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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES  
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**“SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT AS A FOUNDATION FOR  
COLLABORATIVE WORK IN EFL CLASSROOM”**

**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 SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT AS A FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK IN EFL CLASSROOM prepared by GONZALEZ MEDINA FABIANA SALOMÉ and HOLGUIN BAQUE MITZY DANIELA, undergraduate students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Major, at School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve in its entirety because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to evaluation of the academic tribunal.

**Sincerely,**



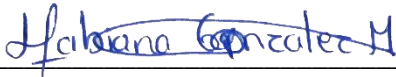
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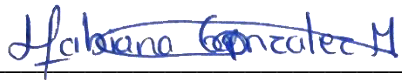
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## Declaration

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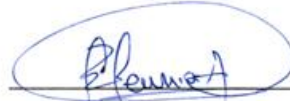


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## **Acknowledgment I**

First of all, I thank our creator for giving us life and for watching over those who are no longer physically present from heaven.

I would like to mention the person who is my greatest motivation, who is always there backing me up in every decision I make, my dear mother Jacqueline Medina, followed by those people who were always a great support during my educational path, my uncle Freddy Gonzalez and my grandmother María Idrovo, as well as my father, Julio Gonzalez, and my older brother, Iván, who were always there for me.

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Fabiana Gonzalez Medina.

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To my sisters, thank you for your constant support, for your words of encouragement, and for filling my life with joy and companionship during the most difficult moments.

And I dedicate this achievement to myself, because in the hardest times, when doubt tried to win, I kept telling myself over and over again, “You can, you will,” and I did. This project is much more than academic work; it is living proof of my strength, determination, and effort, which have brought me this far.

Today, I take pride in myself, love, and gratitude because I didn’t give up, because I kept believing, even when I hesitated. Thank you for continuing, for believing, for being brave. This is for you for all that you were, and all that you are destined to become.

With all my heart, for me.

Mitzy Holguin

## **Dedication I**

*“Dream, though your beginnings might be humble, may the end be prosperous”*

— *Min Yoon Gi*

To everyone who made this possible:  
With infinite love and eternal gratitude,

Fabiana Gonzalez Medina.

## **Dedication II**

This work is not only the result of effort and dedication, but also of all the love, support, and companionship I have received along the way.

I dedicate this work to God, who was my guide on this journey, giving me strength, wisdom, and courage to overcome every obstacle. In moments of doubt and fatigue, His presence sustained me and reminded me that every effort has its reward.

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encouragement and reassurance during the most demanding moments of study and writing, demonstrating that true friendship can be expressed through actions rather than words.

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- With love, Mitzy Holguin

## **Abstract**

The current research explored the sociocultural context as a basis for collaborative work in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. It examined how students' cultural differences and commonalities, traditions, and social experiences contribute to successful interactions, communication, and participation in group-based tasks. Knowledge of these dimensions enables instructors to create assignments that reflect students' inclusiveness, mutual respect, and productive cooperation. The research was qualitative and included interviewing five EFL teachers working at a UPSE university. The purpose was to inquire about their vision and experience in terms of the implementation of sociocultural contextualization in Collaborative Learning.

Based on the results, it can be admitted that valuing the cultural diversity of students contributes to improving group dynamics and overall motivation in collaborative work. At the same time, the teachers faced several difficulties, from lack of time and opportunities for proper training to the continuing use of teacher-centric approaches that do not allow integrating into the principles mentioned above fully. These findings show that the programs should prioritize professional development in terms of raising awareness of pedagogical approaches and elements of the sociocultural context and take them into account when developing collaborative curricular activities. In this way, the report suggests that incorporating sociocultural context into EFL supports not only the development of students' communicative proficiency but also nurtures the atmosphere of cooperation and students' respect for this issue.

**Keywords:** Sociocultural Context; Collaborative Work; EFL Classrooms; Sociocultural awareness and elements; Teacher Perceptions; Challenges in group projects.

## Resumen

La presente investigación exploró el contexto sociocultural como base para el trabajo colaborativo en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. Se examinó cómo las diferencias y similitudes culturales, las tradiciones y las experiencias sociales de los estudiantes contribuyen al éxito de las interacciones, la comunicación y la participación en tareas grupales. El conocimiento de estas dimensiones permite a los profesores crear tareas que reflejen la inclusión, el respeto mutuo y la cooperación productiva de los estudiantes. La investigación fue cualitativa e incluyó entrevistas a cinco profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera que trabajan en una universidad de la UPSE. El objetivo era indagar sobre su visión y experiencia en cuanto a la implementación de la contextualización sociocultural en el aprendizaje colaborativo. A partir de los resultados, se puede admitir que valorar la diversidad cultural de los estudiantes contribuye a mejorar la dinámica de grupo y la motivación general en el trabajo colaborativo. Al mismo tiempo, los profesores se enfrentaron a varias dificultades, desde la falta de tiempo y oportunidades para una formación adecuada hasta el uso continuado de enfoques centrados en el profesor que no permiten integrar plenamente los principios mencionados anteriormente. Estos resultados muestran que los programas deben dar prioridad al desarrollo profesional en lo que respecta a la sensibilización sobre los enfoques pedagógicos y los elementos del contexto sociocultural, y tenerlos en cuenta a la hora de desarrollar actividades curriculares colaborativas. De este modo, el informe sugiere que la incorporación del contexto sociocultural en el EFL no solo favorece el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes, sino que también fomenta el ambiente de cooperación y el respeto de los alumnos por esta cuestión.

**Palabras claves:** Contexto Sociocultural; Trabajo Colaborativo; Aulas de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera; Concienciación y Elementos Socioculturales; Percepciones de los Profesores; Retos en los Proyectos en Grupo.

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## **Introduction**

At present, promoting collaboration and interaction in EFL classes has proven to be quite a challenge for teachers. Many students struggle to participate actively in group activities because of language barriers, lack of confidence, or limited connections between classroom tasks and their cultural backgrounds. These barriers often deter teachers from engaging participants and hinder the acquisition of interpersonal communicative and social skills necessary for collective learning. In this regard, the sociocultural perspective is crucial to understanding how cultural identity, cultural and community traditions and values affect student engagement and association.

This study also highlights the importance of culture as a foundation for cooperative work in EFL classrooms. When educationalists recognize the influence of students' cultural heritage, learning experiences may be responsive, relevant, and transferable to real-life contexts. Sociocultural aspects of teaching are useful in order to enhance team working but also to develop the ability to be empathetic, respectful and appreciative of diversity- all these being important components for creating a positive and satisfying learning environment.

The structure of the present work is composed by five chapters, as follows:

Chapter I presents the main problem to be investigated, explains the contents and sets out the research questions and objectives that guide the work. Furthermore, this chapter also highlights the importance of the subject in education literature.

Chapter II presents the background of the study, including international, Latin American, and national contexts related to the sociocultural approach and collaborative learning in EFL education. It also includes theoretical foundations and key concepts that support the variables under analysis.

Chapter III describes the methodology applied. This chapter attempts to describe the methods used in the study, research design, data collection, and analysis techniques as well as who was involved in this endeavor.

Chapter IV examines the data collected through interviews and interprets it, categorizing systematically to shed light teachers' perceptions on the role of sociocultural context in collaboration work.

Finally, Chapter V presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings, offering suggestions for classroom implementation and future research.

It is in this vein that the present study has been carried out, with a view to exploring the role played by sociocultural context as a basis for collaborative activity performed in EFL classrooms and to understanding its effect in terms of teachers' opinions. It also aims to investigate how sociocultural factors contribute to effective interaction in grouping activity; recognize the predicaments teachers face when using collaborative strategy and disseminate pedagogical practices that support inclusive and culturally relevant school learning.

## **Chapter I**

### **The Problem**

#### **Research Topic**

Sociocultural Context and Collaborative Work

#### **Title of the project**

Sociocultural Context as a Foundation for Collaborative Work in EFL Classrooms

#### **Problem Statement**

In today's globalized world, learning a foreign language is a crucial element for success in education, work, and social life. English, in particular, has become a key tool for a global communication that connects people of different countries, cultures, and communities. As reported by the International Center for Language Studies (2024), approximately 1.52 billion people speak English worldwide that representing about 18% of the global population, which highlights its central role in education and communication.

Learning a language is not just about studying words and grammar. It is also about the social and cultural situations where communication takes place. In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, understanding students' cultural backgrounds, values, and experiences enables teachers to design activities that are more engaging and meaningful. When learning is connected to real-life culture, students feel more motivated to participate (Ramírez-Lizcano & Cabrera-Tovar, 2020).

Language teaching in EFL classrooms increasingly emphasizes collaborative work as a scheme to promote interaction, critical thinking, and teamwork, where collaborative activities enable learners to collectively construct knowledge through debates, interaction, exchange of ideas, and problem-solving. Research reports that collaboration improves language skills, social, and intercultural competencies (Park, 2020).

While collaborative learning has many pedagogical advantages, there are still a lot of barriers to overcome. To see a clear problem scenario, one has just to look at the virtual environment where students continue having difficulties in conducting knowledge construction-oriented discussions because of poor organization and due to inefficient management. Studies from Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) show that, while online collaboration can support critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving, the lack of adequate scaffolding may reduce group cohesion and overall group performance (Jeitziner et al. 2024). These results highlight the role of well-structured guidance and teacher mediation in the success of collaboration.

