



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

**“CHALLENGES FACED BY NON-NATIVE ENGLISH
TEACHERS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
CLASSROOM PRACTICES”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR´S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL
AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Author: Yagual Valverde George Daniel

Advisor: Ing. García Villao Rosa Tatiana, MSc.

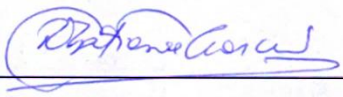
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Advisor's Approval

In my role as Advisor of the research paper under the title Challenges Faced by Non-Native English Teachers: Professional Development and Classroom Practices prepared by Yagual Valverde George Daniel, 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 the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,

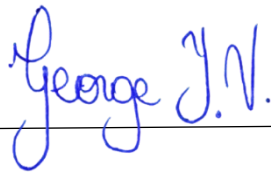


Ing. García Villao Rosa Tatiana, MSc.

ADVISOR

Statement of Authorship

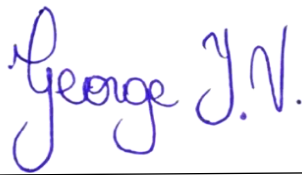
I, **Yagual Valverde George Daniel**, with ID number **2450466566** undergraduate students from Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, School of Education Science and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages in our role as authors of the research project "**Challenges Faced by Non-Native English Teachers: Professional Development and Classroom Practices**" certify that this study work is our authorship, except for quotes, statements, and reflections in the research paper.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "George J.V.", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Yagual Valverde George Daniel
AUTHOR

Declaration.

The content of the following graduation work is my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to peninsula de santa elena state university.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "George J.V." in a cursive script.

Yagual Valverde George Daniel

AUTHOR

Board of Examiners



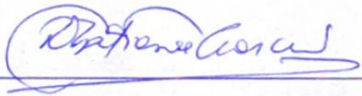
Ing. León Abad Eliana Geomar, MSc.

**PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN
LANGUAGES MAJOR'S DIRECTOR**



Lcdo. Intriago Alcívar Wellintong Segundo, MSc.

SPECIALIST PROFESSOR



Ing. García Villao Tatiana Rosa, MSc.

ADVISOR



Lcdo. Nieto Herrera Diego Josué, MSc.

PROFESSOR, UIC

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Above all, I want to thank my Almighty Jehovah for giving me the strength and wisdom to face the challenges that have arisen on my path, guiding me through a life filled with joy and pride a life I am certain I will never regret.

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“This achievement is not mine alone. It belongs to everyone who was here, to those who are no longer with us, and to those who never stopped believing in me.”

Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my parents, who taught me the value of hard work and the importance of never giving up, even in the most difficult times. To my sister, Sofía, for her love, support, and for always being there when I needed her. To my "Rezagados 2.0" group, for supporting me at every stage of the journey, for sharing this experience with me, and for motivating me with their company.

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But above all, I dedicate it to myself, because every time I felt I could not go on and wanted to give up, I did not. Even when everything around me was falling apart, I found the strength to keep going and reach this point in my life. This thesis is proof that, despite everything, I made it.

With love

George Daniel Yagual Valverde

Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of non-native English teachers at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) regarding the challenges they face in their professional development and classroom practices. The research responds to a gap in the literature: while international and regional studies have examined the struggles of non-native English teachers, little is known about how these teachers experience such challenges within the Ecuadorian higher education context. The general objective was to explore these perceptions in order to understand how linguistic confidence, professional development opportunities, and institutional support shape teaching effectiveness. A qualitative, phenomenological design was used, gathering data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with five non-native English teachers currently working at UPSE. The results showed that English proficiency and accent strongly influence teachers' self-confidence and classroom interaction, often leading them to rely on structured activities instead of spontaneous communication. Participants also identified gaps in current professional development programs, which tend to focus on general pedagogy rather than the specific linguistic and emotional needs of non-native teachers. Heavy workloads and the absence of mentoring programs further limited opportunities for growth. The study concludes that strengthening self-efficacy, offering specialized training, and improving institutional support are essential steps toward enhancing teaching practices at UPSE.

KEY WORDS: Non-native English teachers, professional development, self-efficacy, classroom practices, linguistic insecurity.

Resumen

Este estudio explora las percepciones de los docentes de inglés no nativos de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) sobre los retos que enfrentan en su desarrollo profesional y en sus prácticas de aula. La investigación responde a un vacío en la literatura: aunque existen estudios internacionales y regionales sobre las dificultades de los docentes no nativos de inglés, se sabe poco sobre cómo estos profesionales viven dichos retos dentro del contexto de la educación superior ecuatoriana. El objetivo general fue explorar estas percepciones para comprender cómo la confianza lingüística, las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional y el apoyo institucional influyen en la efectividad de la enseñanza. Se utilizó un diseño cualitativo de tipo fenomenológico, recolectando la información mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas individuales a cinco docentes de inglés no nativos que trabajan actualmente en la UPSE. Los resultados mostraron que el nivel de inglés y el acento influyen fuertemente en la confianza y en la interacción en el aula, llevando a los docentes a depender de actividades estructuradas en lugar de la comunicación espontánea. Los participantes también identificaron vacíos en los programas actuales de desarrollo profesional, los cuales se enfocan más en la pedagogía general que en las necesidades lingüísticas y emocionales específicas de los docentes no nativos. La carga excesiva de trabajo y la falta de programas de mentoría limitaron aún más sus oportunidades de crecimiento. El estudio concluye que fortalecer la autoeficacia, ofrecer capacitación especializada y mejorar el apoyo institucional son pasos esenciales para mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza en la UPSE.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Docentes de inglés no nativos, desarrollo profesional, autoeficacia, prácticas de aula, inseguridad lingüística.

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Introduction

English has become one of the main tools people need today for education, work, and communication. Because of this, schools continue to seek English teachers who can meet these demands. But many English teachers around the world are not native speakers, and they often face real challenges that affect how they teach and connect with students, usually a mix of low confidence, weak training, and the persistent belief that native speakers are simply better teachers.

Several studies support this. In the United States, Hebbard (2024) found that non-native teachers' sense of themselves as professionals depends largely on what their institution expects and on the belief that native speakers are the true language experts. Selvi and Yazan (2023) add that school systems often do not give these teachers the same access to training as native speakers receive.

In Latin America, the situation is comparable. In Colombia, Cañas Guzmán and Gómez Navarro (2026) explain that communicating well in class takes more than grammar it also means understanding the social side of language. Pacheco Vásquez and Veas Aguirre (2024) found that anxiety and insecurity get in the way of good communication for both students and teachers.

In Ecuador, the Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2008) recognizes education as a basic right and calls for inclusive, quality teaching. Even so, many non-native English teachers still face training gaps, low confidence, and outdated materials. At Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE), these same problems appear: some teachers struggle with their English level, confidence, institutional support, and classroom interaction, which can affect both their teaching and student engagement.

While there is already research on this topic internationally and regionally, little is known about how non-native English teachers in Ecuadorian higher education actually understand and describe these challenges, especially at UPSE. This study aims to fill that gap by examining their perspectives directly.

The main question guiding this research is: How do non-native English teachers at UPSE perceive the influence of professional development challenges on their classroom practices and instructional performance? The general objective is to explore these perceptions to understand how they shape teaching effectiveness. The specific objectives are: to identify how English proficiency influences confidence and classroom interaction; to describe the challenges around professional development and institutional support; and to analyze how emotional, linguistic, and institutional factors affect classroom practices.

To answer this, the study uses a qualitative, phenomenological approach, gathering data through one-on-one interviews with five non-native English teachers at UPSE. The goal is to gain a clearer understanding of their experiences and help UPSE develop support that responds effectively to their needs.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

Exploring the Challenges in Professional Development and Classroom Practices of Non-Native English Teachers.

Title

Challenges Faced by Non-Native English Teachers: Professional Development and Classroom Practices.

Problem Statement

In today's globalized world, English has become an essential language for communication, higher education, and professional growth. Consequently, educational institutions increasingly require qualified English teachers capable of responding to modern academic demands. However, non-native English-speaking teachers frequently experience professional and pedagogical challenges that may affect their teaching effectiveness and classroom interaction.

At the international level, studies conducted in countries such as the United States and Spain have highlighted the barriers faced by non-native English teachers. In the United States, Hebbard (2024) explained that professional identity is strongly influenced by institutional expectations and perceptions regarding native-speaker superiority. Likewise, Selvi and Yazan (2023) emphasized that educational systems often limit teachers' access to professional development opportunities and specialized pedagogical training.

