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Título

**Project-Based Learning and its Possibilities to Enhance the Teaching and
Learning of English Focused on Cultural Identity Development**

**Trabajo de Titulación para optar al título de Licenciada en Pedagogía de
los idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**

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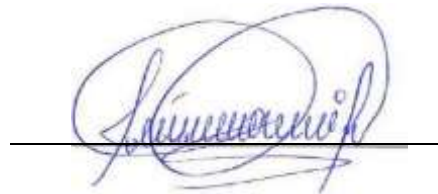
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DEDICATORIA

A mis queridos padres, Fanny y José, por el apoyo inquebrantable que me han brindado a lo largo de toda mi vida, el cual ha sido un pilar esencial para alcanzar todas mis metas. Su amor y sacrificio han sido siempre un ejemplo de inspiración. Su constante aliento me ha guiado en los momentos más oscuros, y estaré eternamente agradecida por su presencia en mi vida. Gracias por estar siempre en cada paso que doy. Me siento muy orgullosa de ser su hija.

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RESUMEN

El Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas es un enfoque interactivo que centra su atención en desarrollar el aprendizaje a través de la colaboración y la creación de experiencias del mundo real. Además, esta metodología activa ayuda a los alumnos a mejorar su pensamiento crítico y sus habilidades de trabajo en equipo. El objetivo principal del Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas (ABP) es identificar problemas sociales y desarrollar soluciones que permita a los estudiantes comprometerse directamente con sus comunidades. Asimismo, el ABP alienta a los educandos a reflexionar sobre su herencia cultural y a explorar formas de expresarla utilizando el inglés como lengua extranjera. Teniendo en cuenta estos aspectos, este proyecto de investigación titulado “Problem-Based Learning and its Possibilities to Enhance the Teaching and Learning of English Focused on Cultural Identity Development”, pretende analizar el potencial de PBL en el enriquecimiento del desarrollo de la identidad cultural a través de la enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

La investigación se desarrolló bajo un enfoque cualitativo, utilizando una matriz bibliográfica y una lista de cotejo como instrumentos de recolección de datos. Debido a la naturaleza del estudio la población de estudio fue tomada desde la bibliografía. Para ello, diferentes bases de datos fueron consideradas tales como E-Libro, Scielo, Scopus, y Web of Science. Dichas plataformas fueron utilizadas, ya que contienen, artículos, investigaciones, libros e información relacionada al campo de educación. Estos instrumentos permitieron analizar el potencial del aprendizaje basado en problemas para mejorar la enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma inglés para el desarrollo de la identidad cultural.

Los resultados indicaron que el Aprendizaje basado en problemas o ABP es un método muy útil para fomentar la identidad cultural, ya que promueve la constante interacción no solamente con los compañeros y el profesor sino también con el medio. En este sentido, los estudiantes tienen la oportunidad de entender a profundidad el estilo de vida de la comunidad y cuáles son los problemas que los afectan directa o indirectamente. Asimismo, las actividades propuestas en la guía pedagógica se enfocan principalmente en el desarrollo de la identidad cultural a través de la realización de proyectos que involucren la combinación del aprendizaje adquirido en el aula y las experiencias personales.

Palabras claves: Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas, Metodologías Activas, Identidad Cultural, Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés.

ABSTRACT

Project-Based Learning is an interactive approach that focuses its attention on learning through collaboration and creating real-world experiences. Furthermore, this active methodology helps students enhance their critical thinking and teamwork skills. The primary goal of Project-Based Learning (PBL) is to identify societal issues and develop solutions that allow learners to engage directly with their communities. Additionally, PBL encourages students to reflect on their cultural heritage and explore ways to express it using English as a foreign language. Given these aspects, this research project titled "Problem-Based Learning and its Possibilities to Enhance the Teaching and Learning of English Focused on Cultural Identity Development" seeks to analyze the potential of PBL to enrich cultural identity development through English language teaching and learning.

This research was developed under a qualitative approach, using a bibliographic matrix and a checklist as data collection instruments. Due to the nature of the investigation project, the population was taken from the bibliography. For this purpose, different databases such as E-Libro, Scielo, Scopus, and Web of Science were considered. Such sources were chosen as they contain papers, research, books, and information related to the field of education. The aforementioned instruments allowed analyzing the potential of Project-Based Learning to improve English language teaching and learning for the development of cultural identity.

The results showed that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a powerful tool that fosters cultural identity since it promotes constant interaction not only with peers and teachers but also with the environment. In this regard, students have the opportunity to understand in-depth the community's lifestyle and the problems that affect them directly or indirectly. Likewise, the activities proposed in the pedagogical guide focus mainly on the development of cultural identity through the development of projects that involve a combination of theoretical knowledge and personal experiences.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Active Methodologies, Cultural Identity, English teaching and learning.

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CHAPTER I.

1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, the need to introduce innovative teaching methodologies in class has become essential as they go beyond the traditional approaches which were only centered on the professor and building knowledge through constant memorization. In such matters, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) stands out from others on account of its ability to foster collaboration, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking, which in turn, enhances direct connection with students' environment. As learners get more engaged with English due to diverse and global contexts, they need to transmit ideas, thoughts, and feelings fluently using the foreign language. In this regard, PBL offers a unique opportunity to create new learning experiences that improve language proficiency and enable students to explore, reflect, and express their own cultural background.

In today's world, it is fundamental to learn English as a second language as it increases opportunities for learners not only in the working and academic areas but also in the personal ones. In addition, as language is linked with identity learners can share their knowledge, thoughts, and ideas by diving into their cultural background. In such matters, learning English is required to be a process that makes a meaningful impact on students' knowledge. To do so, active methodologies such as Project-Based Learning boost knowledge acquisition by putting learning into practice and developing cultural awareness. Given this, the research carried out by Kokotsaki et al., (2016), highlights the influences of Project-Based Learning in fostering cultural identity as students are called upon to reflect on their context and find a problem to work on, which in turn, not only promotes autonomy but also allows them to explore their cultural reality.

Based on the aforementioned, the present research project aims to analyze the potential of Project-Based Learning to enhance the development of cultural identity through teaching and learning English. To accomplish this, a qualitative approach was applied by the utilization of a bibliographical matrix to gather the most important information. Similarly, a checklist was used to design the activities that foster cultural identity, and finally, a pedagogical guide was designed to present the activities.

The findings of this investigation are expected to provide insights into the academic potential of PBL in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English.

The present research work is organized into five chapters, detailed as follows:

Chapter I: Referential Framework: This chapter introduces the study, outlining the research problem, justification, and specific objectives.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework. This chapter reviews the theoretical evidence of the study, collecting essential literature to support the research variables.

Chapter III: Methodology Framework. This chapter details the research design, including the approach type and level, along with the information regarding the population sample, data collection methods, and instruments used in the study.

