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Situated 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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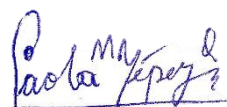**Tutor:**
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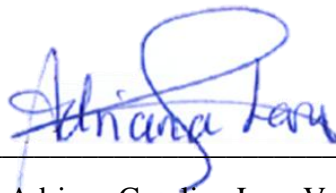
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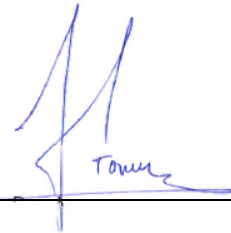
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DEDICATION

To God and the infinite blessings he has bestowed upon me. To my mom Miriam and my dad Alfredo, my sister Gabriela and my grandma Luz for being my pillar and constant in my life, for allowing me to be myself and supporting me every step of the way. To my kitten, Sol, who was my loving companion for half of my major, your memory stays with me every day. To my dear friends, whose support and friendship got me through this whole journey.

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Lastly, my utmost appreciation goes to each and every one of my professors for sharing their knowledge and wisdom and for instilling in me a sense of pride and responsibility toward my future students. I promise I will do right by your teachings.

Paola Yépez

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RESUMEN

Enseñar inglés en un país como Ecuador implica algo más que repasar reglas gramaticales y ejercicios para garantizar el aprendizaje. Las metodologías modernas enfatizan la importancia del aprendizaje en contexto y en escenarios situados donde los estudiantes son participantes activos. Considerando esto, el Aprendizaje Situado ve el proceso de construcción del conocimiento como un viaje desde la periferia hacia una Comunidad de Práctica. Así, el Aprendizaje Situado permite crear un contexto significativo para la enseñanza, además de promover la interacción y el intercambio de experiencias culturales con los demás.

En este sentido, la presente investigación titulada «Situated Learning and its Possibilities to enhance the Teaching and Learning of English focused on cultural identity development» pretende analizar el potencial del Aprendizaje Situado para enriquecer el desarrollo de la identidad cultural a través de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés. Para alcanzar dicho objetivo, el estudio se basó en un enfoque cualitativo, ya que permitió la comprensión del estudio de los fenómenos. Además, se realizó una investigación bibliográfica para recopilar datos de diversas bases de datos. El nivel del proyecto es descriptivo ya que contribuye a la introducción del potencial del Aprendizaje Situado desde un punto de vista epistemológico. Asimismo, el estudio adopta un método de investigación explicativo, ya que ayuda a explorar un fenómeno con información limitada.

Los resultados muestran que actividades como Dramatización, TBL, Excursiones y Comunidades de Práctica Online son ideales para el Aprendizaje Situado, y pueden ser adaptadas para que fomenten la identidad cultural y garanticen el aprendizaje de la lengua. Estas actividades se recopilan en una Guía Pedagógica para que los profesores ecuatorianos puedan ponerlas en práctica en el aula.

En conclusión, el Aprendizaje Situado responsabiliza a los estudiantes de su aprendizaje al proporcionarles oportunidades de socialización y participación. Además, gracias a su naturaleza, este enfoque es fácilmente adaptable a los diversos orígenes de los estudiantes. Así, las experiencias auténticas tienen lugar en un contexto familiar en el que la cultura está presente y se puede desarrollar un sentimiento de pertenencia y de identidad.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje situado, Identidad cultural, Metodología activa, Inglés como lengua extranjera

ABSTRACT

Teaching English in a country such as Ecuador involves more than just going over grammar rules and drills to ensure learning. Modern methodologies emphasise the importance of learning in context and situated scenarios where students are active participants. Considering this, Situated Learning views the process of constructing knowledge as a journey from the periphery and into a Community of Practice. Thus, Situated Learning allows for the creation of a meaningful context for teaching as well as promoting interaction and the exchange of cultural experiences with others.

In this regard, the present research titled "Situated Learning and its Possibilities to enhance the Teaching and Learning of English focused on cultural identity development" aims to analyse the potential of Situated Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. To achieve said objective, the study was developed following the precepts of bibliographic research to collect data from various databases. The level of the project is descriptive since it contributes to the introduction of the potential of Situated Learning from an epistemological standpoint. Similarly, the study embraces an explicative research method as it aids in exploring a phenomenon with limited information.

The results show that activities such as Drama, TBL, Field Trips and Online Communities of Practice are ideal for Situated Learning, and they can be adapted so they both foster cultural identity and guarantee language learning. These activities are compiled in a Pedagogical Guide for Ecuadorian teachers to implement the activities in the classroom.