At the Latin American level, researchers have also examined the relationship between communicative competence, emotional factors, and instructional performance. In Colombia, Cañas Guzmán and Gómez Navarro (2026) explained that communicative competence requires sociolinguistic and pragmatic abilities for meaningful classroom interaction. Similarly, Pacheco Vásquez and Veas Aguirre (2024) demonstrated that language anxiety and emotional insecurity negatively influence communication and participation during the teaching-learning process.

At the national level, Ecuadorian educational policies promote the improvement of English language teaching and teacher professional development. The Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2008) recognizes education as a fundamental right and encourages inclusive and high-quality educational practices. Yet these reforms have not been enough on their own: a large number of non-native English teachers in Ecuador still contend with gaps in professional training, ongoing struggles with communicative confidence, and restricted access to current teaching materials.

The Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) is a significant local institution where English pedagogy professors are expected to exhibit creative teaching methods and effective communication ability and innovative teaching methodologies. However, preliminary observations suggest that some non-native English teachers may experience difficulties related to language proficiency, professional confidence, institutional support, and classroom interaction. Consequently, these challenges may influence teaching effectiveness and student engagement within the educational environment.

However, despite the growing body of international and regional research on the challenges faced by non-native English teachers, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding how these challenges are specifically experienced and perceived by NNESTs working

in Ecuadorian higher education institutions. In particular, little is known about how non-native English teachers at UPSE perceive the relationship between their professional development opportunities, their linguistic confidence, and their daily classroom practices. This research therefore seeks to address this gap by providing contextually grounded insights into the lived experiences of NNESTs within the local academic community.

Justification

This study is socially important because English language teaching plays a fundamental role in academic and professional development in today's globalized society. Consequently, improving the quality of English instruction may contribute to better educational opportunities and stronger professional preparation for students. Furthermore, understanding the challenges experienced by non-native English teachers may help institutions create more inclusive and supportive educational environments (Selvi & Yazan, 2023).

At the international and Latin American levels, several studies have highlighted the difficulties faced by non-native English teachers in educational settings. In the United States, Hebbard (2024) explains that how these teachers see themselves as professionals depends a lot on what their school expects from them, and on the common belief that native speakers are simply better teachers. Something similar comes up in Colombia, where Cañas Guzmán and Gómez Navarro (2026) point out that being able to communicate well in class is not just about knowing grammar rules it also means understanding the social side of language and knowing what to say and how to say it depending on the situation. Put together, these studies make one thing clear: teachers need more support to grow professionally and to feel more confident when they communicate.

At the national and local levels, this study matters because many non-native English teachers in Ecuador still face real challenges, such as not getting enough training, having a hard time interacting with students in class, and lacking access to updated teaching materials. At Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE), these problems can affect how well teachers do their job and how motivated students feel to learn. That is why this research aims to add to qualitative studies by listening to the actual experiences and opinions of non-native English teachers, hoping to help improve both their teaching practices and the support they receive from the institution.

Problem question

How do non-native English teachers at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) perceive the influence of professional development challenges on their classroom practices and instructional performance?

Specific questions

1. How does language proficiency influence the self-confidence and instructional performance of non-native English pedagogy teachers?
2. What are the perceptions of non-native English pedagogy teachers regarding the relevance and institutional support provided by existing professional development programs?
3. How do emotional, linguistic, and institutional factors influence the teaching practices of non-native English teachers within the educational environment?

General Objective

To explore the perceptions of non-native English teachers at UPSE regarding the challenges they face in their professional development and classroom practices in order to understand how these factors shape their teaching effectiveness.

Specific objectives

- To identify the perceptions of non-native English teachers about how language proficiency influences their professional confidence and classroom interaction.
- To describe the challenges experienced by non-native English teachers in relation to professional development opportunities and institutional support at UPSE.
- To analyze how emotional, linguistic, and institutional factors influence the classroom practices of non-native English teachers within the educational environment.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

The increasing demand for qualified English teachers in globalized educational contexts has positioned Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) as the majority of the world's English teaching workforce. Yet qualifications and solid pedagogical training do not shield these educators from a deeper, structural problem: the native speaker fallacy, an ideology that wrongly values the accident of birth over actual teaching competence and professional skill. Grasping how far-reaching this issue is from the international stage down to the regional and local level is a necessary first step before we can meaningfully tackle the specific classroom and professional struggles faced by non-native English teachers at UPSE.

At the international level, Thuy (2025) conducted a qualitative study in Vietnam aimed at examining the professional experiences of non-native English teachers in higher education. The research utilized semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of university English teachers and revealed that deep-seated institutional biases significantly limit NNESTs' credibility and access to professional resources. This study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates that linguistic discrimination affects non-native teachers' professional confidence and instructional performance across different educational contexts.

Similarly, Nigat-Tulod (2025) conducted a qualitative investigation in Macau aimed at exploring the challenges faced by secondary school non-native English teachers in meeting institutional demands while responding to students' learning needs. The findings revealed that language proficiency biases and conflicting institutional expectations create significant professional barriers for NNESTs. This study contributes to the present investigation because it

provides empirical evidence that institutional pressure and linguistic bias directly influence nonnative teachers' classroom performance and professional identity.

Furthermore, Altaai and Gokgoz-Kurt (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study examining the experiences of expatriate non-native English teachers, revealing that linguistic insecurity combined with unfamiliarity with local educational systems negatively affects their instructional performance. Likewise, Nigar et al. (2025) elaborated on the systemic marginalization of immigrant NNESTs in Australia, who must negotiate hybrid professional identities despite their high level of preparation and long-term dedication to English language teaching. These international studies collectively demonstrate the widespread nature of the professional challenges faced by NNESTs and reinforce the need for contextually specific research such as the present study.

Turning to the Latin American context, Zamora Alvarado et al. (2024) carried out a comparative study spanning several countries in the region, examining how well existing teacher training frameworks actually support non-native English instructors. What they found was telling: these regional frameworks often fall short when it comes to offering the metacognitive and pedagogical support instructors need to build genuine professional self-efficacy. Cañas and Gómez (2026) add another layer to this picture, pointing out that in Spanish-speaking settings, developing communicative competence can be genuinely difficult, not just because of psychological barriers, but also due to the lack of clear institutional guidance on how a teacher's professional path should unfold. These regional findings are directly relevant to the present research because they highlight that the structural limitations faced by NNESTs in Latin America mirror the challenges experienced by non-native English teachers at UPSE.

At the local level, the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) reflects these global and regional challenges within its own academic community. Preliminary observations suggest that non-native English teachers at this institution may experience difficulties related to the gap between high professional standards and the limited linguistic and pedagogical support provided by the institution. These challenges may influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy, professional confidence, and ability to maximize student engagement within the classroom. Consequently, this study seeks to fill the gap between global research findings and local educational practice by conducting a phenomenological examination of the lived experiences of non-native English teachers at UPSE, ultimately contributing to the improvement of professional development policies and instructional support systems within the Ecuadorian higher education context.

Pedagogical basis

Constructivist theory sits at the heart of this study's pedagogical approach. It is a theory that pushes back against the old idea of teaching as simply transmitting information, favoring instead something more reflective, something built around the student. Piaget put it well: learners do not just receive knowledge, they build it themselves, bit by bit, through their own interaction with the world around them and every new experience forces them to rework how they understand things (Fernández et al., 2025). That same thinking shows up in more contemporary frameworks too. Education 4.0, for instance, holds onto the constructivist core but changes what the teacher is supposed to do less a source of answers, more a guide who leans on critical reflection and action research to keep up with classrooms that are only getting more complicated (Zamora Alvarado et al., 2024). And here's why that matters for non-native English teachers at

UPSE it means their linguistic imperfections are not something to hide or apologize for. They are simply part of what it looks like to grow, professionally, over time.

Teachers today are expected to be more than just conveyors of information; they are "*architects of learning experiences*," as the phrase goes, actively shaping the space where student participation can actually happen. There is a dual role at play here too: alongside guiding lessons, the teacher also becomes something of a cultural mediator. Using the right pedagogical tools, they walk students through their zone of proximal development, nudging them little by little toward greater autonomy, all while keeping the classroom feeling supportive and genuinely interactive (Jiang et al., 2025).

Implementation of active methodologies, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL), is instrumental in enhancing critical thinking and scientific creativity. Syamra and Suryadi (2025) highlight that PBL fosters deeper student engagement by requiring learners to generate original solutions to complex problems. Furthermore, collaborative models provide structured environments where collective problem-solving and peer review foster a culture of academic belonging and deepen conceptual understanding for all participants.