The main problem presented by this research is the lack of connection or integration between collaborative learning and the sociocultural context of students. Teachers routinely carry out group activities that become mechanical, where more priority is given to completing tasks correctly rather than cultural relevance or even expressive dialogue, as pointed out by Li & Qu (2024). Therefore, teachers need to be able to design activities with collaborative approaches that are also tailored to the cultural backgrounds, linguistic identities, and realities of their students, resulting in authentic and effective collaboration within the classroom.

### **Justification**

Butarbutar (2025) concluded that the sociocultural approach highlights interaction and the strengthening of communicative skills among students to promote collaborative intervention in any EFL classroom. Besides, sociocultural context and collaborative work go beyond simply belonging to a similar society and working together. Whereas, it entails the efficacy of motivating and encouraging learners to participate in interactive and multicultural environments.

As stated by Polly et al. (2018), cited in Alanazi (2025), the sociocultural perspective emphasizes the use of pedagogical practices where learning takes place through collaborative practice. Likewise, English as a Foreign Language teaching process pays attention to the Sociocultural approach as a framework to foster social and cultural communication in the educational field, since collaborative and sociocultural elements determine learning outcomes.

It is essential that educational strategies align with sociocultural teaching methods to ensure that collaborative and communicative learning develops in a meaningful and engaging environment. Moreover, in previous research by Aljuhaish et al. (2020) was stated that the sociocultural experience has strong influence on teachers' identity during their professional training, as it demonstrates the flexible and dynamic nature of the instructor. In addition, the ability to adapt to different educational scenarios where English language instruction is considered a priority.

Regarding collaborative work and social matters, it is believed that pupils acquire knowledge successfully when they work as a team. Yet cultural awareness has a profound impact in language acquisition when making pupils recognize cultural nuances to understand the cultural context. Consequently, it allows students to have contact with different cultural perspectives, create opportunities for authentic language use, and foster social skills development for useful communication, leading to avoid misunderstandings and lack of communication among speakers (Neldawati & Irwandi, 2025).

The aim of this project is to analyze the importance of sociocultural context as a foundation for collaborative work. Furthermore, it seeks to explore how the sociocultural context can serve as a foundation for collaborative work in EFL classrooms through instructors'

perceptions. In the same way, it is necessary to comprehend its contribution to interactive practices and the challenges that arise in promoting collaborative work in a sociocultural environment. In terms of conducting this research, it focuses on exploring and collecting the personal experiences of EFL teachers in higher education, concerning the implementation of collaborative work in a sociocultural classroom, through literature review and interviews with teaching staff.

### **General Question**

- How does the sociocultural context shape collaborative work in EFL classrooms according to teachers' perspectives and existing research?

### **Specific Questions**

- How does the sociocultural context contribute to effective interaction in group projects?
- What challenges do EFL teachers face when integrating sociocultural aspects into collaborative work?
- What educational strategies that combine sociocultural elements can be used to encourage collaborative work in EFL classes?

### **General Objective:**

- To examine the role of the sociocultural context as a basis for collaborative work to understand its influence in EFL classrooms through research and teachers' perceptions.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- To understand how sociocultural context can contribute the effective interaction in group projects.

- To recognize the challenges faced by EFL teachers when integrating collaborative work into the classroom considering sociocultural context.
- To identify educational strategies that include sociocultural elements to foster collaborative work in EFL classrooms.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

#### Background

In the words of Lantolf et al. (2020), the acquisition of a second language, such as English, can only be achieved efficiently through social mediation, where all students build and strengthen their knowledge by interacting within their sociocultural context because they participate in purposeful activities. This view highlights that language learning is not only a cognitive process for students. It is also a social practice connected to cultural values and group dynamics. The findings coincide with Villarreal and Gil-Sarratea (2020), noting that pair and group work significantly encourages the involvement of all students in collaborative language-related activities, as students feel inspired and connected because these activities are in line with their cultural values.

#### International Background

Sahiruddin et al. (2024) conducted some research on the changes in teachers' beliefs when teaching abroad by participating in different sociocultural settings, such as EFL classrooms, where they acquired new concepts, developed, and improved teaching practices. Through semi-structured interviews, teachers' experiences were collected and it was concluded that instructors must be given opportunities to share and actively contribute to various sociocultural activities. Moreover, among the experiences taken into account in the results section, the importance of implementing collaborative activities, for instance, forums, discussions, projects and groups presentations were highlighted.

Novita et al. (2020) based their research on the implementation of collaborative work on EFL classrooms, they suggest that teachers should pay more attention to group performance, social interaction, and mutual support among group members. In addition to mentioning that

collaborative work goes hand by hand with Sociocultural Theory, due to the fact that students not merely work together to achieve success, but equally support each other to reach a specific goal. They further conclude that teacher should consider collaborative purposes as a way to assess learning group performance, as this encourage social interaction and teamwork.

Soleymani et al. (2025) studied the development of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) in English Language Teaching fields in a EFL context, the study demonstrates that SCT has gained popularity in teaching programs for EFL in the Iranian education system in recent years. It is also mentioned as a necessary element for educators training, as it involves a set of skills and attitudes for its development. These include academic and collaborative skills; like teamwork, among others, applied both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Latin-American Background**

Escaloma et al. (2020) directed a paper, whose objective was to develop communicative competence in the teaching and learning of EFL in Cuba, they define Cooperative Learning as a indispensable element for the training for future generations. Experts also said that sociocultural competence is about being able to figure out culturally appropriate behaviors and knowledge, as well as acting comfortably in the Sociocultural Context where the language is used. This research applied Cooperative Learning techniques, and through a pre-experiment, it was proven that these are effective in developing communication skills. As a result, active and conscious participation in classes was observed, which permitted the language to be used in different contexts. Finally, it was conclude that there are different types of Cooperative Learning groups that agree for good cognitive and social development.

Bastidas and Muñoz (2020) executed a study based on exploring several internal and external factors, including the sociocultural and educational context, and its positive contribution to English language learning among high school learners and instructors in Pasto, Colombia:

The results of the data collected through two questionnaires administered to 113 recent high school graduates and 25 teachers showed that learning a foreign language does not depend solely on teaching methods, but also on the social and cultural context in which the student develops. Consequently, it was concluded that the importance of the sociocultural environment for success in the teaching process is related to the need to promote collaborative dynamics. (p.117)

### **National Background**

Although English continues to be increasingly promoted in Ecuadorian schools, its teaching tends to prioritize formal aspects of the language and does not consider the cultural backgrounds of the students. As Soto et al. (2024) mentioned, motivation is an important factor in learning, and it can be reinforced when collaborative work reflects the identity, values, and experiences of students. Therefore, connecting the teaching of English as a foreign language with the sociocultural contexts of students becomes an excellent basis for improving participation and building more authentic interactions in the classroom. As a result, these findings highlight the notably role that cultural beliefs, personal identity, and the dynamics of local communities play in shaping collaborative approaches within language education.

In addition, in high school the study of Romero-Guarquilla et al. (2020) investigated how collaborative learning is causally linked with the motivational impact of English use on secondary students in Azogues, Ecuador. Although it is beyond the scope of this work, future

research should investigate how sociocultural variables such as peer relations, cultural values; and including shared classroom identity support or encourage collaborative learning.

In another scenario, Ley and colleagues (2025) found that the success of team-oriented learning in English as a Foreign Language at the university level is dependent on teachers' understanding of the sociocultural requirements of individual students. Their study, conducted with college learners at the Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo, revealed that when group strategies are tailored to fit the sociocultural backgrounds of the students, it leads to higher participation rates, decreased anxiety about speaking in English, and a stronger sense of involvement in the educational experience.

Given these national findings, the importance of the sociocultural context as a key factor in the efficacy of collaborative work is highlighted, since considering and integrating both parties enriches learning experiences, fostering greater participation, increased motivation, and better communication skills. For this reason, integrating sociocultural element into collaborative practice is an essential approach to improving the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ecuador and achieving better educational outcomes.

## **Pedagogical Basis**

### **Task-Supported Language Teaching**

Boers (2021) as cited in Souzandehfar & Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahi (2023) establishes that Task-Supported Language Teaching (TSLT) has its roots in Task-Based Language Teaching approach, however it is founded on a structured curriculum: It begins with clear and direct teaching of the language feature, then moves on to structured practice, and finally in real classroom context where students demonstrate through activities what they learned. On the other

hand, the collaborative and communicative nature of the tasks fosters a sociocultural learning environment in the context of TSLT.

Task-Supported Language Teaching (TSLT) suggests the use of textbooks, teachers' discourse, collaboration, and interaction among classmates during the teaching process of EFL from a Sociocultural perspective. Furthermore, findings illustrate that authentic tasks encourage a social and collaborative learning environment that enhances learners' academic development, meanwhile Sociocultural approach-oriented EFL class shows how TSLT advocates for a mainstream EFL course while considering cultural sensitivities (Santos, 2023).

### ***Scaffolding***

Scaffolding has become a fundamental concept in language teaching, since although it provides temporary support, it is structured, and this allows students to accomplish tasks that they would not be able to do independently. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, scaffolding underlines both the role of social interaction and cultural context within the learning process that occurs in classrooms, where teachers act as facilitators to guide students through their zone of proximal development (Li & Zou, 2021). Within a classroom where English is taught as a foreign language, scaffolding goes beyond just helping with language. It also includes crafting chances for students to relate their existing knowledge, cultural backgrounds, and teamwork methods, enhancing the significance and interest of their learning experience (Nabiyevna, 2024).