In conclusion, Situated Learning holds students accountable for their learning by providing opportunities for socialisation and participation. Furthermore, this approach is easily adaptable to students' diverse backgrounds thanks to its nature. Thus, authentic experiences take place in a familiar context where culture is present, and a sense of belonging, and identity can be developed

Keywords: Situated Learning, Cultural Identity, Active methodology, English as a Foreign Language.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

As it is known, English has firmly established itself as the dominant global language, largely fuelled by globalisation and the ever-growing reach of the internet. English proficiency has become a vital skill for individuals seeking opportunities in various fields. Thus, Ecuador, like many countries, has adopted an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum. However, while the curriculum does consider cultural awareness, many feel disconnected from their own cultural identity, influenced by the global prominence of English. This can lead to a devaluation of their native culture and a diminished sense of self-esteem.

Considering the aforementioned circumstance, Situated Learning offers an alternative approach to traditional language teaching, focusing on knowledge acquisition through active participation and immersion within a community of practice. This theory highlights the importance of social interaction and contextualised learning and emphasises the process of becoming part of a learning community.

Thus, the present research explores the potential of Situated Learning for enhancing cultural identity through EFL teaching in Ecuador. The literature review indicates that certain activities, such as Task-Based Learning (TBL), Drama, Field Trips, and Online Communities of Practice, are particularly effective when adapted to the Situated Learning framework. These activities not only engage students in meaningful language use but also provide opportunities for cultural exchange and identity development.

The purpose of this study is to develop a Pedagogical Guide for Ecuadorian EFL educators, offering practical activities that integrate Situated Learning principles to promote cultural identity alongside language acquisition. By implementing these activities, educators can create a learning environment where students not only gain English language skills but also deepen their connection to their cultural heritage, ensuring a meaningful and empowering educational experience.

Finally, this research is divided into six chapters. The first one is called the Introduction, where the research problem, problem statement, justification, and objectives are presented for the reader to understand the reasoning behind the decision to do this project. The next chapter displays the Theoretical Framework with both the Research and Theoretical Background with a profound explanation of the Situated Learning theory to contextualise the research. Then, the third chapter describes the Methodology used for conducting this project. It contains a description of the data collection instruments and analysis, which aids in understanding how the information was processed and analysed. The fourth chapter presents the Results and Discussion obtained from the investigation process. The Results section is divided into three parts to display one result per each objective. The fifth chapter contains the Conclusions and Recommendations of the project, which are presented similarly to the results. Finally, the sixth result shows the pedagogical guide created to accomplish the third objective of this research and as a complement to the research project.

1.1 Research Problem

The presence of English as an indispensable language in a globalised world is undeniable. English is now considered by many as a lingua franca, meaning that being able to speak it contributes significantly to the chances of improvement, from individuals to entire nations (Christiansen, 2015). Nowadays, the English language is so valuable that it is taught in most countries of Latin America as part of the educational curriculum, as is the case in Ecuador. Further into this, students are expected to reach a B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale in the English language after finishing their higher education (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

As mentioned, the ability to speak a foreign language, namely English, increases a person's opportunities in a context such as the Ecuadorian almost exponentially. Surprisingly enough, these educational policies and expectations of proficiency are not met, as evidenced by the 2024 Education First-English Proficiency Index (EF-EPI), which ranked Ecuador 19th out of 21 countries in Latin America (Education First, 2024). One potential reason students have not been able to meet the expected level of fluency is the overestimation of English as an aspirational language. This could lead to the diminishing or rejection of the student's own culture as it can appear less important in comparison. Hence, students' sense of identity can be affected, reducing self-esteem and raising their affective filter (Cambridge English Assessment Perspectives, 2018). On the other hand, part of the problem may also lie in the socioeconomic disparity of students. Those from rural areas often have less access to the same resources and opportunities for development as students in urban spaces.

The situation above represents a problem for both English Learning and the preservation of the student's cultural identity. As teachers play a significant role in the introduction of a new language, they are also responsible for including elements of students' own culture in their teaching practice. This can be achieved through the implementation of methodologies such as Situated Learning to counteract the overestimation of foreign cultures and enhance students' identity. Situated learning allows students to experience situations where they take place by creating a community of practice where they need to use all language skills in a contextualised setting (Abdallah, 2015). This methodology is inherently social. It provides opportunities for practice and sharing within the community without the fear of being judged, lowering the affective filter as a result. Finally, it generates perfect conditions to enhance students' learning and strengthen their cultural identity.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the last decades, English has been constantly positioned as a very, if not the most, influential language and globalisation has aided this way of thinking, too. It is more evident nowadays as the internet itself is an example of it. The most relevant and up-to-date information will have, most likely, been written in English. Alfehaid (2014) considers that the mass diffusion of the English language in media and other instances provokes a wish in many nations to partake in the globalised world. Thus, people are encouraged to learn the language and benefit from it.