A teacher's sense of professional identity, once it is solid, ends up shaping the quality of their teaching in real, tangible ways confident educators simply handle the emotional side of learning better. Building that kind of stable identity is not automatic, though; Hebbard (2024) points out that it takes constant balancing between who a teacher feels they are personally and what the institution expects of them. And when self-efficacy is genuinely strong, teachers tend to lean into communicative approaches that put student progress first, which in turn helps lower the "Affective filter" and eases language anxiety in the classroom.

Teaching is not just about getting the grammar right; it is really about the human side of communication. Cañas Guzmán and Gómez Navarro (2026) point out that real fluency means

knowing how to connect with people and feel comfortable in different social situations, not just knowing the rules of a language. When we let students use translanguaging in class, meaning they can mix and use all the languages they know, we are allowing them to bring their whole selves into learning. This helps them understand difficult topics better and get closer to reaching their full potential.

Today's teaching is about more than just technology; it is about using digital tools and AI to create a space where everyone can adapt and grow. We are moving away from the pressure of traditional testing toward formative assessment, a way of providing steady, caring feedback that helps students feel seen and supported throughout their journey. As Saltos (2023) highlights, this approach gives students the power to track their own progress and find the study habits that work best for them. When we balance these modern efficiencies with the warmth of personalized human feedback, we build an environment at institutions like UPSE where every student and teacher can develop lasting skills with genuine confidence.

Theoretical basis

Social Cognitive Theory and Teacher Self-Efficacy

At the heart of this study is the belief that our confidence is not just something we are born with; it is a living part of us that grows through our life stories, the people we meet, and the world around us. This idea comes from Albert Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, and basically it tells us that how capable we feel is closely tied to our own personal experiences and journey. In the classroom, this turns into what's called "teacher self-efficacy" that inner strength and quiet confidence that lets a teacher handle everyday challenges and really connect with their students. For teachers at UPSE, building this kind of self-belief matters a lot, because it can turn the tough moments in their work into real opportunities to grow and to inspire others. According

to San Roque and Valle (2025), teachers with high self-efficacy demonstrate greater motivation, stronger classroom management, and more innovative instructional practices. In contrast, educators with low confidence often avoid communicative interaction and experience significant anxiety during instruction, which directly limits their ability to create meaningful learning experiences.

This theory serves as the central framework of the present study because non-native English teachers at UPSE frequently face insecurity regarding pronunciation, fluency, and linguistic competence, which directly influences their instructional performance and classroom interaction. Furthermore, Corral-Guerrero et al. (2024) emphasize that professional training and institutional support significantly strengthen teacher self-efficacy, reinforcing the idea that continuous professional development can improve the confidence and pedagogical effectiveness of non-native English teachers within the local educational context.

Teacher Professional Identity Theory

Complementing Bandura's perspective on individual confidence, Teacher Professional Identity Theory explains how educators construct their professional image through personal experiences, institutional expectations, and social interaction. Self-efficacy is about what teachers believe they can do; professional identity is a different animal altogether it is about how teachers see their place within a much wider social and institutional picture. And that identity isn't something fixed once and for all. Hebbard (2024) makes this point clearly: it keeps shifting throughout a teacher's career, responding to whatever new demands and experiences come along. For non-native English teachers at UPSE specifically, this identity gets shaped by things like their linguistic background, their cultural experiences, and, often, by lingering perceptions that native speakers are somehow the "real" language experts. Akinmulegun and Kunt (2022)

reflection on that, showing that a lot of non-native teachers carry around linguistic insecurity precisely because of this native speaker fallacy an idea that is simply wrong, but persistent nonetheless. Put those two things together shaky self-efficacy and an unsettled sense of professional identity and non-native teachers end up shying away from communicative interaction, sticking to safer, less innovative teaching strategies. And that, in turn, ends up shaping the quality of what happens in their classrooms at UPSE.

Communicative Competence Theory

Building upon the relationship between self-efficacy and professional identity, Communicative Competence Theory developed by Dell Hymes (1972) establishes that language learning involves not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social and cultural contexts.

This theory is particularly relevant because it explains that the challenges faced by nonnative English teachers extend beyond linguistic accuracy toward broader communicative performance in the classroom. Communicative competence, as Cañas and Gómez (2026) frame it, is not just about grammar; it also pulls in sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills, all of which matter for interaction to actually work in a classroom. And that matters a lot, because teachers lean on this kind of competence constantly: to explain things clearly, to get students participating, to build interactions that actually mean something. So, when non-native English teachers at UPSE run into barriers, shaky pronunciation, hesitant fluency, that nagging sense of linguistic insecurity, it is not just their own confidence that takes a hit. Student participation drops, too, and the whole rhythm of the classroom suffers for it.

This theory, therefore, complements both Bandura's self-efficacy framework and Hebbard's identity theory, as communicative competence is both influenced by and reflective of a

teacher's confidence and professional self-perception. Furthermore, these communicative principles align with student-centered approaches that prioritize active participation and collaborative interaction over traditional teacher-centered methodologies, as Fernández et al. (2025) argue that active learning methodologies improve communicative competence and student engagement through collaborative and experiential activities.

Affective Filter Hypothesis

Whereas Communicative Competence Theory addresses the cognitive and social dimensions of language use, the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982) focuses on the emotional factors that either facilitate or obstruct effective communication and language acquisition. What Krashen's hypothesis really gets at is this: emotional stuff anxiety, low motivation, not feeling confident can genuinely get in the way, both of learning a language and of teaching it well. Pacheco Vásquez and Veas Aguirre (2024) back this up, showing that language anxiety drags down classroom participation and learning outcomes, and not just for students; teachers feel it too. Think about non-native English teachers at UPSE specifically: that fear of slipping up, of making some linguistic mistake in front of the class, can push anxiety levels up during a lesson, which then makes communicative interaction harder and chips away at how effective the teaching actually is.

This theory is directly connected to Bandura's self-efficacy framework because teachers with low confidence are more susceptible to high affective filters, which in turn further diminish their instructional performance. Similarly, when professional identity is unstable as described by Hebbard (2024), emotional barriers tend to increase, creating a cycle of insecurity that negatively impacts both teacher confidence and student learning outcomes. So, it follows that cutting down

on these emotional barriers through workplaces that actually feel supportive, and training that does not stop after one workshop is essential if teaching effectiveness at UPSE is going to improve.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory.

Krashen and Hymes covered the emotional and communicative sides of things, but there is another piece to this puzzle: Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory, which puts the spotlight on recognizing where students actually come from culturally speaking and building classrooms that genuinely value that linguistic and cultural diversity instead of just tolerating it. Kehl et al. (2024) make the case that this kind of teaching opens the door to more equitable interaction in class and pushes back against the discrimination or cultural exclusion that can quietly creep into multicultural settings. These lands are close to home for non-native English teachers at UPSE, who work day in and day out with students from all kinds of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which means cultural adaptability is not optional; it is part of the job.

There is a real link here to Hebbard's professional identity framework too: teachers who manage to build a culturally responsive identity end up better equipped to create classrooms that feel positive and genuinely inclusive. And it does not stop there, these same strategies also chip away at the affective filter Krashen talks about, since fostering a sense of belonging and respect naturally invites more participation and more willingness to communicate. Put simply, nonnative English teachers who bring culturally responsive practices into their classrooms tend to overcome linguistic and emotional barriers more easily, and the quality of their teaching at UPSE benefits as a result.

Teacher Professional Development Theory.

Finally, synthesizing all previously discussed theoretical frameworks, Teacher Professional Development Theory explains that educators improve their instructional practices

through continuous training, reflective learning, and collaborative professional experiences. According to Zamora Alvarado et al. (2024), professional development is not something that happens once it is an ongoing process that helps teachers strengthen their teaching skills, manage their classrooms better, and come up with new ways to teach. In the same way, Amemasor et al. (2025) point out that for professional development programs to actually work, they need to be continuous, practical, and closely tied to the real problems teachers face every day in class. This means schools need to offer real support, mentoring, and spaces where teachers can learn together and share experiences.

This theory ties everything together, bringing self-efficacy, professional identity, communicative competence, affective barriers, and cultural responsiveness under one unified vision of teacher growth. For non-native English teachers at UPSE, specialized professional development isn't just nice to have it is essential, the difference between staying stuck and actually overcoming the linguistic, emotional, and pedagogical challenges holding back their teaching and confidence. When a university like UPSE truly supports it is teachers with training that makes sense for their daily lives, everything starts to change. Teachers begin to really believe in themselves and feel more at home in their roles. This newfound confidence naturally flows into the classroom, making lessons better and helping teachers connect with their students in a much more authentic way.