Flores (2021) discovered that implementing scaffolding strategies in EFL classes, including collaboration among peers and feedback through rubrics, greatly enhanced students' fluency, motivation, and self-assurance. Additionally, Andrade Tacuri et al. (2024) contended that scaffolding activities, such as activating prior knowledge, explaining or clarification tasks, and

providing timely feedback, improved written production and engagement of the students in their learning process. These discoveries underline the importance of scaffolding as pedagogical support that offers social and cultural reinforcement required for students to work well with their peers. Furthermore, in the sociocultural context, scaffolding practices in teaching EFL not merely strengthen language skills but equally promote collaborative environments where students feel motivated to actively participate in group activities, as scaffolding helps learners connect new language tasks with their existing cultural knowledge, making collaboration both cognitively enriching and socially meaningful.

### ***Collaborative Learning***

Collaborative learning is a strategic teaching and learning model that encourages pupils' interaction and motivation by enabling them to share experiences through group dynamics. In an environment shaped by Collaborative Learning, pupils not only have the freedom to propose, discuss, and exchange ideas and beliefs together. As well as questioning their peers' conceptual frameworks, and actively participate in conversations, learners also face social and emotional challenges as they listen to different points of view and respectfully advocate for their opinions (Agustina, 2022).

In the same way, collaborative learning is an educational approach in which students work together to achieve shared academic goals, based on peer interaction, mutual support, and shared responsibility. In the EFL classroom, this method has been shown to improve student achievement, motivation, and attitudes by promoting cooperation rather than competition, thus creating a more engaging and conducive learning environment (Chen, 2021). Similarly, Campoverde et al. (2024) indicated that when students participated in collaborative activities or even in pairs, their speaking time and confidence increased. These results confirm that

collaborative learning is an effective method for language acquisition and a fundamental approach to developing social interaction skills and cultural awareness.

### ***Communicative Language Teaching***

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has given strong relevance by putting interaction and communication as a fundamental element of language acquisition. CLT originates from Hyme's notion of communicative competence, this approach involves the implementation of social interaction to achieve fruitful communication (Kurniawan & Sumani, 2022). Likewise, Zapata et al. (2025) presented convincing evidence that a well-designed methodological guide deeply-rooted in the basics principles of CLT clearly contributed to learners communicative competence, an advantage though carefully assessed using general tests to appreciate language ability. In the broader context of this research, CLT is highly relevant there as it remains a key motivating factor to turn EFL classrooms into centers of interaction. Consequently, in such dynamic sceneries, various languages are not just studied in a vacuum, but acquired in a very real and authentic interaction that is very much connected to the socio-cultural construct of ones life as it comes. This novel policy does not merely facilitate cooperation among students but encourages them to engage in productive interactions, in which they contribute both the completion of a task and the sharing of diverse cultural backgrounds towards a rich and shared construction of meaning.

Chango et al. (2023) reported that the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the rural classrooms in Ecuador had powered great achievements in students' self-confidence and sense of ownership in the EFL acquisition. What is astonishing is that this gain happened even in classrooms where entrenched traditional practices still dominated. In CLT classrooms, teachers implement collaborative activities, for example, group discussions, role

plays, and problem-solving tasks to highly simulate students on real-world communication settings. Consequently, this approach is founded on the idea of Communicative competence that refers to the ability of using language interactively in social contexts. Additionally, CLT has been observed in various cultural contexts where its adaptability and effectiveness with a more interactive approach are demonstrated (Hakami, 2025).

## **Theoretical Basis**

### ***Sociocultural Theory***

Lantolf (2023) mentioned that Vygotsky, within investigations grounded on Sociocultural Theory (SCT), social context is as relevant in the psychological development of humans as instruction. From a cognitive viewpoint, someone's growth is influenced by those around them and by the psychological tools that stem from each individual's cultural environment. Additionally, the foundation for success in learning lies primarily in the social world, and the development process evolves in parallel with society's changes. On the other hand, when seeking to develop a target language, it must be inserted into the social and cultural context in which real communication takes place naturally. Furthermore, Sarmiento et al. (2022) highlights the application of scaffolding strategies based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which pointedly enhanced the skills of EFL learners. This was achieved through authentic social interaction dynamics, cultural mediation, and collaborative work between teachers and students.

### ***Sociocultural Context***

Sociolinguistic factors are provided as a framework where the comprehension of language acquisition is promoted among learners in varied contexts, as Sociocultural Theory is part of these elements and they suggest a valuable perspective on students' social, local, and cultural settings. Moreover, it is established that both are involved in the acquisition of a foreign

language, then it is considered a dynamic process since students interact remarkably within their sociocultural environment involving collaborative efforts (Mtallo & Kimambo, 2024).

On the one hand, sociocultural context is considered an influential factor in sociolinguistics, and it refers to the dynamics and regulations that shapes social relationships and interactions, as well as cultural expressions that can influence educational practices (Chan & Lee, 2021). In contrast, Quiroz et al. (2019) established that sociocultural variable is constituted by social situations and cultural characteristics; it is related to factors that describe individuals in different dimensions, comprising specific social and cultural aspects, including politics and economics, religion, family, communication, education, values, customs, and others.

### ***Collaborative Work***

Collaborative work is considered a productive method to be implemented in language learning to enhance social interaction and teamwork, aiming to lead the development of communicative competence. It goes beyond of working as a team, since learners produce and exchange ideas through purposeful conversation to find problem-solving solutions, while working in groups on the same task to search for understanding, elaborate their knowledge, and fulfil a common goal (Salma, 2020).

### ***Challenges of Collaborative Work***

Challenges in implementing collaborative work in EFL classrooms often result from due to the influence of cultural expectations, classroom dynamics, and institutional constraints. For instance, educators grapple with students who have never worked collaboratively to share knowledge during group activities since traditional school systems continue to favor teacher centric techniques. These difficulties may dampen the engagement of each student and limit the efficiency of collaboration practices (Zheng et al. 2021).

Hence, it is important to acknowledge that the obstacles towards Förderung were related to sociocultural aspects, organization of class, and attraction of students by blending methods. In this type of atmosphere, students may develop their working in groups skills and learn from each other. In Ecuador, teachers of EFL face significant challenges when integrating collaborative work due to limitations, for example, limited teaching time, insufficient teacher training, a strong emphasis on writing and grammar over oral expression, and low student motivation (Guerrero & Moreria, 2025).

### ***Strategies of Applied Collaborative Work***

Despite these obstacles, EFL educators in Ecuador have begun to employ innovative strategies to facilitate language learning. For instance, Fernández et al. (2025) bespeak that active learning approaches enclose collaborative learning, through problem-solving, role-playing, and project-based activities, reinforcing students' communicative competence in fluency and motivation. This strategy permits pupils to develop from a supervised level to linguistic autonomy.

### ***Sociocultural Awareness in a Higher Education in EFL Classroom***

Sociocultural awareness underlines empathy and respect towards language acquisition by enabling cultural sensitivity. Based on Allami et al. (2025) findings:

Implementing sociocultural elements in educational training increases students' competencies, as collaboration and effective communication go beyond the classroom. Most importantly, this offers educators valuable instructional strategies to boost participation and build inclusive learning environments, leading to the opportunities for learners to feel valued and motivated. Besides, carefully designed strategies integrate not only academic goals but also sociocultural awareness to strengthen students' engagement.

(p. 13)

### ***Authenticity as a Principle of Assessment***

Authenticity is one of the principles of assessment. It encourages students to solve real-world problems and raises motivation by implementing materials and activities that reflect real-life situations like natural language, contextualized elements, and topics that can be addressed using their prior knowledge (Larenas et al., 2021). Similarly, several researchers agree that implementing authentic assessment in foreign language teaching and practice brings great benefits, for instance, success in developing linguistic, social, and cognitive skills, and strengthening learners' commitment to learning (Pais & Herrington, 2025).

### **Legal Basis**

The Constitution and the General Regulations of the Organic Law on Intercultural Education Ecuador recognize inclusive, quality education as a right for all. These standards stress the importance of drawing on students' sociocultural backgrounds and cultures, embracing diversity as an essential element in education. Consequently, the school climate is conducive to promoting systems that respect cultural identity and student or community lifestyles.

In accordance with Article 10 of the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural* (LOEI), educational institutions in Ecuador are granted the authority to adapt the national curriculum to their students' needs and the sociocultural characteristics of their surroundings. Flexibility in curriculum adaptations suits local needs and provides schools with the opportunity to align instructional goals along with community values and principles, stimulating inclusive and enriching learning experiences. All the same, these initiatives require curricular review that gives relevance to cultural diversity and local realities, while ensuring consistency with the national curriculum (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2023).

Art. 26, education is recognized as a universal right that can be exercised throughout the lifetime of any citizen, regardless of their age. In addition to promoting it, the government has an

obligation to guarantee it and safeguard that everyone has access to it. Thus, equal and social inclusion are required, along with providing a better quality of life in which family, society, and individuals participate in the educational process (Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2011).

