect with the world and access all kinds of resources that function as a way of expression among students. Moreover, in this theory, the capacity for knowledge is based on critical thinking and the ability to link ideas and concepts, which is precisely evident when students share their thoughts actively in the classroom fostering the practice of speaking and listening skills. Parupalli (2019) stated the importance of developing these skills since it demands learners to generate language actively and receive information.

In accordance with Corbett and Spinello (2020), this theory not only focuses on digital resources but also the knowledge acquisition in diverse contexts, facilitating the teaching of a variety of subjects like science, history, and philosophy through audiovisual material such as podcasts and social media. As a result, students obtain subject-specific knowledge from these disciplines and can relate to English proficiency

In addition, the data analysis provided by the teachers shed light on how the integration of applications in this digital era has been a greater advance for education and communication. According to Poudel (2022), these diverse modern tools are utilized for the transmission of information or other interests, which is advantageous for connecting and expressing with other people throughout the world. The contributions of the participants mention that this exchange of ideas favors collaborative work in the classroom and in turn the critical thinking of the students that is developed based on the information they can obtain from technological devices.

Cambridge University Press (2020) mentioned the significance of bilingualism in academic settings including English language education to young learners as a second language, especially in schools or institutions where students may already possess significant proficiency in two languages. Moreover, the teaching of several academic content subjects in English emphasizes the dedication to bilingual education. This aligns with the connectivism theory which emphasizes the idea of a non-traditional background recognizing the importance of supporting students with innovative applications that are closely oriented to the principles of connectivism supported by the construction of knowledge through authentic material to facilitate a comprehensive language instruction.

Connectivism learning theory provides a great variety of benefits, which contribute to acquiring complex learning and accessing diverse sources of knowledge (Estrada, 2018). According to the data analysis from the teachers' responses, these benefits are mostly evident depending on the adaptation of this theory in content subjects. The types of topics for teaching and their complexity play a crucial role in the selection and implementation of technological resources. Teachers take advantage of the influencing factors, including the network's diversity and strong connections between the acquired

knowledge and actualized information. In their class plans, they thoroughly select the applications more suitable for the specific theme and their possible acceptance from students such as Canva, Genially, Quizlet, Kahoot, and Liveworksheets.

On the other hand, connectivism learning theory involves some challenges that could be considered with great importance, including limited devices in schools, poor access to an internet connection, school policies that do not allow students to bring their own devices, and possible distractions for students. Consequently, Guerrero (2022) stated that in Ecuador, there is evidence of an inadequate implementation of innovative pedagogical models that include mainly technology. This agrees with the comments of the teachers, since without the necessary resources it is complicated to integrate this pedagogical model, however beneficial it may be for the students in their learning of the English language.

**Table 3**Analysis of the interviews and the bibliographic review

Questions	What is your opinion about using the tools of connectivism theory in a bilingual environment?	In what ways does connectivism contribute to the development of skills among high school students in English content subjects?	How do you focus on adapting connectivism to diverse English content subjects in your classes?
Interpretation	These tools allow students to connect with the material, providing a more engaging class.	Connectivism helps students to the development of all four main English skills fostering confidence through daily practice.	Adapting connectivism depends on the subject, theme, or unit in which they are working and the difficulty of it
Authors	A range of tools are used to share information in education for a participatory environment (Poudel, 2022)	Connectivism facilitates opportunities for practice in all English skills in which active skills require extensive practice with various resources.  (Parupalli, 2019)	This operates with the need for diverse networks and varied knowledge sources to manage complex and rapidly changing content. (Estrada, 2018)

### Chapter V

This study aims to identify the Connectivism learning theory to explore ways of teaching English content subjects at a high school level. After in-depth research, it was established that the application of the Connectivism learning theory in a bilingual environment had some advantages in teaching English content subjects. The technological resources involved in the implementation of this theory not only offered dynamic ways of teaching to improve student comprehension but also fostered critical thinking and collaboration among learners. The following section explores the conclusions and provides recommendations about enhancing student academic performance through connectivism and its tools.

#### **5. 1. Conclusions**

Connectivism is presented as an innovative theory in the educational area that contributes to English language skills development due to the exposition of different contexts around the world leading to an immersive atmosphere. That is why it also serves in a bilateral manner that builds knowledge in a non-passive procedure to take the information. This implies the significance of examining how students engage in their cognitive process with digital networks resulting in interconnected learning.

This research revealed that teachers are familiar with the applications of this theory and trained at implementing technological resources in a bilingual setting, which fosters the proper selection of information and tools to teach English content subjects at a high school level. Some applications are more useful and appropriate to explain specific content and enrich the learning process effectively. For this reason, English teachers consider the validity and relevance of the available resources to ensure that they align with the educational objectives of the class.

Connectivism has become an essential theory due to the facilitation of audiovisual resources in teaching English content subjects providing a contextualized view and updated information. It permits a collaborative and interactive environment where high schoolers can create their ideas by participating in class, leading to the development of critical thinking.

However, high schoolers tend to lose attention easily and the constant information could make the opposite of the basis of the connective practices which is to promote active learning and collaboration through these resources.