Legal basis

The legal background for our work starts with Ecuador's 2008 Constitution, which says that learning is a human right for everyone and a duty the government cannot ignore. This constitutional principle is directly relevant to the present study because it establishes the legal obligation of Ecuadorian institutions to provide equitable and quality educational environments for both teachers and students, including non-native English educators at UPSE:

La educación es un derecho de las personas a lo largo de su vida y un deber ineludible e inexcusable del Estado. Constituye un área prioritaria de la política pública y de la inversión estatal, garantía de la igualdad e inclusión social y condición indispensable para el buen vivir. Las personas, las familias y la sociedad tienen el derecho y la responsabilidad de participar en el proceso educativo. (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008, art. 26)

Building on that, Article 27 goes further, laying out that education needs to be holistic, inclusive, and participatory the kind of education that pushes critical thinking and helps students develop real, practical, creative skills. Furthermore, considering that this research explores the professional challenges of non-native English teachers within a higher education context, Article 29 is equally relevant as it recognizes academic freedom and ensures respect for linguistic and cultural diversity within Ecuadorian educational institutions (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008, art. 29)

National Educational Policies and Standards

Building upon these constitutional provisions, national educational policies further reinforce the professional obligations and rights of English language teachers in Ecuador. The

Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural lays out what educators in Ecuador's school system are entitled to and what is expected of them in return, with a clear emphasis on ongoing professional development and quality teaching:

Los docentes que trabajan en el sector público cuentan con el derecho de formarse, capacitarse y actualizarse sin costo alguno, y también pueden presentarse a concursos de méritos y oposición cuando buscan acceder a cargos directivos. Tienen la obligación de participar en actividades de actualización y perfeccionamiento pedagógico, así como en el desarrollo y ejecución de los proyectos educativos institucionales. (LOEI, 2011, art. 10)

This legal framework is particularly significant for non-native English teachers at UPSE because it establishes both the institutional responsibility to provide professional development support and the teachers' right to access such opportunities. Reinforcing this perspective, the Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior further regulates higher education institutions in Ecuador and establishes quality standards for teaching performance:

El personal académico de las instituciones de educación superior tiene derecho a acceder a la carrera académica y al escalafón docente. Las instituciones de educación superior garantizarán oportunidades equitativas a su personal docente para la realización de actividades de investigación, actualización y perfeccionamiento profesional. (LOES, 2018, art. 6)

Professional Standards for English Teachers

Reinforcing these legislative provisions, the Ecuadorian In-Service English Teachers

Standards published by the Ministerio de Educación (2002) establish specific professional expectations for English language educators in Ecuador. Under the domain of Professionalism and Ethical Commitment, teachers are expected to continuously improve their pedagogical strategies and teaching techniques to strengthen foreign language instruction. Furthermore, considering the challenges faced by non-native English teachers at UPSE, the following standard is particularly relevant:

Los docentes de inglés en servicio deben demostrar un compromiso continuo con su desarrollo profesional, participando activamente en programas de capacitación, actualizando sus conocimientos pedagógicos y lingüísticos, y contribuyendo al mejoramiento de los ambientes educativos dentro de sus instituciones. (Ministerio de Educación, 2002, p. 8)

Quality Assurance and Institutional Frameworks

Beyond looking at individual teachers, hay que ver el panorama institucional también los marcos de aseguramiento de calidad son los que le dan estructura al desarrollo profesional. En Ecuador, ese es el papel que cumple el Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (CACES, 2023), que establece los indicadores de calidad y las expectativas éticas para las instituciones de educación superior, orientando el crecimiento profesional de los docentes y conectando su desempeño con los estándares nacionales. As a result, these frameworks help strengthen educational practices at institutions like UPSE:

Las instituciones de educación superior deben garantizar que su personal docente acceda a procesos continuos de formación y actualización pedagógica, asegurando estándares de calidad en la enseñanza y promoviendo entornos institucionales que favorezcan el

desarrollo profesional integral de sus educadores. (CACES, 2023, p. 14)

Similarly, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MoESI, 2025) established the Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035, which aims to support professional growth and align pedagogical practices with current social and educational demands, reducing systemic barriers such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to educational resources.

International Standards and Systemic Frameworks

Finally, complementing the national and institutional frameworks described above, international organizations provide broader perspectives on the professional development and communicative competence of language educators. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development proposes a socio-cognitive framework for foreign language assessment that prioritizes communicative competence and the effective use of receptive and productive skills rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical reproduction (OECD, 2021). Furthermore, Selvi and Yazan (2023) push these points even further, arguing that educational policies need to actually tackle systematically, not just on paper the structural limitations that keep teachers from accessing training programs and real opportunities to grow professionally. At the end of the day, what these international frameworks really reinforce is the need to build supportive, equitable professional environments for non-native English teachers at UPSE, bringing local institutional practices closer in line with global standards of educational quality.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Methods

This study is grounded in the qualitative research method, since the goal is understanding the experiences, perceptions, and challenges of non-native English teachers in a deeper, more human way, exploring their opinions, emotions, and lived realities through detailed description rather than numbers. As Creswell and Poth (2022) note, this method focuses on interpreting meaning through participants' own voices in natural settings. It also falls under applied research, since what it is really after is identifying real educational problems and proposing practical solutions to improve teaching effectiveness and professional development among non-native English teachers at UPSE.

Qualitative

This study leans on a qualitative approach, since the goal is digging deep into the subjective, lived experiences of non-native English teachers at UPSE not just skimming the surface. That is a different game from quantitative research, which measures variables numerically; qualitative research instead cares about the meanings people attach to their social and professional worlds. As Creswell and Poth (2022) note, this approach helps researchers interpret participants' emotions and perspectives in natural settings, making it especially suited to complex phenomena like linguistic insecurity and affective barriers in teaching.

Furthermore, this study is considered applied research because it seeks practical solutions to real educational problems faced by non-native English teachers in the Ecuadorian higher education context. According to Rauteda (2026), applied studies aim to address contextualized issues and generate meaningful improvements within educational environments by grounding

findings in participants' lived realities. Therefore, by examining the systemic challenges and instructional frustrations experienced by UPSE faculty, this research intends to provide useful insights that may support educational leaders in creating supportive environments, strengthening teacher performance, and improving students' language learning outcomes.

Type of Research

This study follows a phenomenological design, since the goal is understanding in depth what non-native English teachers actually live through, day to day. Moustakas (1994) describes phenomenology as a way of capturing the essence of how participants perceive and feel about their experiences, focusing on meaning rather than on observable behaviors or measurable outcomes. That is why this design fits so well here: it's built for exploring issues like linguistic insecurity and the native speaker fallacy things that live more in perception and feeling than in anything you could count while also revealing how non-native English teachers at UPSE see their own competence and professional role within the institution.

Data Collection Techniques

The primary data collection technique for this study is the one-on-one semi-structured interview, chosen for the detailed, personalized window it offers into non-native English teachers' experiences at UPSE. Creswell and Poth (2022) make a strong case for interviews in qualitative and phenomenological work, since they let researchers get close to how participants actually see things, generating rich, genuine data straight from lived experience. That's exactly the strength this study needs to untangle the relationships between professional development challenges, linguistic confidence, and classroom practices among non-native English educators.

Furthermore, one-on-one semi-structured interviews provide a safe and comfortable environment where participants can openly discuss sensitive topics related to their teaching experiences, including feelings of linguistic insecurity, self-doubt, and affective barriers that may influence their instructional performance. Neupane et al. (2026) highlight that individual interview encourage participants to express emotions, insecurities, and personal reflections more freely than other data collection methods such as surveys or focus groups. Consequently, this interaction helps the researcher explore issues such as instructional hesitations and emotional barriers that directly affect teachers' professional confidence at UPSE.

Likewise, this technique contributes to a deeper understanding of how non-native English teachers perceive the relationship between their professional challenges and their teaching effectiveness. According to Rauteda (2026), interviews allow educators to describe their experiences in their own words, thus generating meaningful and authentic information. Therefore, the use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews supports the phenomenological nature of this study by emphasizing participants' lived experiences, emotions, and perceptions within their professional environment at UPSE.

Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this study is a semi-structured interview guide composed of open-ended questions. According to Creswell and Poth (2022), open-ended questions let participants answer in their own words, sharing their personal experiences in a more descriptive and reflective way, which gives rich qualitative data useful for phenomenological analysis. The interview guide includes about 8 questions, grouped into three main sections: the first one looks at language skills and self-confidence, the second one asks about how teachers see

professional development programs, and the third one focuses on classroom practices and how teachers keep students engaged.