Chapter IV: Analysis and Interpretation of Results. This chapter presents the analysis and the results of the project.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations. This chapter summarizes the conclusions obtained from the results and provides useful recommendations for educators.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, societies need multilingual and multicultural people to deal with the challenges of this new globalized world. Learning English as a foreign language is one of the main pillars of education that fosters the incorporation of cultural identity development into English language education (Rao, 2019). In this context, new active approaches such as Project-Based Learning have been implemented in the curriculum to enhance students' understanding of English influence on developing cultural identity. In light of this, Project-Based Learning (PBL) emerges as a tool to contextualize students regarding cultural reality while learning a foreign language by enhancing students' autonomy through social interactions, authentic learning experiences, and the sharing of knowledge to solve a problem or task that is constructed based on their cultural environment.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a constructivist and innovative methodology that fosters students' active participation in the learning process which promotes the enrichment of social skills that are useful to clear up commonplace problems. Through, Project-Based learning students work on everyday projects based on their cultural contexts and communities. This facilitates the connection between English learning and students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, reinforcing cultural identity. Moreover, when working with PBL students can research topics relevant to their cultures such as local festivals, traditions, and history to boost appreciation of their culture through the development of English skills. To do so, students put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired in regular classes enhancing deeper engagement within their society.

In this regard, English learning has become one of the main pillars of Ecuadorian education. It constitutes an essential tool for enhancing students' professional and personal success. In light of this, the Ecuadorian government implemented English teaching from the basic levels in schools until the end of the third year of high school in which students are expected to reach a B1.2 proficiency. Suitably, due to the importance of English learning in the current globalized society, most educational institutes use books that are decontextualized from students' reality. Unhappily such material is focused on American and European cultures, letting aside the Ecuadorian Culture which in the long run causes the suppression of learners' cultural identity, as they incorporate the foreign language as their own.

Following the aforementioned, this investigation aims to epistemologically explore the potential of PBL in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching

and learning of English. To that end, this investigation adopts a qualitative approach regarding a descriptive and explicative level. For the development of this investigation, the estimated time is 1 year starting in May of 2024 during which different techniques and instruments will be applied to reach the objectives previously set. Initially, a systematic bibliographical review will be carried out by the elaboration of a matrix that aims to describe the nature and approach of PBL within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning. Later on, to identify the most suitable activities and resources for the implementation of PBL in correspondence with the study target an integrative literature review will be executed in order to elaborate a checklist. Finally, in order to construct a pedagogical-didactic guide illustrating the academic benefits of Project-Based Learning in the construction of cultural identity an integrative literature review will be implemented through the use of a matrix.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

What is the potential of Project-Based Learning in Enriching the Development of Cultural Identity through the Teaching and Learning of English?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

In today's interconnected world, learning a second language is a key point for getting better opportunities in the academic and personal areas. In light of this, English is the language used all around the world to communicate, it requires learners to go beyond acquiring the necessary skills to share knowledge and thoughts. Language is closely linked to learners' culture as it allows them to explore new cultures as well as express their cultural identity in a second language. Still, traditional methods of language teaching do not foster this connection as they are mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic proficiency. As a result, the implementation of active methodologies such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has shaped how knowledge is provided to students and their receptiveness to the topics being taught in order to integrate cultural identity with language learning in more meaningful ways.

In this regard, the significance of Project-Based Learning to enhance cultural identity development lies in the learning and teaching of English by incorporating real-world problems that foster student-centered learning and active participation through the process. PBL focuses on the idea that students acquire knowledge best when putting into practice their skills to come up with a solution through collaborative work, critical thinking, and practical application. As a result, students have the chance to get closely engaged with the community fostering deeper learning and cultural awareness, which in turn empowers students to use the language as a tool for negotiating meaning based on their cultural backgrounds.

Correspondingly, conducting this investigation on the influence of Project-Based Learning to enhance cultural identity development allowed the researcher to look for

information on different resources that were used to support the issue. Additionally, the expertise and the guidance provided by the tutor were a key point for carrying out the project.

The primary beneficiaries of this research include students and teachers, essentially those involved in English language contextualization. Thanks to this study they gain valuable insights into the potential of Project-Based Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze the academic potential of PBL in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English.

1.5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To describe the nature and approach of PBL within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning.
- To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of PBL in correspondence with the study target.
- To construct a pedagogical-didactic guide illustrating the academic benefits of PBL in the construction of cultural identity.

CHAPTER II

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The role of English as a Lingua Franca in different fields such as economy, education, business, politics, and entertainment are remarkable. To achieve such relevance, traditional approaches to teaching English have evolved into active methodologies that enhance students' active learning through interaction with others in real-life contexts. Given this, Project-Based Learning appeared in the educational field to emphasize the importance of involving a dynamic classroom approach to foster students' active exploration of real-life problems and challenges

Project-Based Learning is a learning method that encourages students to learn and understand concepts and skills through the solution of real-world problems rather than the presentation of concepts and theories by the teacher (Hallinger, 2021). In such a matter, during the 16th and 18th centuries, John Dewey proposed a Progressive – Education Model. This model focused on “Socialized Activities” that promoted freedom for children to talk, and greater attention to individual growth and development as well as a strong unity between life and education through the discovery of new concepts and ideas that allow students to shape their understanding grounded on educational and social experiences (Cremin, 1959).

In this sense, pedagogues such as Jean Piaget whose theory of cognitive learning focused on the construction of knowledge through the interaction with the world around them. Piaget’s theory was based on four stages (Sensorimotor, Preoperational, Concrete operational, and Formal operational). He highlighted that children are in a continuous process of building new knowledge and understanding information as they keep growing and are exposed to new experiences and interactions with the environment (Nicolopoulou, 2010).

In the late 1980’s the constructivist approach gained importance in education thanks to the contributions of well-known pedagogues such as Lev Vygotsky. This new approach emphasized a learning process that did not separate individuals from their sociocultural setting. In such matters, Vygotsky supported that social environments play a significant role in the development of children as they influence and shape how learners acquire knowledge (Prawat, 1999).

During the late 20th century William Heard Kilpatrick a student of John Dewey developed the “Project Method” which emphasized carrying out purposeful activities and the importance of keeping students interested and focused on the learning process. According to Kilpatrick cited by Sutinen (2013), the project method was typically seen as an event that involves not only social situations but also individual attitudes. In a classroom, the Project Method allows students to work cooperatively in groups considering the aims of the project through dynamic activities fostering practical activities.

Forging ahead to the 1990s, more active methods such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) were implemented in the classroom to enhance students’ learning independence through interaction with the world. Project-Based Learning focuses on the implementation of projects or assignments based on the real world which are limited by a specific time to be fulfilled. This method involves learners working cooperatively to accomplish the goals of the project. The utilization of PBL is associated with *action learning*, which supports that people work better when they seek a solution for problems happening in their close environment (DeFillippi, 2001). To lead to meaningful learning, PBL allows students to participate in social interactions to share knowledge and understanding. Through this interaction, learners share aspects from their cultural background such as traditions, values, religion, and language (Català, 2015).

When integrating Project-Based Learning it is essential to present students with a “Challenging Question” regarding the aims of the project that foster the comprehension of the territorial and historical context, as well as the patrimonial values of their area, which is essential for developing cultural identity (Chung & Pantigoso, 2023).

Regarding the aforementioned, it can be said that through the implementation of PBL to foster students' cultural identity, civic and emotional factors are emphasized. Project-Based Learning creates a strong connection between learners' culture and the target language. To achieve such a connection, critical reflections are encouraged regarding students' sense of belonging which promotes a greater immersion in their cultural background. This allows students to come up with relevant alternatives for solving a problem as well as to promote and protect their cultural identity (Chung & Pantigoso, 2023).