Art 27, the core of education, is directed at individuals; therefore, it must focus on their comprehensive development, respect their rights, and warrant their well-being. It will guarantee respect for diversity and interculturalism, be inclusive, democratic, compulsory, and linked to the protection of the environment. The educational process will assure peace, solidarity, and justice. As it is people-centered, it must support individuals in acquiring and developing skills to generate and contribute to the productive and social progress of the country (Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2011).

Both Article 26 and Article 27 of the Constitution of Ecuador attest to the right of each and every individual to receive education, and that education shall be individual, foster the personality's development, and promote equality and appreciation for diversity in society. Moreover, Article 10 of the Law of Intercultural Education verifies that educational programs are adjustable to conform to the cultural identity of students and not vice versa. The given legislative framework proves the importance of sociocultural dimensions in the process of teaching and learning in EFL. It ensures that the learning of a language fosters communication but also interculturality, inclusivity, and cooperation among students.

In summary, Chapter II provided a wide range of studies that enabled a better appreciation of the significant impact of sociocultural context has on collaborative work, as well as on students, educators, the role it plays in the classroom and academic activities, which is detailed in the pedagogical and theoretical basis section. In the next Chapter, information will be presented to explain the type of research, methodology, data collection technique, population,

and other relevant details to know how and what resources will be used to execute the research project.

## Chapter III

### Methodological Framework

#### Methods

Lim (2024) defines qualitative methods as tools that are focused on capturing human experiences and perspectives, underlying meanings, opinions, and viewpoints. Therefore, it suggests a single approach where deep insights are explored and interpreted, as well as understanding the depths of the complexities of social phenomena. It also offers strategies for navigating its multifaceted dimensions, among them open-ended questions, in-depth and focus group interviews, to guarantee a comprehensive exploration of the phenomena.

Through this methodology, the research project aims to gather valuable information on UPSE teachers' prior perspectives and opinions regarding the role of sociocultural context as a foundation for collaborative work in EFL classrooms. In doing so, the purpose of the research is to understand the importance of students' social and cultural aspects and their relationship working together in the classroom, as well as how interaction and the development of communication skills are fostered from a teaching lens.

#### Type of Research

##### *Phenomenological Studies*

This study will employ a phenomenological research design. In accordance with Bonyadi (2023), phenomenology is a useful methodology for exploring essence from the perspective of those who experience it. He also emphasizes that phenomenology is not based on measuring or quantifying but rather on describing the interviewee's meanings and experiences in depth. For example, Teshome (2021) used the phenomenological approach to investigate how students use and adopt strategies to learn English from their own environment, using qualitative interviews and purposive sampling.

Similarly, in Soomro et al. (2025) the phenomenological approach made it possible to identify the possibilities and challenges teachers face when promoting collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity in English as a foreign language teaching environments using technology. Overall, this approach will consent to this study to collect qualitative and detailed descriptions of how the sociocultural context influences collaborative work in emotional, social, and pedagogical terms.

## **Data Collection Techniques**

### ***Interviews***

Interviews are an efficient method of data collection for obtaining facts from real people, including the researcher and the respondent, whether conducted face-to-face or using technological devices via voice or video calls, recordings, instant messages, and so on. Its function is particularly essential in qualitative work, as interviews are flexible and interactive, consenting the researcher to ask predetermined questions or ask additional questions that were not prepared in advance (Mwita, 2022).

The interview was chosen as the research method to gather the experiences of five EFL teachers who have worked in a sociocultural classroom and implemented collaborative Work in teaching lessons. This will have a structured format with a total of eight open-ended questions, whose responses will follow a process of being recorded, transcribed, then analyzed, and finally interpreted to determine the role that sociocultural context plays in collaborative practices.

## **Instrument**

### ***Questionnaire***

For a more valuable data collection process when the group of interviewees is diverse and their answers are extensive, the questionnaire is known as a method that facilitates the work of obtaining relevant information, making the interpretation process easier. Among the response

formats in this type of tool, respondents actively fill in the answers, whereas in questionnaires, the interviewers are assigned to ask questions (Srivastava, 2024).

Regarding the research project, questionnaires will be used as a tool to gather the opinions and experiences required from the target population. It will consist of eight open-ended questions on both the sociocultural context and collaborative work, and their relationship and their role in EFL classrooms, which will then be administered to participants to fulfill the main objective.

### **Type of questions**

#### ***Open-ended questions***

Several experts say that in any qualitative research, open-ended questions are a necessary feature for obtaining first-hand data. This is because they permit interviewees to freely give their opinions and make it easier for researchers to analyze data, opinions, and experiences, and also enable them to draw more abstract conclusions. A major advantage of using this type of question is that it helps researchers better comprehend the thoughts and beliefs of each participant (Hansen & Świdarska, 2023).

For the same reason, open-ended questions are the best option for selected teaching staff to express their unlimited reflections from a professional standpoint as teachers of English as a foreign language. This type of question will not only give instructors the opportunity to provide their insights on the sociocultural context and collaborative work in classrooms, but it will also enable researchers to further examine and interpret all the collected information in an appropriate manner.

**Tabla 1:***Data Collection Processing and Resources*

<b>Basic Questions</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>What?</b>	Interviews
<b>Where?</b>	At Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, using both on-campus spaces and virtual sessions.
<b>When?</b>	September, 2025
<b>How?</b>	One-on-one interviews, conducted through a mixed format: face-to-face and via Zoom.
<b>What for?</b>	To explore the experiences of university English teachers regarding the influence of the sociocultural context on collaborative work in EFL classrooms.

*Note:* This table presents in detail the data collection process

**Population and Sample Population**

The term population refers to a set of individuals who possess specific characteristics in a specific situation, serving as the foundation for understanding the area being examined. By outlining these characteristics, the investigator can recognize and choose individuals whose experiences produce valuable perspectives on the studied event (Sipe & Gacho Segumpan, 2024). This ensures that the collected data will be valuable for the development of this research.

A sampling method will be used to recruit educators with a range of teaching experience and career patterns. Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024) further argue that this strategy of qualitative inquiry authorizes researchers to identify cases that contribute rich information on the phenomenon under investigation. As a result, the sample will be formed by five English language teachers that should give different perspectives on the influence of context on practice for collaboration and would let both variety of and consistency in developing data.

### **Sample**

In the present study, the participants are five English teachers from Santa Elena Peninsula State University. This compilation sets out to explore sociocultural factors contributing to collaborative learning strategies in an EFL context by focussing on teachers' experiences and beliefs. The group was selected in order to meet the needs for authenticity in terms of modern teaching and also to provide some insights into a sociocultural aspect when fostering interpersonal collaborative work.

The method used for this study is qualitative, emphasizing the acquisition of in-depth and detailed perspectives. Each of the five teachers will participate in this interview guided by eight open-ended questions, allowing them to reflect and provide responses about their teaching practices and challenges. This technique ensures that the responses reflect individual perspectives and align with the primary goal of this research.

Interviews will take place in a hybrid format (in some combination of in-person and Zoom discussions) to make meetings more easily accessible. Not only is this convenient for the teachers, but it also ensures accurate recording of data. Moreover, the blending of face-to-face and online interviewing fosters a relaxed setting that elicits open response from educators about the impact of sociocultural rather than technical factors on their collaborative practices.

## Chapter IV

### Analysis of Findings

This section offers an examination and interpretation of qualitative data acquired from interviews with five English as a Foreign Language instructors at the Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena (UPSE). The central purpose of this part is to understand how the sociocultural context acts as a basis for collaborative work in EFL classrooms and how it influences the pedagogical methods of educators as well as student involvement.

The eight open-ended questions arranged along with the aims of this study enabled the interviewees to express their points of view and personal experiences about the impact of sociocultural factors played in collaboration. Educators described how aspects like students' cultural backgrounds, community principles, and prior educational encounters considerably affect how group tasks are designed, executed, and perceived within the classroom environment.

First-hand responses from teachers identified the importance of applying social and cultural elements in the teaching process through collaborative activities. Simultaneously, it was suggested that sociocultural insights lead to enhancing student involvement and motivation and fostering respectful and inclusive environments, all this in collaborative efforts. Likewise, professionals mentioned the most useful collaborative strategies and how the sociocultural elements are incorporated. Nevertheless, there exist some obstacles, such as students' insufficient vocabulary or unwillingness to participate in group activities.

Put it briefly, sociocultural context serves as a basis for collaborative work boosting student's motivation, interaction, communication skills, and sociocultural awareness inside the classroom. Conversely, it demands ongoing adjustments from teachers, who need to find a

balance between institutional expectations and approaches that respect and integrate their students' cultural backgrounds.