Moreover, to ensure the clarity and academic rigor of the instrument, the interview guide will undergo validation through expert judgment by three specialists in English language teaching and qualitative research methodology. A pilot interview will also be conducted with one non-native English teacher outside the main sample to verify the comprehensibility of the questions before the main data collection process begins (Rauteda, 2026). Likewise, the questionnaire will be applied in person at the university campus in order to establish trust and encourage educators to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences more naturally, ensuring that the instrument accurately reflects participants lived professional experiences at UPSE.

Table 1

Data Collection Processing and Resources

Questions	Justification
What Where	Interviews Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena
When Who How	(UPSE) in La Libertad, Ecuador During the 2026 academic period 5 non-native English teachers One-on-one interview (8 Open-ended questions)
What for	To explore perceptions of professional challenges and their influence on teaching effectiveness

Note. Own elaboration based on the methodological design of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of English pedagogy educators currently working at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) in La Libertad, Ecuador. According to Creswell and Poth (2022), purposive sampling is the most appropriate strategy for qualitative studies, as it allows the researcher to deliberately select participants with direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation.

The inclusion criteria require that participants must be actively teaching English at UPSE during the 2026 academic period and self-identify as non-native speakers with at least one year of experience. Conversely, native speakers and educators from other disciplines will be excluded to maintain the contextual focus of the study (Moustakas, 1994).

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

The analysis and interpretation of the interviewees' responses emphasized the importance of addressing the systemic challenges faced by non-native English-speaking teachers at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE). As a result, the data was systematically organized and analyzed to identify relevant patterns and categories among the participants.

Furthermore, the following sections establish correlations between participants' responses and the theoretical foundations developed in previous chapters. Finally, any limitations encountered during the data collection process will be duly noted and justified at the end of the chapter.

Interpretation of Data from the One-on-one Interviews

The results of the 8 open-ended questions from the 5 individual interviews are summarized in the following general interpretation:

1.How does your English proficiency level influence your confidence and your interactions with students in the classroom?

The interviewees agreed that English language proficiency plays a fundamental role in shaping confidence and classroom interaction among non-native English teachers at UPSE. Participants consistently acknowledged that higher proficiency levels enable clearer explanations, more dynamic student interaction, and greater pedagogical flexibility. However, participants also recognized that linguistic confidence is equally influenced by preparation, experience, and professional attitude, as Teacher 1 noted that hesitation arises particularly when students ask unexpected questions outside the planned content. As Teacher 4 emphasized, "as

long as you try and you educate yourselves, that confidence will grow" (personal communication, 2026). These findings align with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which establishes that self-efficacy beliefs are shaped by mastery experiences and environmental influences (San Roque & Valle, 2025), reinforcing the idea that continuous professional development is essential for strengthening linguistic confidence among non-native English educators at UPSE (Corral et al., 2024).

2.How, if at all, has your accent or linguistic background influenced your confidence and your interactions with students and colleagues?

Across the board, participants agreed that accent and linguistic background have left a real mark on their professional confidence and on how they interact with others at UPSE. Accent, in particular, kept coming up as a lingering source of insecurity especially in moments when students corrected their pronunciation right there in front of the class, chipping away at their sense of authority in that room. On top of that, several non-native teachers admitted to feeling less credible than native speakers when interacting professionally with colleagues, no matter how solid their pedagogical training actually was. That said, it wasn't all discouraging: participants also talked about how learning to embrace their linguistic background as a strength, rather than something to hide, turned out to be genuinely transformative being able to relate to students' own struggles with the language became, in their eyes, a real pedagogical edge. This lines up closely with what Hebbard (2024) and Akinmulegun and Kunt (2022) have argued: the native speaker fallacy wrongly paints native speakers as the superior model for language, and that idea alone ends up feeding unnecessary insecurity in highly qualified non-native educators, including those at UPSE.

3. In what classroom situations, if any, does linguistic insecurity influence your teaching performance?

The interviewees described those spontaneous conversations, unexpected questions, and specialized topics such as phonetics and complex grammar structures generate the greatest levels of insecurity among non-native English teachers at UPSE. As one participant noted, *"the situations where I feel most insecure are spontaneous conversations and when students challenge my pronunciation or vocabulary choices in front of the whole class"* (Teacher 1, personal communication, 2026). Additionally, stress and fatigue were identified as factors that intensify linguistic insecurity and negatively affect classroom explanations. However, participants emphasized that thorough preparation and continuous practice effectively reduce these feelings, as one teacher explained, *"if you go really confident to your class, the students are not going to realize that you feel insecure about yourself"* (Teacher 3, personal communication, 2026). These findings align with Pacheco Vásquez and Veas Aguirre (2024) and Corral-Guerrero et al. (2024), who emphasize that language anxiety negatively affects instructional performance while professional training significantly strengthens teacher self-efficacy at UPSE.

4. What is your perception of the professional development programs currently offered by UPSE? Do you consider that these are designed to address the specific needs of non-native teachers?

The interviewees expressed generally positive opinions about the professional development programs at UPSE, acknowledging their contribution to pedagogical growth and English knowledge improvement. As one participant stated, *"they are creating different programs so we as teachers can improve our teaching and English knowledge"* (Teacher 2, personal communication, 2026). However, participants also identified significant gaps,

particularly regarding the specific needs of non-native English teachers, as one explained, *"the professional development programs offered by UPSE are general and do not specifically address the challenges faced by non-native English teachers"* (Teacher 4, personal communication, 2026). Given all this, participants themselves pointed toward a solution: more specialized training programs, ones that actually target linguistic confidence and communicative competence directly. This tracks closely with what Zamora Alvarado et al. (2024) and Amemasor et al. (2025) have argued, that professional development, to really work, can not be a one-off event; it needs to be continuous, practical, and tied directly to the actual challenges teachers face in their own classrooms.

5. What institutional or administrative challenges, if any, influence your professional development as an English teacher at UPSE?

When it came to institutional challenges, three things kept coming up: heavy workloads, limited access to specialized training, and no real mentoring program. These were the main obstacles participants mentioned about professional development at UPSE. One teacher said it plainly: *"one of the main challenges I face is the heavy teaching load, which leaves very little time for professional development activities"* (Teacher 1, personal communication, 2026). Still, most participants also gave UPSE credit for supporting their growth, especially through certifications and research opportunities. As one put it, *"the university is trying to push us to obtain diplomas, research programs, projects, and certifications"* (Teacher 3, personal communication, 2026). Participants also stressed that professional development depends on both personal motivation and institutional support. This matches what Selvi and Yazan (2023) and Amemasor et al. (2025) argue: effective professional development needs structured support systems along with individual motivation to create lasting improvement.

6. How do emotional pressures, linguistic challenges, or institutional conditions at UPSE affect the way you plan and deliver your lessons?

Emotional pressures and linguistic challenges, participants agreed, shape both how they plan their lessons and how those lessons actually play out in the classroom at UPSE. Time and again, teachers described how linguistic insecurity eats into their preparation time they feel like they have to go back over tricky vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar points before they can even think about bringing them into class. One participant summed it up this way: *"when I feel insecure about my linguistic competence, I tend to over-prepare my lessons to compensate"* (Teacher 1, personal communication, 2026). These findings align with Pacheco Vásquez and Veas Aguirre (2024), who demonstrate that language anxiety negatively influences instructional performance.

However, most participants indicated that preparation and adaptability serve as effective strategies for managing these challenges. One teacher explained, *"if I find something that is very difficult to pronounce, I must do some research previously"* (Teacher 3, personal communication, 2026), reflecting a proactive approach that strengthens instructional confidence. Consequently, participants emphasized that proper planning plays a fundamental role in overcoming emotional and linguistic challenges at UPSE (Corral-Guerrero et al., 2024).

7. To what extent, if any, does your English proficiency influence the teaching strategies you employ in the classroom?

The interviewees expressed contrasting opinions regarding the influence of English proficiency on their teaching strategies at UPSE. Some participants considered proficiency essential for effective instruction, as one stated, *"if we do not have a good or high level of*

English proficiency, we are not able to identify the best teaching strategies" (Teacher 2, personal communication, 2026). However, others argued that pedagogical knowledge is equally or more influential, as one teacher explained, *"more than English proficiency, it is pedagogical knowledge that influences the teaching strategies in my classroom"* (Teacher 4, personal communication, 2026). Furthermore, some participants acknowledged that linguistic insecurity leads them to rely on structured activities rather than spontaneous communicative tasks (Teacher 1, personal communication, 2026). These findings suggest that both proficiency and pedagogical knowledge play complementary roles in shaping effective teaching strategies among non-native English educators at UPSE (Cañas & Gómez, 2026; San Roque & Valle, 2025).