Nowadays, the integration of this method has been crucial for creating and developing dynamic and inclusive learning environments where language and culture are combined as a powerful means of communication (Lázár, 2003). This idea can be attestable in the study analysis carried out by Peraza and Furumura (2022) titled "Project-Based Learning to Develop Intercultural Communicative Competence in Virtual Exchange Contexts" in which was demonstrated that the implementation of Project-Based Learning in VE contexts effectively boots the development of the intercultural communicative competencies. This study emphasized the student-centered approach which empowers participants to learn from the experimentation. Moreover, people-to-people education programs or activities were used to foster constructive communication and interaction between individuals or groups that are geographically separated and have different cultural backgrounds.

The main aim was to develop EFL students' intercultural communication competencies in the VE context through the integration of concepts from the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. To do so, a mixed method was applied for over ten weeks with Costa Rica and Japanese EFL students who were divided into groups to complete the activities set up in the project. Such activities, not only allowed participants to develop their language skills and ability to communicate in an international environment but also to enhance their digital literacy skills. In such matters, this study gathered qualitative and quantitative data that was used to identify the impact of the VE project regarding the development of communicative competencies for participating in democratic culture and intercultural dialogues. Similarly, this research concluded that by the implementation of PBL IN VE contexts students fostered their skills, values, attitudes, knowledge, and critical understanding of the world and the language used for communication. Moreover, it was shown that students felt more confident when facing intercultural interactions as they were enabled to meet the specific demands and challenges of this situation appropriately and effectively.

Accordingly, another study that emphasizes the importance of implementing PBL for fostering Cultural identity is the one conducted by Chung and Pantigoso (2023) titled "Application of the Project-Based Learning Method (PBL) to Promote the Cultural Identity". This study aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of applying the Project-Based Learning (PBL) method to promote cultural identity in first-grade secondary school students of the I.E.P.P Santa Rosa de Lima of Chimbote City. It is a well-known fact that cultural values, nowadays are in danger due to different factors such as migration and globalization which promote the acculturation of societies.

To analyze this scenario, a quantitative approach was utilized taking a population and intentional sample of 70 students from first-grade secondary school. Furthermore, for gathering information, some instruments such as questionnaires, rubrics, pre-tests, and post-tests were implemented which helped to identify how the application of PBL activities during the learning process enhances students' cultural identity by encouraging them to come up with ideas to solve issues that are present on their environment. This investigation concluded that participants were more involved in cultural manifestations by promoting cooperative work in PBL activities. Moreover, it was shown that students' perceptions of their cultural identity are influenced by their geographical location and historical background which plays an essential role when looking for a solution to the problems identified.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.2.1 Language Learning Theories

2.2.1.1 Constructivist Approach

The constructivist approach is a learning theory that promotes a student-centered way of teaching which whips students up to have an active role in the learning process. Unlike traditional methods that suggest a teacher-centered approach and a teaching process focused only on delivering information to students. The constructivist approach encourages students to develop their understanding and knowledge about the subject matter through new experiences and reflections. In other words, the constructivist approach enhances a more dynamic classroom in which students are no longer passive recipients but actively engaged in their learning process (Kumar, 2019).

2.2.1.2 Learning as a Social Construction

Encouraging students to construct their knowledge through active experimentation allowed teachers to move beyond the traditional standards and focus more on what should be the heart of the teaching and learning process. In such matters, the pedagogy used by the teachers was deeply analyzed and understood from the learners' point of view. In such cases, learning occurs as the result of social interactions where students collaborate and interact with others in order to shape and construct knowledge fostering also their communication skills (Adams, 2006).

2.2.1.3 Motivation as a Pillar of Constructivism

When individuals get familiarized with their surroundings, they overcome the limitations they might find and increase their participation creating meaningful knowledge. According to McCaslin & Hickey (2001), to construct such active learning, motivation is a fundamental pillar to be considered. Motivation is about engagement with the environment as it stimulates the creation of interpersonal relationships and opportunities. When learners actively participate in the activities, they not only grow their knowledge but also form a bond

with the culture of their context. Therefore, within close relationships and constant participation, students transform the environment and develop their autonomy becoming experts through the creation of meaningful connections between cultural knowledge and everyday experiences.

2.2.1.4 Cognitive Approach

The cognitive approach aims to have students create meaningful learning by comprehending the language structure. In simpler terms, memorizing the language form is not enough to acquire a foreign but is needed to process the information (Moghaddam & Araghi, 2013). In light of this, the cognitive approach enhances students' deeper understanding of the language by making them an active part of the learning process. It means that the learner is exposed to a situation in which real communication is promoted to make the student use the language meaningfully.

2.2.1.5 Sociocultural Approach

Vygotsky's sociocultural approach suggests that the intellectual development of a person is shaped according to the place where this process takes place and through interaction with others. In this regard, Vygotsky argues that language learning is influenced by cultural and social factors that determine how the language is used according to the context and the situation (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

2.2.1.6 Second Language Acquisition Theory

The process of acquiring a second language is very similar to how children learn their mother tongue. Such acquisition can be conscious or unconscious. When a student is acquiring the language consciously, he can correct himself as he recognizes his own mistakes when using the language. On the other hand, when the second language acquisition is unconscious language performance is automatic which means that students do not have time to think about mistakes but interact spontaneously within the classroom (Slabakova, 2016).

2.2.1.7 Active Construction of Meaning

When students are deeply involved in the learning activities, they are more likely to find meaning in what they are learning. According to Coulson (2006), learners actively co-create knowledge and understanding through collaboration, dialogues, and shared experiences with others rather than only absorbing the information that is being transmitted to them. In such matters, students can develop a deeper connection with their peers, teachers, and also the cultural context so that they understand concepts and ideas.

Unlike the transmission model where students are passive receptors of knowledge, and the teacher ignores prior knowledge and develops students' skills in isolation, in the

active construction of meaning students use their prior knowledge the teacher focuses on developing all the skills in the context and critically linking pieces of knowledge to construct a better understanding (King & Hicks, 2009).

2.2.2 Active Methodologies

2.2.2.1 Humanistic Approach

Humanistic education goes beyond the traditional methods, in which students were seen only as learners, and not as people. Nevertheless, according to Treve (2021), the humanistic approach emphasizes the relevance within the inner learners' world, and individual thoughts, feelings, and emotions as an essential factor of students' development prioritizing human dignity and well-being over another set of values.

2.2.2.2 Communicative Approach

The communicative approach is based on the theory of language as communication. This approach aims to have students communicate with each other by sharing their ideas, feelings, and emotions. To do this, students use the different functions of the language such as arguing, persuading, excusing, describing, inviting, and so on (Torres, 2017).

2.2.2.3 Task-Based Learning Approach

Task-based learning involves students comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting with the target language to achieve a real outcome. In other words, Task-based learning requires learners to be engaged in the interaction to perform a task in which students have to use the target language (Torres, 2017).

2.2.2.4 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an alternative to traditional methods in which students work strictly under the teacher's rules. Nevertheless, nowadays students have a more active role within the classroom. In such matters, students work in heterogeneous groups where they can interact with their peers and construct their knowledge with other's help. Moreover, cooperative learning promotes a more interactive environment where students work hand in hand to so solve a problem leading to meaningful learning (Manning & Lucking, 1991).