## Questions report

**Tabla 2**

*Results obtained from interviews with teachers from the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages major at UPSE.*

<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>AUTHORS</b>
<b>1) Role of Sociocultural Context in Collaborative Work</b>	Teachers agreed that sociocultural context plays a substantial role in providing authenticity and relevance to classroom practices. They highlighted that students' cultural backgrounds, traditions, and prior experiences shape classroom interaction. By considering these elements, teachers can design meaningful collaborative tasks that connect with real-life situations.	Lantolf et al. (2020) suggest that the theory of sociocultural learning underscores the importance of cultural and social instruments in the educational process, reinforcing the belief among educators that the context is crucial and cannot be ignored. Bastidas and Muñoz (2020) confirm this perspective within Ecuador, showing that sociocultural elements are essential and heavily affect language acquisition.
<b>2) Sociocultural Awareness as a Key to Interaction</b>	As teachers are aware of their students' sociocultural context, they can design activities and apply strategies that encourage students to actively participate, enhance interaction during the educational sessions, promote inclusivity and motivation. In addition, it is easier to expose learners to experiences in culturally diverse settings.	Based on Allami et al. (2025) findings implementing sociocultural elements in educational training increases students' competencies, as collaboration and valuable communication go beyond the classroom. Besides, carefully designed strategies integrate not only academic goals but also sociocultural awareness to strengthen students' engagement.
<b>3) Challenges in implementing the</b>	Teachers reported several challenges that arise when considering the sociocultural	Zheng et al. (2021) explain that teacher-centered traditions hinder students

<b>Sociocultural Context in Collaborative Work</b>	context in applying it to collaborative work. These included students' limited vocabulary, lack of enthusiasm for engaging in group activities, and nervousness and anxiety when communicating in English. Others highlighted that some students are not used to group activities due to traditional teacher-centered practices, which reduce participation.	willingness to participate in group tasks, as they are not familiarized to sharing knowledge or working collaboratively. In the Ecuadorian context, Guerrero and Baquerizo (2025) reported that EFL teachers struggle with limited time, insufficient training, and low student motivation, which restrict the effective implementation of group work.
<b>4) Strategies that Integrate Sociocultural Elements</b>	Among collaborative strategies that incorporate sociocultural elements and educators commonly use in their lessons, interactive activities as debates, role-playing games, projects-based tasks, and storytelling are highlighted, in which a variety of social and cultural factors can be integrated. Through these teamwork activities students discuss, make decisions, and solve real-life problems while working together, promoting a more collaborative and inclusive environment.	Collaborative activities encourage learners to construct knowledge collectively through interaction, discussion, and problem-solving. Research indicates that collaboration enhances language skills, social, and intercultural competencies (Park, 2020). While Fernández et al. (2025) bespeak that active learning approaches enclose collaborative learning, through problem-solving, role-playing, and project-based activities, reinforcing students' communicative competence in fluency and motivation.

*Note 1* the results obtained are related to teachers' perceptions of Sociocultural Context as a Foundation for Collaborative Work in EFL Classrooms, compared with the literature review.

### **Interpretation of Data from The Interview**

In accordance with the questionnaire, one category was identified for each question; however, of the eight categories, four were identified as the most relevant for analysis. The same ones that were indicated in the previous and compared with the authors mentioned to verify that

those responses are valid. This analysis yielded vital information about the role of sociocultural context in collaborative work, thanks to the willingness of experts in the field of English as a foreign language teaching.

The first category highlights the importance of sociocultural context for collaborative activities in EFL classrooms. It is teachers' observation that the students' background, habits, etc., and such milieu related fully to it has a distinct bearing on the group dynamics as also on the classroom participation. Understanding these factors provides teachers with a foundation upon which to base their lesson designs, making them more connected to students' lives and thus ensure good learning and vocabulary development in the classroom. When group activities match students' cultural backgrounds, they help to bridge the gap between classroom tasks and everyday experience; this results in active engagement and collaboration.

The second category affirms how valuable it is for teachers to have insight into the sociocultural aspects of their students. This demonstrates that teachers take into account the needs and personal traits of their students, which facilitates their teaching work when planning activities and adapting them in a way that promotes interaction and inclusion when working in teams. In addition, knowing this encourages students to participate in collaborative assignments, as the tasks are based on their social and cultural context.

The third category focuses on the main concerns of integrating the sociocultural context into collaboration tasks from a teacher perspective. They stated that many students are inhibited in using English due to language constraints, low motivation and security causing lack of willingness to participate in the group work. Moreover, teacher-centered activities decrease students' acquaintances with cooperation learning, as they fail to effectively interact with their classmates. These findings highlight the importance of methods that can increase students'

confidence, encourage their participation in using EFL, and develop real teamwork inside the classroom.

The fourth category illustrates some of the strategies that teachers include in the syllabus that integrate sociocultural elements into collaborative activities. As educators teach several subjects to a diverse group of students, various strategies are employed, such as role-plays and storytelling that promote sociocultural awareness and collaboration, project-based tasks that involve students in personal experiences and cultural aspects, debates about their interests, and reciprocal teaching which authorize learners to practice their language skills. Nonetheless, they all incorporate social, cultural, even humorous, and real-life elements to encourage students to interact, participate, communicate, and work collaboratively.

This research will be elaborated upon in the following chapter. The information obtained will be interpreted to indicate the main results of this study. This assessment will provide a basis for later close readings related to the concerns raised in Chapter I. Moreover, the results of this retrospective summative evaluation will offer a model for pedagogical suggestions and set the stage for further research in this area.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the research titled “Sociocultural Context as a Foundation for Collaborative Work in EFL Classrooms”. The conclusions are directly connected to the objectives detailed in the first chapter and respond to the questions that guided this investigation. The results emphasize how sociocultural factors affect students' motivation, participation, and interaction, while also identifying the difficulties teachers face when integrating sociocultural elements into collaborative activities.

These findings together suggest a few institutional recommendations for integrating student cultures in order to promote collaborative learning. These guidelines are made to help EFL teachers create more inclusive and enjoyable lesson-plans that better fit their students' realities, thus leading to development in both language and socio-cultural skills. When the sociocultural situation of each student is taken into account as it is woven into group tasks, teachers are able to develop educational experiences that are more real and attentive to diversity-challenges for collaboration.

### Conclusions

1. Based on the analysis of teachers' perceptions, the sociocultural context is important for designing and implementing collaborative work in the EFL classroom. Teachers recognized that students' cultural backgrounds, values, and traditions influence how they interact, contribute, and participate during group activities. Recognizing these elements helps teachers to create authentic, meaningful, and relevant tasks that

- connect learning to real-life situations, allowing inclusion and collaboration through respect and understanding.
2. In relation to the role of sociocultural context in stimulating interaction during group activity, it can be deduced that teachers who are aware of and familiar with their learners' cultural background, traditions and social life are more likely to create tasks which employ communication, team-work and cooperation. Through incorporating these cultural aspects, teachers facilitate a learning environment reflective of the dynamic, student-focused, and collaborative nature in which students are motivated to contribute to their peers.
  3. As demonstrated by the findings, implementing collaborative work serves as a useful method in teaching and learning practices, bearing in mind the students' sociocultural context. However, teachers have faced difficulties in the classroom, which stem from negative aspects related to a lack of motivation and low confidence in communicating in another language, limited vocabulary, and even differences in their beliefs and attitudes toward English, which affect group participation and interaction. Nonetheless, recognizing these drawbacks and sociocultural elements assists teachers in designing new strategies that address these shortcomings and create a collaborative and supportive environment.
  4. As revealed by the results, integrating sociocultural elements into educational strategies yields positive outcomes, including enhanced student motivation and fostered collaborative practice in EFL classrooms. This is evident in the fact that the activities contain social and cultural traits that are familiar to the students and spark their interest in connecting language, their own cultural backgrounds, and those of

their partners. Consequently, teachers acknowledge that all those strategies contribute to increasing motivation to participate and interact, authorizing learners to share ideas and experiences, communicate openly, make decisions, and solve problems when working as a team.

### **Recommendations**

1. Given the important role that sociocultural context plays in students' participation and collaboration, it is suggested that in collaborative work, teachers include this context into newcomers. By using diagnostics or reflective task-based communication, educators can learn more about their students' backgrounds, values, and experiences in order to generate group activities that are linguistically rich and socioculturally relevant. Skills like these foster empathy, and mutual understanding, as well as promoting interest in language teaching. Further, they must enable continuing professional development in areas such as intercultural competence and inclusive education to foster teaching practices that are culturally relevant to the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students.
2. In order to promote interaction and collaboration in group tasks, teachers need to design communicative activities that are modelled upon real-life contexts and social realities which their learners are acquainted with. Work that encourages students to exchange personal stories, address community problems and do local projects promotes collaboration and the development of speaking skills. Not only does this pedagogical method stimulate students' motivation and involvement, but also develops a classroom environment that advocates teamwork, respect, and cultural appreciation.

3. To meet learning and teaching needs, it is advisable to include collaborative projects that reflect real-life issues within the students' setting, so that they can practice the language beyond the content of the textbooks. Activities should be aligned with English language teaching and the students' sociocultural background, as this gives teachers an idea of their experiences, preferences, and environment, thereby sparking their interest and encouraging them to interact and communicate. Additionally, the institution should also commit to providing more than just a classroom, for example, by facilitating resources and areas for teaching that encourage teamwork and sociocultural exchange and fostering educational lectures for instructors on the importance of sociocultural awareness.
4. Teachers should encourage students to engage in social, cultural, and collaborative dynamics more often, beyond just using textbooks. In other words, when designing their classes or syllabus, they should not limit themselves to using only the resources provided by the institution and focus solely on grammar, vocabulary, or practice the language individually, but rather on the exchange of experiences, appreciation, and exposure to social and cultural diversity. On the other hand, educators should implement activities that connect real-life context and sociocultural background to motivate learners to communicate and interact in a way that strength collaborative skills inside the classrooms, letting them to practice the English language with confidence.