Ecuador has not been an exception to this norm. The English as a Foreign Language Ecuadorian curriculum is constructed to fit international standards as it is "based on internationally recognised levels and processes of teaching and learning languages" (Ministerio de Educación, 2016, p. 3). The EFL curriculum conceives five curricular threads for teaching English. The first thread, Communication and Cultural Awareness, is divided into two sub-threads, one of which focuses on intercultural awareness and identity.

Despite the situation, authors such as Alvarez and Ha declare that only a small number of people benefit from these curricular policies and reach the desired level of fluency. A potential reason is the overemphasis on English as the dominant language (2022). This attitude can create feelings of inferiority, causing students to devalue their own culture. As a result, their sense of identity can suffer, leading to lower self-esteem and a higher affective filter. Socioeconomic disparities might also contribute to the problem, as students from rural areas often lack the same resources and opportunities as those in urban areas. Thus, Situated Learning presents itself as a learning theory, focused on the acquisition of knowledge through practice and integration into a community. This approach is inherently social, offering opportunities for practice and sharing within the community without fear of judgment, thereby reducing the affective filter. Ultimately, it creates ideal conditions for enhancing students' learning and reinforcing their cultural identity and appreciation for it.

Considering the facts, this research aims to analyse the potential of Situated Learning, from an epistemological standpoint, in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. The study was rooted in the principles of bibliographic research. By nature, this investigation was descriptive and explicative. To accomplish the goals of the research, a literature review was developed through the extensive analysis of the bibliography and databases.

1.3 Problem Formulation

What is the potential of Situated Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English?

1.4 Justification

This research examines the usefulness of the Situated Learning Theory in developing cultural identity. As it has been established, Ecuador is a culturally rich country, shaped by its history, geographical standing, and biodiversity. Despite the inclusion of these aspects in the National Curriculum, this richness is often overlooked in foreign language teaching. Given the undeniable hegemony of English as the most used language in media and academia, it is often viewed as an access tool to the most state-of-the-art information. In this regard, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become standard practice, reinforcing its importance and usefulness. However, this emphasis can lead learners to resent and undermine their own set of traditions and beliefs in favour of the ones associated with English-speaking cultures.

As this study aims to find a way to counteract the problem, it is essential to look at the way EFL is taught in Ecuador. The National Curriculum for EFL is constructed around modern approaches (communicative, student-centred, etc.) and structured according to

active methodologies (CLIL and TBL). Additionally, it includes curricular threads like Cultural Awareness and interculturality that intend to acknowledge the country's cultural expanse. These curricular threads, however, lack the necessary elements, such as experiential learning and hands-on action, which foster a deeper connection to cultural identity and aid significant learning.

In a globalised era, where English significantly influences local cultures, theories such as Situated Learning help build a balance between achieving global standards in terms of language and preserving Ecuador's unique cultural heritage. Research on Situated Learning suggests that students develop a sense of identity and belonging to a community with shared values and aligned interests when they engage in meaningful, context-based learning experiences. By applying this theory, learners become both culturally aware and open (due to interaction) and more knowledgeable (due to the experience).

Overall, this research contributes to the discussion on the importance of cultural preservation and identity in language learning. Furthermore, as English maintains its status as an influential language, this study intends to support students' cultural roots by providing a framework for integrating cultural identity more effectively into English instruction. Ultimately, this research aims to benefit EFL students and educators by exploring Situated Learning as a pedagogical approach and offering practical, evidence-based strategies to integrate cultural identity into language instruction. These strategies are presented through a Pedagogical Guide for teachers with tailored activities that will ease their application in the Ecuadorian context.

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1   General Objective

To analyse the potential of Situated Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English.