2.2.3 EFL Ecuadorian Curriculum

2.2.3.1 CLIL Approach

The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach aims to teach the content of other subjects through English fostering the reinforcement of such content.

Moreover, this approach helps students to develop their cognitive and social skills and their Critical thinking. In this wise, the CLIL model serves as a mechanism for implementing the 4cs framework: Content, Culture, Communication, and Cognition. (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

2.2.3.2 Curricular Threads

The Ecuadorian EFL curriculum aims to complement the 4cs framework by implementing five curricular threads including Communication and Cultural Awareness, Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking), Reading, Writing, and Language through the Arts (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

2.2.3.3. Communication and Cultural Awareness

According to Ministerio de Educación (2016), the communication and Cultural Awareness threads are made up of two aspects or sub-threads:

2.2.3.3.1 Intercultural Awareness and Identity: Due to the importance of globalization nowadays, students are allowed to learn a foreign language and learn through it. Learning English as a foreign language allows students to understand their own culture as well as other cultures around the world. Moreover, activities promote intercultural awareness, which means that learner understand how they view others' cultures, and how others view their culture. It involves students being able to communicate based on a real-life situation.

2.2.3.3.2 Social Competence and Values: It refers to the ability to interact properly in a given situation. In EFL classrooms learners develop their social and communicative skills through cooperative work by accepting others' points of view and learning about reciprocity. In this way, roleplays and group work are used to develop students' self-efficacy.

2.2.4 Cultural Identity

2.2.4.1 What is Identity?

Identity refers to the unique characteristics used to define a person and how that person sees himself. Identity includes the memories, experiences, values, and relationships that make people be themselves. In our society, each person is distinct from the others and their identity can be defined according to the way they behave and how they work (Stalnaker, 1986).

2.2.4.2 What is Culture?

Culture is the property of each society or human group. It includes beliefs, traditions, costumes, language, art, and so on. Culture is the system of knowledge shared by a group of people and it can be taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive reality. Furthermore, depending on each culture people learn to cope with the problems of external adaptations and internal integration (Godwyn & Gittel, 2011).

2.2.4.3 Cultural Identity in Language Teaching

According to Schwartz et al., (2008) Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging that an individual has to a particular group or society where collective knowledge is shared by the members of a certain group. Additionally, it is based on cultural categories such as ethnicity, religion, gender, race, or nationality.

Over the last decades, teaching foreign languages in Latin American countries has gained an important role. By learning a foreign language, students cannot only talk about their hometown, culture, and traditions but also develop better comprehension of others' cultures. This leads to better cross-cultural understanding and the development of learners' awareness of others' cultural identity and their own (Vickov, 2007).

2.2.5 Project-Based Learning

2.2.5.1 What is Project-Based Learning?

Project-Based Learning is a teaching method in which students work cooperatively to find a solution for real-world problems, assignments, or challenging situations at a certain time. The idea of Project-Based Learning is for students to work together, not only with their classmates but also with the teacher, to gather information from the outside world. These kinds of activities take students beyond the classroom to create their own learning while using the language in real-life situations (Gary, 2015).

Furthermore, according to Baines et al., (2021), projects involve complex tasks that foster motivation, reflection, and the creation of a final project, allowing students to create their own knowledge around developing strong problem-solving and collaborative skills. Project-Based Learning (PBL) differs from traditional methods which are centered on teachers giving more active participation to students resulting in outcomes improvement and higher levels of motivation.

In such matters, it can be said that due to the nature of Project-Based Learning allows students to bring the theory they acquire in classes to the hands-on level. These projects promote the active construction of knowledge and connections through direct contact with the environment permitting students and teachers to engage in an ongoing understanding of the language and the communities (Miller et al., 2021).

2.2.5.2 Principles of Project-Based Learning

Baines et al., (2021), have identified four PBL principles that inform instruction, curriculum development, and professional learning in order to promote the same learning opportunities for everybody.

- **Purposeful and Authentic Experiences:** Students are engaged by a relevant question that drives them to the problem to be studied. Such questions must be feasible to consider, worthwhile, meaningful, ethical, and related to students' context or environment. The questions are to be focused on real-world issues happening outside the class so students can look for a solution by putting into practice their knowledge through the development of a project.

- **Deep Integration with Course Content:** Project-Based Learning is an approach that has a multidimensional nature that emphasizes a connection between the contents of the subject matter and outdoor experiences as it helps to build students' knowledge rooted in subject areas.

- **Meaningful and Supportive Relationship:** For carrying out a project it is essential to build a good and strong relationship with peers and teachers. To that end, fostering a culture of collaboration is essential as it integrates more learning opportunities, views mistakes, and focuses on the development of student's emotional and social learning skills which are a crucial component to enhancing PBL environments.

- **Evidence-based Teaching and Assessment Practices:** Project-Based Learning is a useful approach for assessing students as it includes providing strategic and timely feedback which creates opportunities for reflection. Moreover, this assessment not only empowers learners to share their ideas with others to construct new understanding but also makes teachers feel more comfortable and confident to bring rigorous PBL into their classrooms.

2.2.5.3 Stages for Developing a Project

According to Torres (2017), the following steps might be taken into consideration to work on a project.

- **Agreement on the Theme of the Project:** This is the first step in which students have the opportunity to choose the topic for the project according to their perspectives and commitments.

- **Definition of the Objectives and the Final Outcome:** Students set the purposes for developing the project, and define the project that will be obtained at the end such as a written report, a letter, an open house, an oral presentation, a magazine, and so on.

- **Structure the Project:** In this stage, teachers and students structure the project. Such structure must include the information needed to develop the project, and how it will be obtained, as well as the process to gather the information and how it would be compiled and analyzed. Similarly, in this stage, the role of each student is also defined, in other words, what each member has to do.
- **Teacher Prepares Students for the Language Demands:** The teacher presents the type of language that students will use to carry out the project. Moreover, the teacher provides feedback regarding pronunciation so students can improve it.
- **Carrying out the Project:** In this stage, students leave the classroom to carry out the activities planned for the project such as Interviews, reading something, or printing visual aids.
- **Reviewing and Monitoring the Work:** The students present their progress. The teacher can provide feedback on their work.
- **Presentation of the final outcome:** This is the final stage in which students present their final product of the project.

2.2.5.4 Key Characteristics of Project-Based Learning

Project- Based Learning is a useful approach that aids students in developing the necessary skills for facing twenty-first-century education. As one of the principal characteristics, PBL strengthens students' intra and interpersonal competencies as it promotes self-reflection and autonomy as well as collaborative work, empathy, and problem-solution.

Additionally, PBL boosts scientific practices as it encourages students to inquire about problems from the surroundings and participate in authentic research to come up with a solution, which in turn helps to construct students' knowledge like a scientist would improving their motivation and long-term engagement (Markula & Aksela, 2022).

2.2.5.5 Benefits of Applying Project-Based Learning in EFL Classrooms

The main goal of PBL is to help students gain deeper knowledge through the development of a project. It also boosts students' interaction and commitment to the world. According to Bahadur (2022), PBL is a very effective method for teaching and learning a foreign language as it involves mastering students' social, cognitive, and professional development. In the same line, PBL can be adapted to different types of learners and learning situations as long as social learning and cooperative work is promoted.