Ultimately, this research project attempts to demonstrate the function of sociocultural context and its contribution instructional practices by exploring its role as a basis for collaborative work and how it influences teachers' duties in teaching English as a foreign

language. Furthermore, this study illustrates the importance of considering sociocultural context into collaborative efforts to enhance motivation and interaction, the common obstacles that arise during group activities, and the strategies that employed to build collaboration among students by integrating their sociocultural factors.

In conclusion, sociocultural context plays a significant role as a foundation for collaborative work in EFL classrooms, since it facilitates the acquisition of the English language through interaction, authorizing communication to occur spontaneously. It is clear that social and cultural interventions have a strong impact on educational fields and practices, as well as on the development of strategies and promotion of collaborative dynamics.

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## Annexes

### Annex A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System

La Libertad, 29 de Octubre de 2025

#### Certificado Sistema Anti-Plagio

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado “SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT AS A FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK IN EFL CLASSROOMS” elaborado por las estudiantes, Gonzalez Medina Fabiana Salomé y Holguin Baque Mitzy Daniela, 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 3% de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente,



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Lcdo. Jefferson Sánchez Paguay, MSc.

**ADVISOR**



# Sociocultural Context as a Foundation for Collaborative Work in EFL Classrooms



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## Annex B: Questionnaire



### UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

**Interviewers:** 2

**Interviewees:** 5

The questionnaire aims to gather information about the experiences of higher education teachers regarding the role of the sociocultural context on collaborative work in EFL classrooms. Beyond serving educational purposes, the collected data will contribute to understanding the influence of sociocultural context as a foundation for collaborative work. We are genuinely grateful for your valuable contribution and for sharing your knowledge.

#### **General Objective:**

- To examine the role of the sociocultural context as a basis for collaborative work to understand its influence in EFL classrooms through research and teachers' perceptions.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- To understand how sociocultural context can contribute the effective interaction in group projects.

- To recognize the challenges faced by EFL teachers when integrating collaborative work into the classroom considering sociocultural context.
- To identify educational strategies that include sociocultural elements to foster collaborative work in EFL classrooms.

### **Questionnaire**

- 1) What role do you think the sociocultural context plays alongside collaborative work in an English as a foreign language classroom?
- 2) What do you think about the relationship between the sociocultural context and collaborative work in teaching English as a foreign language?
- 3) How important do you think it is to take into account the sociocultural context of the student when applying it to collaborative activities in an English as a foreign language class?
- 4) How does knowledge of the student's sociocultural context contribute to or improve interaction and collaborative learning in the English class?
- 5) From your experience, what institutional resources are necessary for reaching effective collaborative work?
- 6) What aspects of your students' sociocultural context do you consider to be the greatest challenges in achieving successful collaborative work?
- 7) What sociocultural elements do you consider essential when planning collaborative English activities?
- 8) What strategies do you use to integrate sociocultural elements into collaborative English activities?

## Annex C: Transcripts of interviews Categories

### Categories

Role of socio-cultural context in collaborative work  
 Relationship between socio-cultural context & collaborative work  
 Importance of considering socio-cultural context  
 Socio-cultural awareness as a key to interaction  
 Institutional resources needed  
 Challenges in implementing the sociocultural context in collaborative work  
 Socio-cultural elements for planning  
 Strategies to integrate socio-cultural elements

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
1) What role do you think the sociocultural context plays alongside collaborative work in an English as a foreign language classroom?	<p>This is a very interesting question because socio-cultural context plays a very important role in two different aspects with the students. Number one, it recalls the background and formation and cultural values that the student is bringing from home. And those backgrounds are going to interact with the learning of a second language</p>	<p>I think one of the most important aspects that I learned in the past is these aspects of background knowledge so with this background we can identify different aspects from our students, so it is necessary to know this information, basically characteristic, important characteristic about them, values, thoughts,</p>	<p>I believe that this socio-cultural context plays an important role. I guess it is a crucial role, because students don't enter the classroom as blank slates. They bring cultural norms. They bring communication styles. These factors strongly influence how they participate in groups. and how they engage with English. So, when we acknowledge, it</p>	<p>Sociocultural context plays an important and a key role in collaborative work because from those experiences that are shared or the exercises that are at work together as a group, it can come out the actual real English that is going to be applied for them. So you need to set the scenarios for</p>	<p>The role that a sociocultural context plays alongside collaborative work. Well, when students are learning a language, it is not just acquiring some specific skills like grammar, listening. It is necessary that students develop other types of skills. The sociocultural context of the students gives the teacher an idea of their beliefs, about their values, about</p>

because learning English as a foreign language is not just learning English. Learning is learning a different culture, different environment that is shaped along English learning.

communication styles, learning styles. So maybe these aspects that are necessary for this interaction, that when we are using this kind of collaborative work, that is meaningful during this process.

becomes more inclusive, more effective.

sociocultural realities for the students, real names, real places, real food that they are actually having, eating, or watching. And if they know more about this context, they will participate more and they will provide more ideas, everybody together. So it's a key role, sociocultural context in the moment of having collaborative work.

their cultural backgrounds, their experiences. So that's why it is very important that teachers know or have a great amount of information from their students because participating, having meaningful communication with the students is very important.

2) **What do you think about the relationship between the sociocultural context and collaborative work in teaching**

To answer correctly or academically this question, the relationship between social culture and collaborative is very closely related because one cannot survive with the other one. What I'm trying

Important aspects for us as teachers to identify the most important activities, maybe according to the information that we have from our students. So, we can't create activities without knowing

Well, I see this relationship as reciprocal. So, on one hand, collaborative work is more meaningful when it is connected to the students' sociocultural realities. And on the

Well, the relationship lies especially that at the moment that the teacher prepares the collaborative activity must work with sociocultural

Collaborative task allows the students to work with their classmates, right, and with other students, with peers, in the activities, that they do in class. So it is very important that relationship between

<p><b>English as a foreign language?</b></p>	<p>to say is that if a student is trying to learn a foreign language, it needs to search for the background, for the background of the personal growing up. And this, we are talking about values, we are talking about more, we are talking about many different values that the student is bringing from home towards the classroom.</p>	<p>about them. We have to analyze them and identify these important aspects and apply it in the classroom.</p>	<p>other hand, these collaborative activities can help themselves help students to achieve their perspectives. So, we practice negotiation of meaning, we develop intercultural competences, which is vital in language learning.</p>	<p>context. As I said a moment ago, one thing is to work with the books. Another thing is to apply all the information that they have to the books into real contexts. And in order to apply this into a real context, the teacher must design the activities of collaborative work using sociocultural context. So, they must be completely related.</p>	<p>sociocultural context and collaborative work, especially in learning a foreign language, because with collaborative activities, students perform in a better way, especially in speaking activities. And they, as I said before, they develop other types of skills because they communicate with their peers, they share information, they also help each other, and it is not just about developing communication skills. They also develop soft skills with collaborative activities.</p>
<p><b>3) How important do you think it is to take into account the sociocultural</b></p>	<p>This is another great question. To answer this is that one of the important aspects that socio-cultural theory brings in order for the students to assimilate</p>	<p>It is very important, I consider, because we can make sure that they contribute to them with this learning process. These activities can</p>	<p>Well, I think that it's essential. So, because if we ignore the sociocultural context, we take a risk. So, we risk like designing activities</p>	<p>It's super important because at the moment that the student is applying English in a sociocultural context, the</p>	<p>It is very important because students bring their own sociocultural identities. Everybody has their own identities, right? They</p>

**context of the student when applying it to collaborative activities in an English as a foreign language class?**

correctly English as a foreign language is, for example, cooperative work, reciprocal teaching, and also using a language and culture that are relevant to the tools that they are learning. And those tools are provided by teachers here at UPSE from the very beginning, from semester number one all the way through semester number eight.

be relevant, inclusive maybe, with a high level of motivation too, so I consider that they are really important, so it is necessary to know these aspects of our students' backgrounds.

that are not aligned with the students or even making them feel uncomfortable. But when they take into account these types of activities that become more relevant, become more motivating. So, our students feel valued. So, it lets them, and even it lets them as students, as me as a teacher, to reach this interaction and we can perform better learning outcomes.

students are actually having more than the creation. The students memorize, practice, analyze, study. At the moment that you go outside the zone of approximate development. At that point, when you surpass that zone is when they apply sociocultural context. So It means that it is super important to apply the sociocultural context in order to students to develop the higher levels of cognition.

express themselves with a politeness, they show their attitudes they have towards their classmates or towards the class, they express about their beliefs. So, with a sociocultural share, they also shape these collaboration skills. And they also develop others skills, other skills, as I said, because when they are speaking to each other, they also learn to develop active listening, and also, they show respect to the other students. They can express their opinions and they can express disagreements maybe, but with respect depending on the socio-cultural identity that they have. The socio-cultural context is developed with the

4) **How does knowledge of the student's sociocultural context contribute to or improve interaction and collaborative learning in the English class?**

It's a very important question because of the knowledge that the students and the motivation that the students provide in order for their learning. That is planted at home. How I can say this, because students, when they come to the university, they already bring in values. Values, behavioral context, and also how they can interact among other students. So socio-cultural context plays a very important role in this regards.