8. Based on your experience, what types of institutional support would help nonnative English teachers improve their professional development, well-being, and teaching effectiveness?

The interviewees consistently identified specialized workshops, updated training programs, and international partnerships as essential forms of institutional support at UPSE. As one participant suggested, *"they can develop different activities like workshops where we can remember some aspects of our knowledge and update it"* (Teacher 2, personal communication, 2026). Furthermore, participants emphasized the value of mentoring programs and professional learning communities where non-native teachers can share experiences and strategies collaboratively. These findings align with Amemasor et al. (2025), who argue that effective professional development must be continuous, practical, and directly connected to teachers' real classroom challenges, reinforcing the need for more targeted and inclusive institutional support at UPSE.

Table 2*Analysis of the Interviewees' Perceptions of the Factors Influencing the Professional**Development and Teaching Effectiveness of Non-Native English Teachers at UPSE*

Questions	How does your English proficiency level influence your confidence and your interactions with students in the classroom?	How, if at all, has your accent or linguistic background influenced your confidence and your interactions with students and colleagues?	In what classroom situations, if any, does linguistic insecurity influence your teaching performance?	What is your perception of the professional development programs currently offered by UPSE?
Answers	Participants agreed that English proficiency plays an important role in their confidence and classroom interactions. They explained that higher proficiency allows them to communicate more effectively, explain content clearly, and respond to students' questions. However, some teachers reported feeling insecure when facing unexpected questions or unfamiliar expressions.	Participants reported that accent influenced their confidence mainly at the beginning of their careers. However, most teachers now believe that effective communication, pedagogical knowledge, and language competence are more important than having a native-like accent. They also recognized the value of linguistic diversity and Global English.	Teachers pointed to Spontaneous conversations, unexpected questions, and specialized topics these were the situations teachers pointed to again and again as the ones that really stir up linguistic insecurity. Stress and a lack of preparation didn't help either, they noted, often chipping away at their performance in the moment. But preparation and experience, over time, seem to take the edge off these feelings.	Most participants spoke positively about UPSE's professional development programs. Still, some felt these programs lean too heavily toward general pedagogy and administration, without really addressing what non-native English teachers specifically need.
Authors	Language proficiency contributes to teacher self-efficacy, confidence, and classroom effectiveness (San Roque & Valle, 2025; Corral et al., 2024)	The native speaker fallacy incorrectly positions native speakers as superior language models, reinforcing unnecessary insecurity among non-native educators (Hebbard, 2024; Akinmulegun & Kunt, 2022)	Linguistic insecurity is often associated with spontaneous communication and language anxiety negatively affects classroom participation and instructional performance (Pacheco Vásquez & Veas Aguirre, 2024)	Effective professional development addresses teachers' linguistic, pedagogical, and emotional needs through continuous, practical training (Zamora Alvarado et al., 2024; Amemasor et al., 2025)

Note. Own elaboration based on the responses obtained from the interviews with non-native English teachers at UPSE

Table 3*Analysis of the Interviewees' Perceptions of the Factors Influencing the Professional**Development and Teaching Effectiveness of Non-Native English Teachers at UPSE*

Questions	What institutional or administrative challenges, if any, influence your professional development as an English teacher at UPSE?	How do emotional pressures, linguistic challenges, or institutional conditions at UPSE affect the way you plan and deliver your lessons?	To what extent, if any, does your English proficiency influence the teaching strategies you employ in the classroom?	Based on your experience, what types of institutional support would help non-native English teachers improve their professional development, wellbeing, and teaching effectiveness?
Answers	Heavy workloads, administrative duties, and limited access to specialized training were the challenges participants kept coming back to. Nevertheless, they recognized that UPSE provides opportunities for certifications, research, and professional growth.	Participants reported that linguistic challenges and stress affect lesson preparation and delivery, leading to overpreparation as a compensatory strategy. Others emphasized that preparation and professional responsibility help overcome these difficulties.	Participants agreed that English proficiency influences teaching strategies to some extent. While some considered proficiency essential, others emphasized that pedagogical knowledge and students' needs have a greater influence on instructional decisions.	Participants suggested things like specialized workshops, mentoring, learning communities with other teachers, more contact with native speakers, better access to academic resources, and psychological support.
Authors	Structural limitations within educational systems restrict teachers' access to training programs and professional growth opportunities (Selvi & Yazan, 2023; Amemasor et al., 2025).	Teacher self-efficacy and preparation help educators manage emotional and linguistic challenges in the classroom (Corral-Guerrero et al., 2024; Pacheco Vázquez & Veas Aguirre, 2024).	Effective language teaching requires both linguistic competence and pedagogical expertise, as communicative competence transcends mere grammatical mastery (Cañas Guzmán & Gómez Navarro, 2026; San Roque & Valle, 2025).	Mentoring, collaboration, and continuous professional development improve teacher confidence and effectiveness, fostering holistic professional growth (Zamora Alvarado et al., 2024; Amemasor et al., 2025).

Note. Own elaboration based on the responses obtained from the interviews with non-native English teachers at UPSE.

The answers collected from the interviews shown in the tables above help to understand the participants' opinions about the challenges and professional development of non-native English teachers at UPSE. In addition, the responses show how English proficiency, accent, linguistic insecurity, and institutional factors influence teachers' confidence and classroom performance. Finally, the answers help identify the types of support and training that can improve teachers' professional growth, well-being, and teaching effectiveness.

Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the analysis of the challenges faced by non-native English-speaking teachers at UPSE are presented in this chapter to understand how linguistic proficiency, accent, and institutional factors influence their professional development and teaching effectiveness. Interviews were conducted with five participants (teachers) whose answers aligned with what renowned authors have said about non-native English educators. This qualitative study has gathered opinions and applicable strategies that may contribute to improving teaching practices and building professional growth among non-native English teachers at UPSE.

Conclusions

This research investigated the perceptions of non-native English teachers at UPSE regarding the challenges they face in their professional development and classroom practices.

First, the findings showed that how well teachers speak English has a big effect on their confidence and performance in class at UPSE. Speaking English well helps teachers explain things clearly and teach with more freedom. However, feeling insecure about their accent can make them feel like they have lost their authority. This often leads them to play it safe, sticking to a script instead of having real conversations, which makes the classroom feel less interactive.

Teachers at UPSE really value the support they get, but they also admitted that the current training does not quite hit the mark. Right now, most of the programs focus on general teaching methods and do not really address the specific language, communication, and emotional needs that non-native English teachers have. Because of this lack of specific training, teachers found it harder to actually use new, student-centered teaching methods in their everyday classes.

Finally, the findings showed that emotional, language-related, and institutional factors together shape how non-native English teachers teach at UPSE. Feeling anxious about their English led teachers to over-prepare lessons, leaving less room for spontaneity. Language insecurity made them lean on pre-planned materials instead of real conversations with students, cutting down genuine connection. And heavy workloads, with no mentor to turn to, left teachers buried in daily tasks with little time to grow professionally, which ended up affecting their teaching.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from this research, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by non-native English teachers at UPSE.

First, to start, if UPSE really wants to strengthen linguistic confidence and instructional performance, it needs professional development programs built specifically around pronunciation, communicative competence, and strategies for handling spontaneous classroom moments not generic training. Structured mentoring would help too pairing newer teachers with more experienced ones could give them the kind of emotional support and hands-on guidance they need to work through their insecurities about language in a healthy, professional way.

Second, closing the gaps in the current professional development programs is going to take more than good intentions. UPSE really needs to reduce teachers' workloads so they actually have time to grow professionally, and also build partnerships with other countries so non-native teachers can get real exposure to different English-speaking environments. Steps like these would show something generic training alone can't: genuine institutional commitment to supporting non-native English educators.

Finally, to soften the impact of emotional, linguistic, and institutional factors on classroom practice, UPSE should put policies in place that formally recognize bilingualism as a real professional asset, and offer psychological support services that actually attend to teachers' emotional well-being. At the individual level, teachers are encouraged to embrace their linguistic background as a pedagogical strength and commit to continuous self-directed development through reflective teaching practices and professional learning communities.

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Annexes

Annex A. Certified Anti-Plagiarism

Certificado Sistema Anti-Plagio

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado CHALLENGES FACED BY NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES elaborado por el estudiante YAGUAL VALVERDE GEORGE DANIEL 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.

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**ROSA TATIANA GARCIA
VILLAO**

Ing. García Villao Rosa Tatiana, MSc.