Similarly, PBL permits learners to discover who they are as students and identify their weaknesses and strengths fostering their sense of motivation, autonomy, and responsibility as it can be adapted to different types of learners and learning situations.

2.2.5.6 Project Work

As stated by Kolmos (1996), Project-Based Learning is an instructional approach that presents problems to students based on their reality so they can apply their knowledge, and skills, through the development of some tasks. Similarly, applying PBL the classes are different from the traditional ones as students are involved in authentic communication, cooperative learning, collaboration, and problem-solving situations. In such matters, projects are divided into three different types.

- **Assignment Project:** These projects are characterized by being mainly controlled by the teacher in terms of topic, materials, methods, and presentation.

- **Subject Project:** It is characterized by the project of the project being chosen beforehand. In these types of projects, students are either free to choose the problem or the problem can be given to them and students are free to choose how to carry it out.

- **Problem Project:** These types of projects depend on the problem to select the best method to develop the project and come up with a solution.

Additionally, Aceves (2011), mentions that projects are also categorized according to the approach chosen to present the information obtained. There are three types of approaches.

- **Production Projects:** These projects involve the creation of bulletin boards, DVDs, radio programs, podcasts, posters, written reports, photo essays, letters, handbooks, brochures, etc.

- **Performance Projects:** These projects can be presented as debates, oral presentations, theatrical performances, food fairs, or fashion shops.

- **Organizational Projects:** These projects involve the planning and formation of a club, conversation table, or forums.

2.2.5.7 Project-Based Learning as a Tool for Assessing

When developing a project, it is crucial to allow students to have a continuous formative assessment to reflect on their knowledge, and how they are doing, they can even revise the learning process. Through formative assessment, learners have the chance to compare their solutions with the solutions and explanations generated by other authors who worked on a similar Project- Based Learning scenario. Without this assessment opportunity,

the quality of learning cannot be as good as expected since the process for carrying out a project-based learning activity is not clear and the results obtained cannot be compared and supported with others resulting in prejudicial for the participants (Barron et al., 1998).

2.2.5.8 The Role of Students and Teachers in Project-Based Learning

To develop a project, the roles of teachers and students within the activity must be considered to meet the expected outcome at the end of the project. In such matters, it is essential to know that the teacher is in charge of providing students with enough environmental support and guidance. Moreover, he monitors students' progress all the time and provides the language structures and feedback needed for developing the project. On the other hand, students play an active role in the project as they are in charge of constructing their own learning through positive experimentation in a real-life context, and cooperative work (Morrison et al., 2021).

2.2.5.9 Project-Based Learning to Enhance Cultural Identity

When developing a project, students are called upon to reflect on their real context and find a problem to work on. Project-Based Learning provides learners the opportunity to explore and engage their learning process with their own cultural heritage as well as the cultures that surround them. In such matters, Kokotsaki et al., (2016) suggest that there are some benefits of having students work on projects to enhance cultural identity.

- **Promotes Students' Autonomy:** When working on a project, students are in charge of shaping their learning as each one of them processes the gathered information distinctly based on their experience.
- **Dives into cultural topics:** Project-based learning allows students to dive into their cultural reality and choose the topic that interests them the most to work on. Through research, discussion, and the development of the project, students reach a deeper understanding of their cultural diversity.
- **Fosters cultural engagement:** To carry out a project, students must interact with others to find out the best solution to their problem. In light of that, students foster connections between the classroom and the outside community by interviewing community members and understanding different cultures to develop a deeper appreciation for their own culture as well as others' cultures.

2.2.5.10 Project-Based Learning Activities

2.2.5.10.1 Community Service Activities

Project-Based Learning activities are experiences based on everyday settings with tangible outcomes. In such matters, Community service activities can be carried out. The idea of including PBL as a tool for doing community service is to provide students with an engaging learning experience that integrates academic knowledge with real-world problem-solving (Barron et al., 1998).

To develop this type of activity, first students need to identify an issue that affects their community. Then they set the goals of the project according to the learning objectives. Moreover, students organize groups and create a plan to solve the problematic situation by assigning roles. During this process, the professor acts more as a consultant by giving them guidance about how to conduct their project to get to the expected outcome (Arantes do Amaral & Santos, 2018).

By developing these kinds of activities, students gain valuable knowledge and skills that help them enhance their sense of citizenship.

2.2.5.10.2 PSA Video Project

It is a well-known fact that technology has gained important relevance within educational settings as it facilitates the learning process through the support of technology. In such matters, PSA video projects can be carried out to come out with a solution to a problem identified by students.

PSA video project emphasizes the production of short videos based on real-life contexts where students are in charge of creating their own video to solve an issue that affects their society. In the first stage, students need to choose a topic for their project regarding the problem they seek to solve. Then, learners create a plan for developing their project by coming up with ideas to develop the script for the video. Throughout this process, the teacher monitors students' progress and provides them with an environment in which they can act. Through the development of a PSA video, students are allowed to work cooperatively to produce a well-elaborated video that will be presented to their peers and posted on websites for sharing (Rasi-Heikkinen, 2011)

2.2.6 Pedagogical Guide

2.2.6.1 What is a Pedagogical Guide?

A pedagogical guide is a document that contains methodological resources that provide teachers with support in creating their training materials for their own classes. The purpose of a pedagogical guide is to help teachers develop teaching materials based on student's needs and the expected outcome. Such a pedagogical guide shows teachers how to structure and develop an activity in the classroom (Lee & Lowe, 2018).

2.2.6.2 Steps for Constructing a Pedagogical Guide

Constructing a pedagogical guide includes some key points to ensure its effectiveness in the teaching process (Lee & Lowe, 2018).

- **Set the objectives:** In this stage, the learning goals and outcomes that the pedagogical guide aims to achieve are stated.
- **Identify the target audience:** The age and characteristics of the target audience are to be considered in designing the activities according to their needs.
- **Set the materials:** The materials are chosen based on the objectives of the and the audience characteristics. In that matter, the materials should be innovative and creative.
- **Description of the process:** In this stage, the activities proposed in the pedagogical guide are described in a detailed way. Clear instructions and models are included to facilitate the understanding of the activities.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This investigation adopted a qualitative approach as it helped to interpret data based on participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior rather than numerical data. In such a matter, the qualitative approach answers the hows and whys instead of how many and how much (Armour & Macdonald, 2012).

Moreover, according to Armour and Macdonald (2012), this approach contributes to the knowledge of human experiences and permits the researcher to make sense of social phenomena. Since qualitative investigations privilege subjectivity, it fosters a deep understanding of a social problem in order to find a solution. In this context, the present investigation aimed to analyze the potential of PBL in enriching the development of cultural identity through teaching and learning English.

3.2 RESEARCH MODALITY

On account of the characteristics of this investigation, the research embraced a bibliographical modality to achieve the stated objectives. This type of research involves the

analysis of documents published in journals or public records through which the researcher can insight into past activities and the process of change to the present (Walsh, 2014).