Well, I consider that there are a lot of these maybe reasons or aspects that can help, but basically I consider that these something that's it's really like a challenge sometimes, depending on the students that we have, that we can go for this aspect of participation so we can motivate, encourage the participation of other students, maybe decrease their level of anxiety, something that they don't want to do, they don't want to participate because maybe they are going to make mistakes, but basically consider

Well, I think that it really helps. It really helps us to adapt or to adapt the way that we organize the groups, that we foster interaction and also that we manage the interaction. For example, in some cultures, students may be or may feel less comfortable out of the whole class, but they feel more confident, perhaps in small groups. So, knowing this allows me to create these learning conditions where everyone can participate more actively and everyone feels safe to express

Definitely, sociocultural context is going to give the students more ideas to participate and more ideas to feel like they know the information and they can transmit the information. So for example, if we talk with students about Barcelona from Ecuador, or we talk about, another soccer team that maybe the girls don't recognize or the girls who don't like sports or soccer especially, there will be like

family, with the relationship that they have in the society, with the neighbors, with all the people who they have any type of relationship.

Knowing about their sociocultural context is going to help the teacher to plan the activities in class because the teacher will know about the student's culture.

Nowadays, we can have students from different regions in Ecuador and not only from Ecuador, we can have students from other countries. So it is very important that we know about the students' beliefs, about the students' cultures, and it is going to help the students to know more about them and to interact with people from different

		that this can help a lot with this participation in an excellent level.	themselves. It's like creating this community of learning together.	fewer students who are going to participate. But if you work with Barcelona, or with a team or with a famous person from here, from Ecuador, they are going to feel more related, so they will have more ideas to apply, to tell in the context, and they are going to feel more motivated to participate.	regions or countries. And in that way, engage more actively. It is necessary that teachers make all the activities, all the collaborative activities with a purpose to include them in the learning goals that the teacher sets every day for the classes.
5) <b>From your experience, what institutional resources are necessary for reaching effective collaborative work?</b>	Wow, now we're talking about different aspects. As an English teacher, I'm an English teacher with a lot of experience in a teaching environment. I believe that the institutions are supposed to provide with us with many different resources.	I consider that we can identify different aspects, such as basically digital tools that we can use. Teacher, so we can, as a teacher, to know how we can apply a different activity, so this kind of updating knowledge is important for teacher. Also, we need space. Sometimes there are	Well, we can say that we need both, but we need materials, we need resources, but also we need this institutional support. Also, the access to authentic materials, authentic resources, technology, technology for communication, different spaces that	Definitely, I know that the books that the Ministry of Education works with the students, they are applying the sociocultural context. They are using pictures, situations, readings about Ecuador, and that is very good. At university levels,	Well, for every class, especially for English classes, it is necessary that the students and also the teacher have the necessary technological resources because to have access to the internet, for example, because it is easier to surf the internet and find more

One of the most important resources that the institution is supposed to give us is seminars. They are supposed to give us seminars, they are supposed to provide us with the proper tools in order for us, we teachers, need to keep going and keep working in the teaching process in the socio-cultural environment.

classrooms with very that the space is not proper. So, the space and these essential materials may be some aspect that they can work. So, I think they are the most important from my perspective.

are designed for the interaction, are relevant, are important, but at the same time, institutional backing is important. For example, teaching training, different policies that can encourage collaboration, and also innovation in our classroom practices.

we also need to have our own books, our own resources that may relate future teachers with their reality. So it's important that not only the parents should buy the information, but the teachers must create the information to have this resource to be applied for the students.

information about the different customs or culture that each of the students have. So it is necessary that they can also do research about the different types of cultures that may be a part of the classroom. So I think it is important that the teachers count on the technological resources to have access to the cultural information maybe that can be shared, so that the students know more about cultural traditions, about food, about historical sites from every region where the students belong.

6) **What aspects of your students' sociocultural context do you consider to be the greatest**

Absolutely. The aspects that every student is supposed to present, the same scenario that every teacher is supposed to present, are again, the values, the

Well, it could be this communication style, so these students have different characteristics, so maybe these communication styles, the level

Well, we can see that one of the main challenges is the diversity of communication styles and attitudes. Attitudes toward teamwork. So, some

Students sociocultural context to be the greatest challenges. First, for the students to place them into a sociocultural

Well, maybe some of the greatest challenges could be related to the customs that traditions that the students have, I mean religion. Maybe some people have some

**challenges in achieving successful collaborative work?**

motivation, and the desire that these students applies in order to learn a foreign language. For example, if a student does not have the cultural motivation to learn a different culture, how can these students going to learn? And this, adding to the personal interaction, to the personal interest that the students provide, will allow for these students to go along and get an acceptable learning process and also go into the professional life.

maybe of the students, the English sometimes can be something that stops our activities barrier to complete maybe some of them. So, we have to identify all of the details. So, all of this is balanced and can be connected with activities that we are that we planned at the beginning, and we consider important to complete in the classroom.

students are used to more teacher-centered approach. All right. And they can have difficulties with active participation. So, socioeconomic differences can also affect access to resources, to technology for collaboration. And of course, the expectations, I mean, the cultural expectations about the authority or gender roles. can also influence how they interact with each other.

context in another language is going to be the challenge, how to say the things besides books. The book says, the snow is white, but here we can say the mango tree is very big, so they must have the right vocabulary words because it's not in the book directly so that is the challenge to look for the actual word that is going to serve for me as a student to tell you how is that done in the context, so I think that the challenge is to look for the words that are not on the books to try to cooperate and try to participate, and that is the

types of beliefs that not all the people know, and it is necessary that that we know them because we have to respect that, and maybe that could be the greatest challenge that we have to achieve because for some cultures. They have specific customs, they are not used to some practices, but they need to adapt. Sometimes when you move from one city to another, or when you move from one country to another, you have to adapt to the food, to the traditions, to the culture, right? And we need to know that, it is very important that teachers use that information also in classes because it's necessary that all the

				<p>challenge. Another thing is <b>the pronunciation</b>. Sometimes when you have things on the book, you have, <b>for example, many ideas that are not in our context</b>. So at the moment that the student doesn't feel like, how do I say this? Because I have all these ideas, I understand the context, but I cannot say it. That is the challenge, mostly. Once they get information, they are free to participate.</p>	<p>students feel that they are part of the class, that they are present, that they are not invisible to the other students or to the teacher.</p>
<p>7) <b>What sociocultural elements do you consider essential when planning collaborative</b></p>	<p>One of the elements that we already emphasized, and I believe that what was the most important elements that we can identify is the <b>social backgrounds</b>. The <b>socio-cultural</b></p>	<p>Well, <b>prior knowledge</b> would be one important aspect in this part, something that they like, interest, <b>something that we consider that is updated, something</b></p>	<p>Okay, so we consider <b>students' cultural identity, also their prior knowledge, their background with education, and their values related to teamwork</b>, how they</p>	<p>When a teacher plans collaborative activities in <b>English, teachers should know exactly the audience they are working on</b>. You</p>	<p>Talking about sociocultural elements, it could be necessary that <b>the teacher knows about the students' cultural backgrounds, that the teacher knows about their values</b> to</p>

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**English activities?**

background that the students mentally need to bring. So, the principal element is the desire and the motivation.

about movies, something that they like that we can modify the activity and take it in the classroom. Values and could be in this case, well, level of in this too because they are something that we need to in the classroom. So, basically, they are the most important according to my opinion.

appreciate teamwork. So, I also pay attention to different issues like gender dynamics or community traditions and their own interests. So, these factors can either encourage or discourage participation.

may have two classes, the same level, but one class is going to be different from the other class. So a teacher must plan for this class and they plan for this class. That is the first thing, to consider that every single class should be planned differently according to their sociocultural context. Second, I consider that the teacher must know what is happening around this class. So the teacher is going to plan activities, elements, exercises, ideas, considering their reality, their social cultural context. So it's important that the teacher is going to

promote respect any kind of differences that all the students have. Another important sociocultural element could be the way that the teacher forms, for example, the role plays or the dynamics when they have to work in groups to consider the student's skills, so the groups can be balanced, to include in each of the groups, students that have different skills so that they can help each other. The purpose of collaborative strategies is that the students help each other to improve and to take advantage of the skills that each of the students have in order to improve also individually. So it is necessary that the teacher considers that when she is working

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be involved with the community, with authorities, with the previous teachers, with family members, or with the reality that the students are, where are you watching? Where are they looking? Do you have internet? Do you have a cell phone? Do you have a favorite YouTuber? Do you have a favorite movie, a favorite character? Oh, you don't have access to that. Okay. What do you have? What do you like? Do you like nature? Do you like your house? Do you like the rivers? Do you like the sea? So you need to understand all

with collaborative activities, it is necessary that the teacher knows most of the information from the students about their lives, about their traditions, about their needs, about their professional goals. It is necessary that they work together with the rules that they have to follow during the classes, that they agree or they construct these own rules with the teacher. So everybody agrees on what to do and how to do it to establish norms for collaboration when they are working in groups to respect the students' turn takings and opinions and things like that.

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the situation, not every single one, because it's going to be impossible, but at least a general expectation of what is the class about, so you can plan a good course for them.

8) What strategies do you use to integrate sociocultural elements into collaborative English activities?