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

English teachers should develop lesson plans that incorporate connectivism as a learning theory to handle diverse English language skills by facilitating collaborative projects of the subject matter that require students to actively participate, where educators assess the student's comprehension of the subject matter with different applications or practices of this theory and identify areas for improvement to address effective learning experiences to connect with different contexts.

English teachers should have constant training and previous knowledge of how to integrate audiovisual resources adequately in classes. Additionally, teachers should consider specific technological tools for each content that they are teaching and its needs with the purpose of reinforcing the student's comprehension of the information that is provided to prevent them from underperforming by choosing the wrong resources.

By rigorously selecting from the large variety of technological resources, could be aligned to the needs of high schoolers which is recommended to avoid distractions in class. It is imperative to consider a combination of non-technological and technological resources previously worked by both students and teachers. Encouraging the holistic

vision through reviews of content from different subjects in the process of teaching the English language where students can choose to realize different projects they are interested in, related to what they learned.

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#### Annexes

# Annex A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System

## CERTIFICADO SISTEMA ANTI PLAGIO

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado "EXPLORING CONNECTIVISM IN TEACHING ENGLISH CONTENT SUBJECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS" elaborado por las estudiantes MALAVE TOMALA XIMENA ANDREA and ROSALES BONE DARIAN DESIRETH de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 5 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

#### Atentamente



Almeida Briones Xavier Antonio, MSc.

**TUTOR** 

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30 fuentes similares

### **Annex B: Questionnaire**

# EXPLORING CONNECTIVISM TO TEACHING ENGLISH CONTENT SUBJECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Population and Sample:** 6 English teachers (4 English teachers from Unidad Educativa Nuestro Mundo and 2 English teachers from Unidad Educativa Walt Whitman

## **Questions aimed at teachers**

- Are you familiar with the applications of connectivism theory in education?
   Could you explain why?
- 2. From your perspective, do you consider connectivism a valuable theory for improving how the English language is taught nowadays?
- 3. What is your opinion about using the tools of connectivism theory in a bilingual environment?
- 4. How do you focus on adapting connectivism to diverse English content subjects in your classes?
- 5. In what ways does connectivism contribute to the development of skills among high school students in English content subjects?
- 6. What challenges have you faced with high school students implementing technology in class with your subject content in English?
- 7. How can this theory help other teachers adapt their subjects for bilingual English teaching?
- 8. How do you think teacher training and support could be improved for

effective connectivism implementation in High school students?

9. What are your thoughts on the future of connectivism in teaching English content subjects?

## **Annex C: Letter of permission to the institution**



# FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN E IDIOMAS

# CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Oficio No. 148-PINE-2024

La Libertad, 21 de mayo de 2024

Master Sofia San Miguel de Muñoz RECTORA DE LA UNIDAD EDUCATIVA NUESTRO MUNDO (e) En su despacho. -

De mi consideración. -

Por medio del presente, reciba un cordial saludo, de quienes formamos parte de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, para posteriormente exponerle lo siguiente.

Las estudiantes de octavo semestre, Ximena Andrea Malavé Tomalá y Darian Desireth Rosales Bone, actualmente se encuentran en desarrollo de su proyecto de tesis, cuyo tema está relacionado a técnicas de enseñanza en Idiomas Inglés, "Exploring Connectivism in Teaching English Content Subjects on High School Students"; ante lo expuesto, solicito su autorización para que las estudiantes puedan acceder a la recolección de datos cualitativos mediante entrevistas a dos docentes de la Institución bajo su dirección, información que será de utilidad para el desarrollo de su trabajo de investigación, previo a la obtención del título como Licenciadas en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.

La fecha programada seria para el miércoles 29 de mayo del presente año; dado a que las entrevistas tienen una duración de 10 minutos, sugiero que sea realizada en la hora de receso a fin de no interrumpir con las horas de clases de los docentes.

En espera de su aceptación a nuestro petitorio quedo de usted muy agradecida

Atentamente,

Ing. Eliana León Abad, MSc.

Directora Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Cc. archivo.



# FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN E IDIOMAS

# CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Oficio No. 155-PINE-2024

La Libertad, 23 de mayo de 2024

Licenciada
Violeta Auza Carvajal, MSc.
RECTORA DE LA UNIDAD EDUCATIVA WALT WHITMAN
En su despacho. -

De mi consideración. -

Por medio del presente, reciba un cordial saludo, de quienes formamos parte de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, para posteriormente exponerle lo siguiente.

Las estudiantes de octavo semestre, Ximena Andrea Malavé Tomalá y Darian Desireth Rosales Bone, actualmente se encuentran en desarrollo de su proyecto de tesis cuyo tema está relacionado a técnicas de enseñanza en Idiomas Inglés, "Exploring Connectivism in Teaching English Content Subjects on High School Students"; ante lo expuesto, solicito su autorización para que las estudiantes puedan acceder a la recolección de datos cualitativos mediante entrevistas a dos docentes de la Institución bajo su dirección, información que será de utilidad para el desarrollo de su trabajo de investigación, previo a la obtención del título como Licenciadas en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.

La fecha programada seria para el miércoles 29 de mayo del presente año; a partir de las 14H00 pm.

En espera de su aceptación a nuestro petitorio quedo de usted muy agradecida

Atentamente,

Ing. Eliana León Abad, MSc.

Directora Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Cc. archivo.