3.3 LEVEL OR TYPE OF INVESTIGATION

This research project adopted a descriptive level which allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data regarding the events, who is involved, what is involved, and where things take place (Lambert and Lambert, 2012). On this account, this investigation work embraced a descriptive level as it aims to describe the nature of Project-Based learning from the literature. Moreover, the characteristics and steps for putting into practice this approach were analyzed by carrying out a bibliographical review.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION

Due to the research modality of this investigation, the population considered was taken from the bibliography and the databases analyzed. The chosen databases for this study were E-Libro, ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Pro-Quest, ResearchGate, Science Direct, Scielo, Scopus, and Web of Science. These data databases were selected since they contain papers, investigations, books, and data information generally related to the educational field. Moreover, the information found in these databases is trustworthy and contained the information needed to carry out this study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

This investigation aimed to fulfill its first two objectives by conducting a literature review. To accomplish the first objective a systematic bibliographical review was applied to elaborate a bibliographical matrix in which the most important information was discriminated to help the researcher construct a well-founded review. Moreover, an integrative review was executed to elaborate a checklist. Finally, the information gathered was used to create a pedagogical guide. All these instruments and techniques aim to develop cultural identity through teaching and learning language

3.5.1 TECHNIQUES

In the first place, a systematic bibliographical review was conducted to describe the nature and approach of Project-Based Learning within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning. This type of review aims to identify all the studies related to a specific question and their methodology. A systematic bibliographical review helped the researcher to get deeply engaged with the research topic and discriminate the number of results found, which are used to construct the research project (Nightingale, 2009).

The second objective aimed to identify the most suitable activities for implementing PBL regarding the investigation context. To that end, an integrative review was applied. This

review seeks to support the main findings by employing secondary sources to generate new knowledge. It also helped to identify the key points in a specific study so as to develop a deeper understanding of a subject (Torraco, 2005).

The third objective of this investigation aimed to construct a pedagogical-didactic guide based on bibliographical sources, illustrating the academic benefits of Project-Based Learning in the construction of cultural identity. To do so, a register and systematization of information was executed. This process helps to organize and condense the essential details extracted from the previous literature review. In such matters, looking for and finding information according to the researcher's needs becomes easier (Galeano, 2008).

3.5.2 INSTRUMENTS

To conduct this research project some instruments were used in order to gather essential information. In the first place, a bibliographical matrix was constructed to help the researcher systematically organize and summarize the literature found. This was helpful to have a clearer overview of the existing sources. Furthermore, a checklist was used to identify useful activities for the implementation of PBL to enhance the enrichment of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. Finally, the elaboration of a matrix was required to construct a pedagogical-didactic guide, which illustrates the academic benefits of PBL in the construction of cultural identity.

CHAPTER IV

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results obtained throughout the research are presented with the general purpose of analyzing the academic potential of PBL in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. The results are derived from the analysis of the data gathered to carry out this project, which in turn helped foster a deeper understanding of the influence of Project-Based Learning on developing cultural identity.

4.1 RESULTS

Transforming Language Learning and Teaching Through PBL

In accordance with the first objective, “To describe the nature and approach of PBL within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning”, the most important information was condensed into a bibliographical matrix which revealed that applying new active methodologies such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) when teaching English as a Foreign language has benefits for students’ development. In this respect, PBL focuses on allowing students to acquire knowledge through the development of projects that enhance their sense of ownership and construct a deeper understanding of their reality while seeking a solution

to the issues detected. Accordingly, Adams (2006) states that when carrying out a project, students are called up to understand in deep the problems that affect society to come up with a solution, which in turn, encourages the active construction of knowledge through direct interaction with the environment. In such matters, participants take the chance to go beyond the traditional standards and shape their knowledge according to their necessities. In this regard, it can be said that through the implementation of PBL students are immersed in more authentic and real-world scenarios that foster their engagement and motivation which helps them to think more critically and construct meaningful learning through direct interactions.

Furthermore, to carry out a project, students need to develop teamwork skills as in most cases they work in groups where they share diverse perspectives to solve a problem and come up with a product that will help to overcome such problems. On this matter, Markula and Aksela (2022) suggest that one of the main characteristics of PBL is to strengthen students' interpersonal competencies as it promotes collaboration, empathy, and shared responsibility for achieving goals. To achieve students' success in this type of activity, teachers play a crucial role as they are in charge of providing enough environmental support and guidance. Additionally, teachers monitor the whole process of carrying out the project giving help when needed by students.

Along the same line, when learners are working on projects, they develop a deeper connection with their surroundings as they are directly exposed to an environment where personal experiences and cultural backgrounds can be integrated to find a problem to work on and come up with a great solution. To do so, students need to create connections with the local communities, allowing them to understand each of its components and what makes them unique and different from the others. Through meaningful and engaging projects, students have the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice while connecting it with real-world scenarios and sharing their heritage making learning more authentic and relevant (Miller et al., 2021). Similarly, according to Kokotsaki et al., (2016), Project-Based Learning promotes cultural awareness and allows students to dive into their reality, fostering interaction with others and creating connections beyond the classroom.

In short, Project-Based Learning is an effective learning and teaching approach as it encourages students to create their knowledge and reflect on it through active experimentation. To develop such projects students need to follow a process, which according to Torres (2017) is divided into seven stages which include agreement on the topic, definition of the objectives, and the final outcome, structure of the project, preparation for language demands, carrying out the project, reviewing and monitoring, and presentation of the final outcome. Subsequently, PBL moves students beyond traditional methods and tailors their knowledge to their needs. By engaging learners in real-world scenarios, different skills are developed such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative teamwork which foster connections with their communities to develop solutions.

Learning through Active Interaction

In relation to the second objective “ To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of PBL in correspondence with the study target” a checklist was used to

select the most accurate activities that foster cultural identity development through the implementation of projects. In this regard, the parameters established on the checklist were considered, these criteria included context relevance, cultural sensitivity, students' engagement, and learning outcomes. Apart from that, the activities were adapted taking into consideration the types of projects and also the approach that each one would apply with the objective of actively engaging students to construct knowledge through meaningful experiences and collaborative work. To present each activity in the pedagogical guide the principles of Project-Based learning, which include developing purposeful and authentic experiences, deep integration with course content, meaningful and supportive relationships, evidence-based teaching and assessment practices, and the stages for developing a project such as agreement on the topic, definition of the objectives and final outcome, structure the project, preparation for language demands, carrying out the project, reviewing and monitoring, and presentation of the outcome, were considered as they not only promote the same learning opportunities for everybody but also help to carry out the project in a more organized way.

In this regard, as stated by Baines et al., (2021), Project-Based Learning principles require activities, first, to be purposeful and promote authentic experiences by engaging students in learning through relevant questions that drive them to identify a problem affecting the society. In the second place, students are contextualized about the activity through the previous presentation of the vocabulary, so that they integrate their prior knowledge with outdoor activities fostering active experimentation. Later, all the activities involve teamwork to develop the project and present the final outcome, which in turn, creates a more supportive environment where students can rely on their peers' knowledge to come up with a solution to the problem. Finally, at the end of the presentation of the outcome, learners are provided with strategic and timely feedback that encourages them to reflect on their performance.

Following the same line, six activities were presented in the pedagogical guide. The first activity is entitled "Time to cook!", in which students are asked to choose a traditional dish and present it at a food fair. The second activity called "Your Roots!" focuses on the presentation of vernacular vocabulary through a dictionary. The third activity called "Icons of your Nation" encourages students to show outstanding people from their environment through a blog. The fourth activity entitled "Myths Beyond the Mist" highlights the importance of traditional legends and stories which will be presented in English. The fifth activity called "Beyond the Rhythms" emphasizes the presentation of Ecuadorian songs in the second language. The last activity entitled "Move Your Feet" draws attention to traditional dances and their performance. These activities were selected and adapted from the types of projects presented by Kolmos (1996), as they give students autonomy to choose how to carry out their project always bearing in mind the development of cultural identity.