Well, this is one of the strategies that are normally used is, for example, collaborative group work and also reciprocal teaching. What is reciprocal teaching? Reciprocal teaching is a collaborative learning activity where teachers allow students to interact among themselves. This way, the students will feel comfortable and also confident enough to speak, not only to practice their speaking abilities, but

One of these aspects could be projects-based learning, that it is something that they have to interact, they have to identify what are some important elements that they have to discuss, they have to create different elements of discussions, interchange ideas, decide which one is the best. In all of these, they are interchanging important aspects like personal interests, experience, cultural aspects. They are

Well, you know that I like to design tasks that let students feel comfortable and bring their own culture. So, we can apply different things, such as storytelling and role plays. Okay, but this is storytelling or role plays. This interaction is based on real community situations or maybe problem-solving tasks connected to personal issues, local issues. Okay, so also, we can mix these groups so students can share different

Well, the strategies that I use are mostly questions and answers. When we do any game, we apply names. And it depends on the people. For example, in my case, when I work with personal disruptions with adults, I have like a very nice, handsome guy, for example, Cristiano Ronaldo, the adult male audience are going to say "I know he's

During collaborative activities, well, I usually consider the rules that they have to follow, the number of members in each of the groups and the role that each of the students should have so that everybody works in the group. And another thing is, for example, if there are students from different regions in Ecuador or maybe if I have students from different countries, because that could happen, to work with these traditions to include in the

also to know that making mistakes is part of the learning process. And that comes along with the cultural background. So, very interesting question. And I believe that reciprocal teaching is one of the elements that I will use the most.

using this kind of communication. So basically, with this kind of activity, maybe they can join all of these elements and apply with these projects-based learning. And we consider as a teacher that they need to complete, in this case, in English, maybe.

perspectives. After these activities, I encourage a reflection, all right, where they are allowed to discuss cultural similarities and differences, but I think that it not only has a purpose of developing language, but also, we are fostering this intercultural awareness.

handsome, okay, he's mostly". And they start having these descriptions and the ladies are happy at that moment. And I am going to change now to a female character. So all the men go like, "oh my God, who's coming?" And I place the picture of Betty La Fea. So they're like "Betty La Fea, Miss", "yes, she's a lady, you have to describe her". And they say, "no, I was waiting for such a nice lady". No, so motivation, expectation, and sometimes this kind of humor that is going to appeal to students is going to be very helpful at the moment of

activities, topics like cultural topics. For example, when we're working with food, Okay. It is it is an opportunity to talk about a typical food in in different regions in Ecuador. There are students from the coast, there are students from the highlands, or maybe there are students from other countries so they can talk about their typical foods in their regions. Also depending on the activity. For any activity, teachers can have an opportunity to include cultural aspects in the activities so that the students share this information about the city where they were born including information about these places, especially from our country, because you

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<p>applying real life situations for them. So it's not necessarily to have their favorite YouTuber. We don't know exactly if that YouTuber is a very good person, but maybe just to mention that. If you really know that, you will see that you will have to change the students' expectations. You apply the sociocultural context, but not exactly as people were expecting. So the surprise factor is super important at the moment that you apply any of these strategies with the students.</p>	<p>know that in English textbooks, they usually have information from other countries, from the United States, from England. So it is important that we use also information from our country to develop, especially to develop culture and love for our regions. So that's what I usually do.</p>
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*Note:* This table shows the results of the interviews conducted with the five EFL teachers from Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages

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**Annex D: Evidence from the interviews**

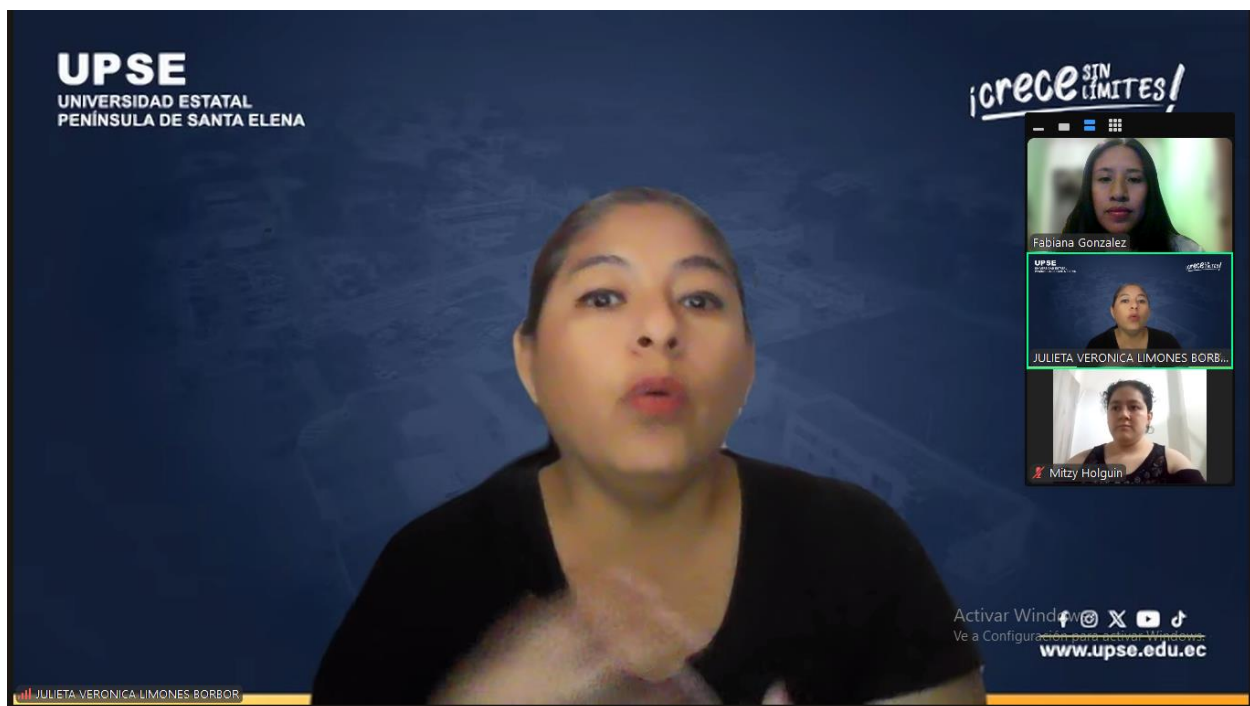
**Source:** photo taken from interview conducted with participant 1.



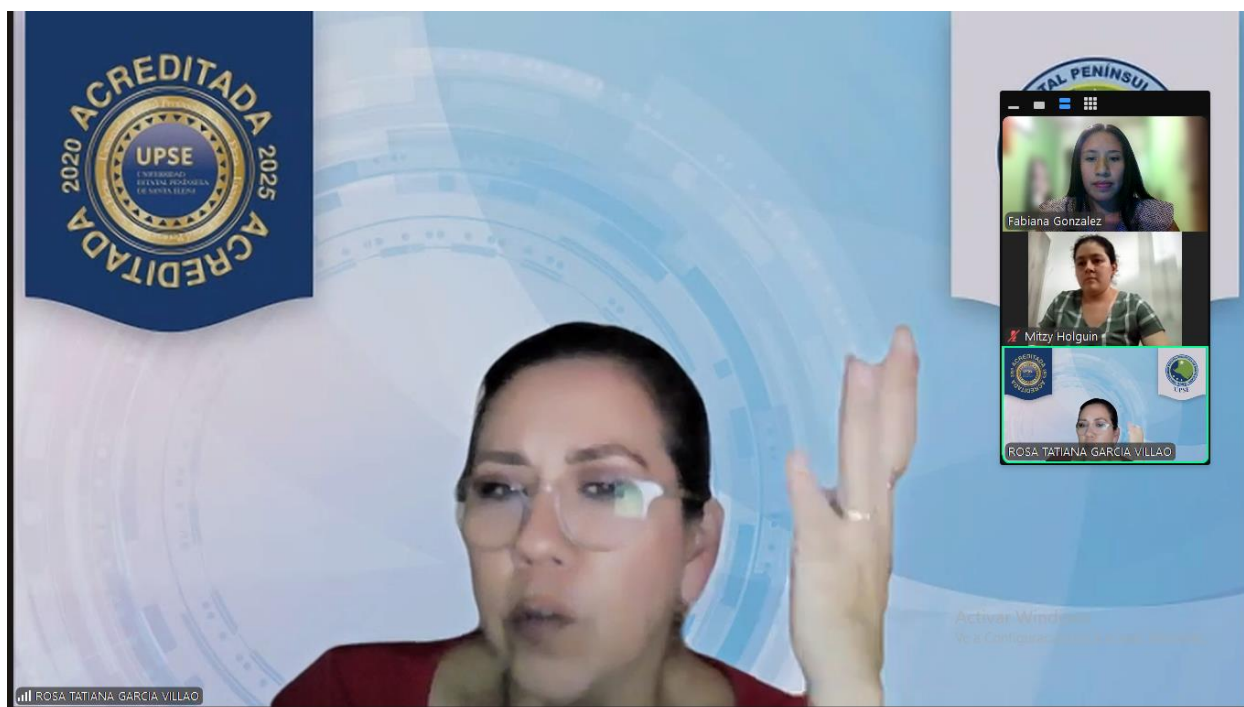
**Source:** photo taken from interview conducted with participant 4.



**Source:** photo taken from interview conducted with participant 2.



**Source:** photo taken from interview conducted with participant 3.



**Source:** photo taken from interview conducted with participant 5.