TUTOR



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Resumen (sección 1/2)

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Annex B. Interview Model for Teachers

Professional Development for Non-Native English Teachers

1. How does your English proficiency level influence your confidence and your interactions with students in the classroom?
2. How, if at all, has your accent or linguistic background influenced your confidence and your interactions with students and colleagues?
3. In what classroom situations, if any, does linguistic insecurity influence your teaching performance?
4. What is your perception of the professional development programs currently offered by UPSE? Do you consider that these are designed to address the specific needs of non-native teachers?
5. What institutional or administrative challenges, if any, influence your professional development as an English teacher at UPSE?
6. How do emotional pressures, linguistic challenges, or institutional conditions at UPSE affect the way you plan and deliver your lessons?
7. To what extent, if any, does your English proficiency influence the teaching strategies you employ in the classroom?
8. Based on your experience, what types of institutional support would help non-native English teachers improve their professional development, well-being, and teaching effectiveness?

Annex C. Interview with Teachers One-on-one (8 Open-ended questions)

1. How does your English proficiency level influence your confidence and your interactions with students in the classroom?

1. my proficiency level in the classroom. My proficiency level does affect my confidence because I feel more empowered to provide different forms of saying something in different ways. And in my interactions, I consider that my proficiency level is also helping me to feel more prepared so I can help my students, that I can communicate information with them easier.

2. As you become professional, you become patient, it also becomes your confidence. For sure, you are not a good public speaker, but as long as you try and you educate yourself, that confidence will grow.

3. We, as I think, a teacher in this case. In my case, it is really important because I can communicate in a better way with my students. If I don't have this high level of English proficiency, well, it can affect my confidence way because I wouldn't be able to explain instructions, grammar topics, any idea that I have. And would be this type of interaction with my students and I won't be able to find alternatives to develop my class in a better way.

4. If I have to talk about my proficiency level and how it influences my confidence and my interaction with my students in the classroom, it's definitely something important to consider. But in terms of confidence, I think it is very important that through this journey, I think that is important for every teacher at this point, personally, get to know that your English is not going to be perfect, even if you're a native speaker. There probably will be questions that you cannot answer in your classroom, right? And then you eventually need to take care of that situation. But

definitely, the English proficiency level influences the teacher's confidence and our interactions in the class.

5. English confidence always influenced on my confidence in the classroom. And as the time passed, my English proficiency has improved over the years, right through continuous studies, preparation, as well as my professional practice. And as the time passed, I become more confident when explaining complex matters, complex structures, as well as facilitating discussions and responding to students' questions in a spontaneous way. However, also I recognize that confidence is not determined by language proficiency. So, teaching experience, pedagogical knowledge, and preparation play equally important roles.

2. How, if at all, has your accent or linguistic background influenced your confidence and your interactions with students and colleagues?

1. Okay, so in the past, when I was a young teacher, I thought, my opinion was that if I didn't have like an accent or like a gringo accent, I was not going to be a good teacher. But now, after my years of experience, I realized that the accent is not important for English, because we have Chinese people speaking English, we have Australians, we have Latin American people, we have different accents, Indian people who speak English. But I have learned that the accent is not relevant. What is really important is the person has a good education, good grammar, good use of vocabulary, the use of phrasal verbs, I mean, the correct usage of English instead of the accent. So right now, my confidence is not because I have a gringo accent. My confidence is because I know that I have good academic English. Not the pronunciation, but I have a good understanding and a good, how can I say? I mean, my English is not good, not because I speak nice. My English is good because I have studied, I have prepared, and I have enough basis to have a good academic English.

Accent won't be a matter of discussion, but we all have different accents, even native speakers have different accents. As long as you send the message and that message is understood, the accent becomes a second part of the idea of the language. The most important thing is to transmit the message correctly.

2. Accent won't be a matter of discussion, but we all have different accents, even native speakers have different accents. As long as you send the message and that message is understood, the accent becomes a second part of the idea of the language. The most important thing is to transmit the message correctly.
3. Well, I consider with my colleagues, not that often because sometimes I don't have much time to talk to them in English. But with my students, obviously, it can affect something. It has, you know, influence. Maybe I am explaining some part of pronunciation or I am teaching some aspect of linguistic, phonetics, so I need to feel myself secure, confident with that, so I can explain in a better way to my students. So, yes, it has a little connection with this when I am teaching these kinds of topics in my classes.
4. Actually, I think I am lucky to be a skilled in this aspect. I am aware of the global English and local Englishers and accents, it's okay. It's part of the English language. And it's something very important to highlight to English learners and to future English teachers as well. But I think it is important to consider this for teaching or learning a foreign language because you will have to face in real life different backgrounds and different accents.
5. As a native speaker, I've occasionally been aware about my accent, right? Particularly when interacting with highly proficient speakers or participating in international academic events. So, earlier in my career, this awareness sometimes affected my confidence. So, however, with experience, through experience, I've come to understand that effective communication is

more important than having a native accent. My linguistic background allows me to empathize with my students because I understand the challenges they face while learning English.

3. In what classroom situations, if any, does linguistic insecurity influence your teaching performance?

1. I consider that the insecurity for a teacher is more internal, because the students, if you go really confident to the class, the students are not going to realize that you feel very bad about yourself or that you don't feel very, or you feel very insecure about yourself. No. I think that it's not the pronunciation. I think that what comes to insecurity is when you don't have a well-prepared class. If you don't know exactly what you're going to do, if you don't have all the required resources, I think that that will be insecurity more than trying to sound different, not with my, like say, accent. Like my Latino accent is not going to affect the class. What is going to really affect the class is if I don't have my class well-prepared, I don't have enough resources, and I don't know how to handle this class.
2. Insecurity when teaching English is another matter. In that case, the teacher should be able to transmit confidence to the students. Always, with practice. Theory is good, but nothing like practice.
3. As I mentioned before, with me, linguistic, I am not used to teach this subject, so if we, or teachers in general, don't manage this, maybe linguistic aspect, phonetics aspect, sounds, I don't know, this alphabetic or linguistic aspect, so it can maybe influence in this case, to the process of this kind of subject. So, if necessary, if we are not secure, if we are not confident about ourselves, we can identify, or we can read or prepare, train more to be able to teach this kind of subjects.

4. Well, I think I have faced some situations that I felt insecure. In my own experience, I can probably share a couple of anecdotes with native speakers, but this was a wonderful opportunity for me actually to build confidence, because, yes, I have felt insecure when discussing specialized themes or specialized topics or something that surprises me in the middle of a lesson or maybe of an area outside of my area. So yes, it is important to face this actually. In my experience, I will say that this helps build confidence because you need to face the reality that you cannot discuss everything, but you can struggle and navigate the situation in the benefit of the entire classroom.
5. Okay, so linguistic insecurity may appear in different situations, and it requires, we know that it requires a spontaneous language production, such as answering unexpected questions, discussing highly specialized topics, or explaining differences in meaning without prior knowledge or prior preparation. And carefulness of planning, reliable, the use of reliable sources when necessary, and also thinking about ongoing preparation, continuous preparation, rather than personal limitations.

4. What is your perception of the professional development programs currently offered by UPSE? Do you consider that these are designed to address the specific needs of non-native teachers?

1. I consider that are especially designed for non-native teachers. So, in this master's program and also here in undergraduate programs here at INE, I consider that the programs are designed not for becoming a native speaker because you have other programs for that. You have to go to these exchange programs or you can go to do some preparation practices or internships outside the country. In that way, you're going to get your native teacher's experience. But in UPSE, specifically in the master's program, I think that all the classes and

all the teachers from there are really helping these teachers to become better teachers, not related to be native teachers because that is a completely different thing.

2. It depends on the professor and the directors, of course. But this program was conceived for non-native speakers. But at the end of the four years of study, the students have a very high level of English.
3. Well, I think in general they are doing a great work with these programs. I think I have not been involved a lot on this kind of program related to English in this area. Maybe one year ago we were involved of a teacher training with a lot of aspect of English, but yes, I consider that they are creating different programs so we as a teacher can improve our teaching, maybe proficiency in this case, or teaching English knowledge, we can increase and we can use all of these tools and important elements to improve our classes too.
4. Well, I'm very happy and aspects. I think we have workshops that are focused on genetic technology, and I think that most of some, some of the important documents are, for example, from the institutional resources. But I think that this is something that can be beneficial because it is clear. Everything in the program is clear. So, I would appreciate maybe having the opportunity to spend more time in the institution since I've been working for a relatively short time. But in this short time, I am very happy and I appreciate the training I've had so far.
5. Well, I really appreciate what Upskill do for, what Upskill does for teachers, because we have access to continuous preparation, continuous preparation that benefits us as teachers. So, in terms of technology, in terms of improving our level of English, in terms of research, so we learn a lot. However, I believe that there is still, there is still time for improvement. We

need to learn something new every day. We need to be prepared every day, especially for those challenges that we have in this 21st century.