Furthermore, to construct the pedagogical guide the seven stages to develop a project presented by Torres (2017) were considered. In the first stage of every activity, students are called up to dive into a problem occurring in their environment and select a topic to work on based on the themes previously stated by the teacher. Once the topic has been selected, students establish the objectives for developing the project and how it will be presented at

the end of the time set by the teacher. Later on, learners are given some time to plan how the information needed to fundament their topic will be obtained and analyzed. Additionally, in this stage, students assign roles to each member of the group so they can start developing the project. Besides, in the six activities, there is a section that allows the teacher to present the vocabulary that students may encounter while carrying out the project, pronunciation is also checked in this stage. Subsequently, students start developing the project outside the classroom to apply the activities that have been planned beforehand. It is essential to indicate that in every activity the teacher has the role of a monitor who helps and guides students throughout the whole process of developing the project. Regarding the last stage, after the time set by the teacher, students prepare the presentation of their outcome through an open house, written report, food fair, audiobook, videos, etc.

Furthermore, it is essential to point out that the activities used for the pedagogical guide were constructed based on the “Subject Project”, which according to Kolmos (1996), refers to a type of project that is characterized by giving students the freedom to choose the problem they want to work on or the teacher can also give it and they choose how to carry it out. In the six activities from the pedagogical guide, students are already given some themes that foster the connection with their cultural background and also enhance cultural identity sharing. Moreover, the activities were adapted to integrate two types of approaches suggested by Aceves (2011), to present the information or the outcome. In this regard, “Production Projects” and “Performance Projects” were selected as the most accurate ones to present students’ outcomes. Consequently, for the first activity, a food fair will be presented as an outcome aligning with the “Performance Projects” which can be presented as debates, food fairs, oral presentations, etc. Meanwhile, the remaining five activities align with the “Production Projects” as they include the creation of written reports, DVSSs, videos, audiobooks, letters, brochures, etc.

PBL as a Pathway to Cultural Identity: A Teacher’s Guide

Following the third objective of this investigation project “To construct a pedagogical-didactic guide illustrating the academic benefits of PBL in the construction of cultural identity” a pedagogical-didactic guide was made to show some activities that help foster students’ cultural identity through the development of different projects.

In the first place, the principles of PBL, which emphasize students’ engagement through purposeful and authentic experiences, developing integrated connections between the subject matter and outside learning, creating a meaningful and supportive relationship between teachers and students to foster collaboration work, and finally, providing accurate and timely feedback to reflect on the knowledge, were considered to construct the guide. In the first part of the pedagogical guide, the objective and the introduction are presented. Later on, the most important literature is presented in a brief summary which illustrates the importance of PBL from the literature. Likewise, to present the activities, the seven stages for developing a project proposed by Torres (2017), which include agreement on the theme of the project, definition of the objective and the final outcome, structure of the project, preparation for language demands, carrying out the project, reviewing and monitoring the

work and the final presentation were considered and detailed according to each activity. Moreover, this pedagogical guide was created to work with A2 level students and has a duration of one week to carry out the project. Additionally, it is essential to point out that the activities proposed in the guide can be adapted to any level of English.

Subsequently, this pedagogical guide aimed to develop students' cultural identity through the identification of certain problems present in Ecuadorian society nowadays such as the loss of cultural values due to the incorporation of new trends and fashions that set apart students' costumes leading to a weak sense of belonging and disconnection to their roots which can result in a loss of values, language, and traditions that shape their unique heritage. In this regard, the activities in the pedagogical guide encourage students to do meaningful projects that connect their learning to their roots. That is why the following six activities were designed and adapted fostering students' appreciation for their identity while improving their language skills.

Tabla 4- 1: PBL ACTIVITIES

Name of the activity	Objective	Time	Outcome
Time to Cook!	Students will be able to describe the process of preparing a traditional dish.	1 week	Food Fair
Your Roots!	Students will elucidate Vernacular Vocabulary through the elaboration of a dictionary.	1 week	Written or digital dictionaries
Icons of your Nation	Students will elucidate outstanding people from their country through the creation of a blog.	1 week	Digital Blog

Myths Beyond the Mist	Students will retell a traditional Ecuadorian story in English to share with others.	1 week	Audiobook
Beyond the Rhythms	Students will present information about Ecuadorian songs and translate it into English.	1 week	Video
Move your Feet	Students will create a step-by-step dance tutorial in English.	1 week	Video Tutorial

Elaborated by: Jennyfer Bonifaz

Lastly, for more information, the pedagogical guide is attached in the annexes section of this study.

4.2 DISCUSSION

From the epistemological part, Project-Based Learning is deeply rooted in the constructivist approach that advocates learning through active and meaningful experiences. In this regard, according to Kumar (2019), the constructivist approach is a learning theory that emphasizes a student-centered way of teaching where students attain an active role in the learning process that improves their deep understanding and knowledge about the subject matter through new experiences and reflection. By implementing active methodologies centered on students as the most important part of the teaching and learning process, learners can apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, making education more relevant and long-lasting.

Similarly, when developing a project, students are called up to interact with their environment which engages them with the activities and fosters the creation of interpersonal relationships and learning opportunities. This can be corroborated by Adams (2006), who mentions that learning occurs as the result of social interactions where students can

collaborate and have close interaction with others to shape their knowledge and put into practice their communicative skills. Accordingly, McCaslin & Hickey (2001) state that through close relationships and constant participation students not only grow their knowledge but also form a bond with the culture of their context. This participative environment fosters autonomy which allows them to be responsible and take charge of their own learning process.

Following the same line, Project-Based Learning has been proven to be an effective approach that helps foster cultural identity, but it still has some challenges to consider. According to Jones (2006), one of the main drawbacks of applying PBL in the class is that it can be time-consuming due to its own nature. Implementing culturally meaningful projects requires more preparation time, careful planning, research, and execution, which is difficult to integrate when some professors work under the teaching demands of a curriculum that has controlled periods of time to carry out each activity before continuing with the next one. Despite the drawbacks Project-based Learning helps to strengthen students' sense of belonging as they can share their culture with others by using a foreign language which helps to preserve their heritage in a globalized world. Moreover, PBL enables students to investigate and identify issues related to their community, by recognizing such problems, students can dismiss their influence that causes the loss of traditional practices.

In this respect, authors like Kolmos (1996) introduced the Subject Project, which is a type of project that gives students the freedom to choose the problem they want to work on or it can be also given by the teacher beforehand. Accordingly, Aceves (2011), remarks that each project is categorized according to the approach chosen to present the outcome, such approaches are divided into Production, Performance, and Organizational Projects. Based on this, six activities were designed and adapted taking into consideration the aspects of the checklist to enhance students' cultural identity through the development of a project. Such parameters include context relevance, cultural sensitivity, students' engagement, and learning outcomes. Likewise, as the principles of PBL, which embrace being purposeful and promoting authentic experiences, integration with the course content, creating meaningful and supportive relationships, and assessing practices, were considered, as well as the seven stages for developing a project such as agreement on the topic, the definition of the objective and final outcome, project structure, preparation for language demands, carrying out the project, reviewing and monitoring the work, and presentation of the outcome. With respect to this Barron et al., (1998) argue that these types of activities provide students with an engaging learning experience, ensure their participation, and integrate academic knowledge with real-world context to come up with a meaningful solution. Finally, the activities were designed for A2 students and were planned to last 1 week, yet it can be adapted by the teacher depending on their context.

In this regard, the final product of this investigation project was a pedagogical didactic guide for teachers who want to introduce Project-Based Learning to foster the development of cultural identity as it not only includes activities to be used but also an explanation of the method and how to apply it. Following this, Lee and Lowe (2018) maintain that a pedagogical didactic guide provides teachers with support in the creation and adaptation of certain kinds of materials and activities to be used in the class.

Correspondingly, the pedagogical guide aimed to help teachers ensure students' cultural identity through the development of projects that take into account problems that are present in Ecuadorian society such as the adaption of trends and fashions that influence students' attire, distancing them from their cultural roots and weakening their sense of belonging. On this matter, with the pedagogical guide educators can develop certain skills that allow them to apply the projects accurately to promote deep cultural understanding and immersion.

Considering the aforementioned, Project-Based Learning has an essential role in teaching and learning English as it allows students to create a bond with their environment. When developing a project, learners must interact with society as they need to understand their context in deep to detect any situation that is affecting them in one way or another. This corresponds with Gary's (2015) assertion that Problem-Based Learning is a teaching method that requires students to interact with their surroundings to identify real-world problems and come up with a solution. Furthermore, the idea of PBL is to have students working together not only with their classmates but also with the constant guidance of the teacher to gather information from the outside world. In the same line Baines et al., (2021) mention that PBL involves complex tasks that engage students in the activity and foster reflection and problem-solving skills. The main focus of introducing PBL in classes is to ameliorate learning opportunities and vary from traditional methods that only emphasize the passive role of learners and constant repetition.

Ultimately, Project-Based Learning is an approach that transforms traditional teaching methods into a more active and creative way of acquiring knowledge. Through constant interactions with peers and the environment, students can bridge the gap between academic learning and personal experiences, which allows them to reflect on their education. PBL fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and self-expression that empowers students to embrace their cultural background and ensure their growth as individuals who value their roots while sharing their diversity with future generations and the outside world.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- Project-Based Learning is an effective active method that fosters students' deep engagement and motivation. As learners immerse in real-world scenarios, PBL encourages active knowledge construction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that help them connect the knowledge acquired in classes and the experience when developing the project. Moreover, it strengthens students' interpersonal competencies through collaborative work as all the members share responsibilities to achieve the final goal. Additionally, PBL also promotes the development of cultural identity as it requires students to connect with their environment in order to solve a problem and create more meaningful knowledge through experiences.
- The selection and adaptation of the activities for implementing the Project-Based Learning (PBL) was done taking into consideration the criteria established on the checklist to ensure the effectiveness in fostering cultural identity development. These activities, Time to Cook!, Your Roots!, Icons of your Nation, Myths Beyond the Mist, Beyond the Rhythms, and Move your Feet, were also aligned with the principles and stages of PBL to provide meaningful opportunities to engage students in real-world problems, collaborative work, and reflection. The six suggested activities were planned to be developed by A2 level students in 1 week, yet they can be adapted to any level depending on each situation. At last, such activities were incorporated into a pedagogical guide that aims to provide the teacher with some ideas that not only promote learning through experiences but also dive into cultural backgrounds and share them through project outcomes.
- The pedagogical guide includes interactive activities that were designed to illustrate the academic benefits of Project-Based Learning to foster cultural identity. Moreover, this pedagogical guide serves as a guide for teachers who want to implement PBL as it contains a brief explanation of the method and its benefits. Besides, the pedagogical guide aims to help the teacher foster the connection of language learning with real-world issues. Through its incorporation, teachers foster students' engagement and motivation as well as collaborative work and problem-solving skills, which in turn encourage students to carry out meaningful projects that connect their learning with their roots.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Project-Based Learning fosters students' active engagement with their environment and allows them to create meaningful learning through experiences as well as language skills production. In this regard, educators should integrate PBL as one of the primary teaching strategies to increase motivation and connection with cultural backgrounds. Moreover, teachers should provide more opportunities for teamwork, ensuring the development of essential skills while working on meaningful projects, in that way they let aside traditional ways of teaching.
- Teachers should design more PBL activities, that encourage students to explore and dive into their cultural heritage, such activities should be applied at least twice in the scholar year so they can make learning more engaging and meaningful. The activities might be flexible and based on students' language proficiency and they should also include the utilization of technological tools in order to enrich learning experiences.
- The pedagogical guide should be shared among educators so they can promote the use of PBL in foreign language teaching and learning. Moreover, teachers should be taught how to implement the guide in the best way possible to emphasize the importance of preserving cultural values, traditions, and language to reinforce students' connection to their heritage.

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ANEXES

CHECKLIST				
AREA: Learning English as a Foreign Language		LEVEL:		
DATE:		NAME: Jennyfer Bonifaz		
TOPIC:				
OBJECTIVE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of PBL in correspondence with the study target. 				
CATEGORY	ASPECTS	OUTCOMES		
Context Relevance	Authenticity: Are the contexts used in the learning activities authentic and reflective of real-world scenarios?	Yes	No	Observations
	Cultural Relevance: Do the contexts reflect the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the students?			
	Student Interest: Are the contexts engaging and interesting to the students?			
Instructional Design	Learning Objectives: Are the learning objectives clearly defined and aligned with fostering cultural identity?			
	Integration of Cultural Content: Is cultural content seamlessly integrated into the learning activities?			
	Active Learning: Do the activities promote active learning and student participation?			
Cultural Sensitivity	Respect for Diversity: Are the activities designed with respect for cultural diversity and avoiding stereotypes?			
	Inclusivity: Do the activities accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds?			
	Representation: Are various cultural perspectives and voices represented in the materials and activities?			
Student Engagement	Participation: Are all students actively participating in the activities?			
	Engagement: Are the students engaged and showing interest in the cultural contexts presented?			

	Collaboration: Do the activities encourage collaboration among students from different cultural backgrounds?			
Learning Outcomes	Knowledge and Understanding: Are students gaining knowledge and understanding of their own and others' cultures?			
	Identity Development: Are the activities contributing to students' development of a strong and positive cultural identity?			
Assessment	Formative Assessment: Are there formative assessments to monitor student progress and understanding during the activities?			
	Summative Assessment: Are there summative assessments to evaluate overall learning outcomes related to cultural identity?			
	Feedback Mechanisms: Is there a system for collecting and incorporating student feedback on the activities?			
Reflection and Adaptation	Reflection Opportunities: Are there opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and cultural identity?			
	Continuous Improvement: Is there a process for continuously improving the activities based on student feedback and learning outcomes?			
	Adaptability: Are the activities adaptable to different cultural contexts and student needs?			
Community Involvement	Community Connections: Do the activities connect students with the local community and cultural resources?			

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MATRIX					
Author and year/ Editorial	Type of document	URL / DOI	Purpose	Findings	PBL Activities