5. What institutional or administrative challenges, if any, influence your professional development as an English teacher at UPSE?

1. Okay, so, definitely becoming an English teacher requires a lot of challenges. Administrative challenges means that I have on my own responsibility, not because my boss is ordering me. I have to be updated with information, I have to continue preparing, I have to study, I have to take a certification from time to time. So it's part of my inner responsibility, my inner motivation that I need to continue studying, especially in English, to have an extra certification or to study something in English, etc. That is institutional challenges. We have all the opportunities from UCR to become better professionals. I think that more than institutional, I think that is for each person to take the decision because I know that I will have all the backup, all the support from the authorities at.
2. Well, all teachers here at UPSE are really qualified. They have an international certification of teaching English. That's why I consider that all teachers are more than qualified to prepare the students here in this major.
3. That when we have too many activities to complete, maybe some activities extra of our teaching process, they can sometimes affect, maybe we have to, I don't know, to complete other activities like vinculación, research, well, aspects that are not connected with teaching sometimes, in this case, has affected me to complete some activities, maybe on time. But we as a teacher, we have the responsibility to do it. But yes, it's that they can have a little influence on us.

4. On the contrary, if we talk about professional development as an English teacher here, actually universities try to push us to obtain diplomas, research projects, and certifications. Actually, we had a recent meeting in which we were talking about a certification. So I think I am very happy with this professional development that also pursue important features.
5. One of the main is to keep this balance among teaching practice, but you know that we not only, we do not only have these responsibilities. We also have other teaching responsibilities, administrative duties, research, as well as continuous professional development. So, with limited time, in some cases, of course, a financial constraint or limited access to international training opportunities may also restrict this participation in specialized courses or conferences, or this can be one of the main challenges.

6. How do emotional pressures, linguistic challenges, or institutional conditions at UPSE affect the way you plan and deliver your lessons?

1. Emotional pressures. I don't face emotional pressure because if I am a responsible teacher, I know what I have to do. I know that I have some pronunciation problems, for example. It's my responsibility to study and to become a better professional. Linguistic challenges. There are always linguistic challenges because I am not a native teacher, so I understand that there will be a linguistic challenge for my classes. For that reason, I need to prepare in advance. If I find something that is very difficult to pronounce or it's really confusing something, I must do some research previously. I need to look for information, confirm with other peers that may have more experience, and in that way, I am going to be prepared for my classes. So that is a linguistic challenge. Or institutional conditions, I don't think that UPSE affects the way that I plan because UPSE gives me the freedom to organize my class as I wish I can.

2. These we talk about education, emotional education. So, the emotions are very difficult to handle in the classroom. Again, it will always depend on the teacher. This person should be able to handle all the emotions of the students.
3. Well, these aspects can affect a little bit, I consider. In my case, I try to manage all of these aspects in the best way. Depending on the activity that we have, yes, sometimes they can affect, in my case, a little bit, not a lot. But if we don't know how to manage them, obviously I consider that in other cases, other teachers cannot develop the classes correctly, they don't have material on time, they don't have resources to use in the classroom. So, if we don't manage emotional pressures or linguistic challenges or institutional conditions properly, they can affect our classes in some ways.
4. Well, I think I have faced challenges planning my lessons when sometimes we have had changes that are more social, political circumstances that push us to go to online, to online modality. Well, that is the only thing I can tell my own experience if I have to talk about these pressures and changing the way I deliver my lesson most of the time. I know the resources I have in advance, so I can plan my lesson and deliver it as planned with the conditions I have available.
5. So, we can say that these factors certainly can influence teaching practice. Emotional pressure, such as managing heavy workloads or meeting institutional expectations, sometimes require additional planning to ensure this high-quality construction. These challenges motivate me to prepare by reviewing materials, anticipating students' questions, and selecting appropriate teaching resources. Institutional conditions can include available technological resources as well as the class size also influence these instructional decisions.

7. To what extent, if any, does your English proficiency influence the teaching strategies you employ in the classroom?

1. An English proficiency influences the teaching strategies that I employ in the classroom?

Yes. No. I mean, it has an effect, but it's not a big influence. As I said, my English proficiency depends on my self-regulation on how to become better and better and better with practice. And the teaching strategies are related more to the students, more than the teacher. So, they don't have to close, a close relationship. It is part, but it's not necessary, okay? If I am not a gringo, it doesn't mean that I will have an excellent class. No. If I am a good teacher, and I pick the good strategies for the class, my class will be effective.

2. Efficiency of the teacher will always depend on his preparation. That's why here at UPSE, we

are able to see that all the teachers have a degree in teaching English, they have a master in teaching English, and of course, as I mentioned before, they have an international certificate, and they are qualified to handle all the teaching here at UPSE.

3. A lot because if we don't have a good or high level of English proficiency, as I mentioned in

the previous answers, we are not able to identify the best teaching strategies or we can have an excellent teaching strategy, but as we don't have a balanced level that can be applied with my students and I can't use any new words or new instruction, paraphrase, interact, and all of this, I consider that they can affect how we are going to be in the classes and how we are going to develop our classes.

4. More than the English proficiency, which is indeed very important to make people feel

comfortable and challenged inside the classroom at the same time, I would say more than English proficiency is the pedagogical knowledge that influences teaching strategies in my classroom. Depending on what are the results that the syllabus are requesting in my students,

then I need to focus on what is requested and then change or plan my strategies for that same objective. But my English proficiency, I think it's always, it's always improving because we are learning all the time. And having a good English proficiency is always necessary because you need to be one step ahead all the time.

5. Ok, influenced into a considerable extent. It allows me to implement a communicative and task-based teaching approaches that requires spontaneous interaction and authentic language. At the same time, my experience as a language learner enables me to anticipate students' difficulties as well as provide explanation or accurate feedback to help them to improve. So, I prioritize communication, learner autonomy, because I really like to foster, to boost this learner autonomy and confidence, while continuously seeking opportunity to improve my own language proficiency.

8. Based on your experience, what types of institutional support would help nonnative English teachers improve their professional development, well-being, and teaching effectiveness?

1. From my experience, the discussion and support would be to continue having these projects or classes with universities from the United States or any country that comes from English language natives. So that would help us to continue practicing in the real world, and that will improve my professional development because I will understand how is education in English language performed in other classes. And of course, that would be more effective in my classes because we would have the backup of this collaboration project, so we can work together with the other university and this university, so my class is going to be more effective.

2. I think that 100% secure here at UPSE for all the factors that I mentioned before. I always recommend this major. Four years of studies always will not be enough, but this major is 100% recommended for our students.
3. They can develop different activities like workshops where we can remember some aspects of our knowledge, how to apply it in the classes, and we can update our knowledge of that. The same training would be in some different alternatives online, face-to-face, and we can have this kind of interaction with them. And maybe more spaces that we can interact with colleagues to discuss, to communicate ideas, how we can apply this aspect, because sometimes we don't have that time to interact with our colleagues, and sometimes it's necessary to identify what aspect that maybe I apply and they don't, or the opposite. They use something that I can consider that is beneficial for me and for my classes, and it would be good that we have this time, because sometimes we don't have time to sit, talk, discuss about these aspects before teaching any lesson in our daily activities.
4. Okay, I have had the opportunity to share in the path of my career with native speakers. And definitely I found, I have found their jobs, just the fact that they are, they are very supportive. Native speakers inside a team are a very element of support for the rest of the team. So, yes, in a non-formal way, not that institutional, but having a native speaker will benefit the nonnative speakers and their teachers. For example, when you have peer observations, even if it's not a formal peer observation, depending, of course, on the relationship in the institution that you work, the personal relationship you may have among co-workers. They always kind of have this mentoring, if you can request it or the other teacher allows it. But yes, there could be more support for non-native speakers always, like workshops to address other aspects that cannot be handled by non-native speaker teachers. And of course, this will

also help, as we were discussing at the beginning of the interview, the confidence level in the teacher.

5. Well, that there are several forms of institutional support that could be beneficial. And this can include access to English proficiency courses, preparation programs for international certifications such as IELTS or Cambridge or Pearson or any of them, as well as workshops on pronunciation, academic communication, mentoring programs, opportunities for international collaboration, because now we can go into any net to collaborate with other teachers around the world. And so, it can foster and it can promote teaching initiatives, as well as to boost a better work environment, work environment. So, supporting teachers' linguistic and emotional development ultimately benefits from, in this way, by improving the quality of English language instruction.