1.5.2   Specific Objectives

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

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.   Research Background

The relevance of teaching English as a foreign language is quite recent. Historically, English was taught first under traditional methodologies such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), the Direct Method (DM), and the Audiolingual (AM). The first aimed for accuracy in writing through translation and memorisation. The Direct Method came as a response to the traditional method in the early XX century. It tried to emulate how children learn their first language, to teach a second one. Later, the Audiolingual Method came along to answer the need to learn a language the fastest way possible during times of war. It was done through drills, mimicry memorisation and the repetition of language patterns, making learning automatic. All these had in common that they focused on developing accuracy rather than fluency. And while teachers were the sole holders of knowledge, students were expected to replicate what they were shown, making learning impersonal and detached (Torres, 2017).

After World War II, the United States became the centre of a developing world, hence English turned into the most influential language. This condition was the catalyst for the emergence of more modern language learning methodologies that would suit the necessities of a world in the process of globalisation. Contrary to the traditional methodologies, new styles started concentrating on different aspects of language learning, such as culture and identity. (Alfehaid, 2014). Situated Learning is an example of this. First mentioned in 1991 by Lave and Wenger in their book Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation, it refers to the conception that students' learning is better when they have active roles during the learning experience.

Situated learning provides the perfect opportunity to create spaces where students have the same goal, interest, and practice: learning a new language. Interaction between the participants becomes the root of significant learning as it happens in a familiar context where language is used rather than just shown. Plus, the inclusion of Situated Learning activities such as Communities of Practice or Drama brings about occasions for sharing experiences with classmates, allowing students, even shy ones, to develop a sense of identity and belonging (Lave and Wegner, 1991).

The theory has evidence of being successful, as in the study made by Jama and Alnefaie in 2023. They sought to discover how learners utilised different grammatical structures based on the situated learning theory. Three aspects were addressed to connect the content with real-life situations through this theory. The first focuses on content and concepts, the second enhances contextualised activities, and the third centres on communicating socially, using the content and concepts. The application of these components allowed the creation of Communities of Practice where students who had never been exposed to the contents of the course had a smooth initiation, and those more experienced enhanced their skills.

O'Connor reflects upon the two tendencies that Situated Learning has taken: cognitive apprenticeships and cultural production. He says one of the flaws of the apprenticeship trend is the lack of focus on offering contextualisation, which is essential for cultural production. On the other hand, the latter can be understood as the reproduction of

cultural patterns that learners acquire during their formation. Since learners are never part of only one community, they bring their own values, norms and practices (acquired from other spaces) to the new community. Thus, Situated Learning allows students to build their identity based on all these aspects, namely exposition and interaction (2003).

Initially, identity was thought of as a permanent characteristic of an individual. However, the socio-cultural perspective theorised by sociologists like Bourdieu, Hall and Weedon in the 90s changed the concept of identity. It no longer was a stable attribute, but a changing aspect in constant development. For Oprescu (2016), a meaningful part of students' identity is constructed through education. It is in school where people spend their formative years the most and where they start shaping a sense of identity.

In a globalised world, communication, cooperation and interaction across cultures are fundamental to growth (Oprescu 2016). These necessities are reflected in education. Curricula are constantly adapting to the requirements of society to help students become competent individuals. In 1997, Bryman advocated for the establishment of ICC, intercultural communicative competence as a key skill in education. Ever since foreign language teaching models focused on cultural and identity development have become more widespread. The Hallet Bilingual triangle, related to the CLIL model, shows the relationship between students' other cultures, target language culture and intercultural, global aspects. All three contribute to developing intercultural competence and are crucial to language proficiency.

Cultural Identity is of such importance that the EFL curriculum is centred on students from different cultures and takes into consideration multilingual students as well. This is done because being mindful of one's culture will allow both an appreciation for it and a better understanding of someone else's. In a globalised society, having a strong sense of identity and being culturally aware are key to initiating and maintaining contact with people from different cultures.

3.   Theoretical Background

3.1 Language Learning Theories

Language Learning is the process of acquiring a language different from the native tongue. The way a language is learned and taught has undergone many changes over the years. Back in the 50s, the Behavioural Theory treated Language Learning as "any other kind of learning", which involved the formation of habits and a stimuli-response method (Mitchel, Myles and Marsden, 2004, p.30). However, as the new century approached, and global necessities altered so did the learning of languages. Modern methodologies shifted the focus away from teachers and centred it on students. The following are examples of this.

- **Constructivist Approach**

In 1984, Von Glasersfeld described the constructivism model of knowledge as the action in which learners construct their understanding. For him, students' learning is not limited to reflection and repetition, instead, it extends so the knowledge acquired can fit reality and help solve problems.

- **Cognitive Constructivism**

Based on Piaget's work, Kalina and Powell, (2009) defined cognitive constructivism as the process of assimilation through the accommodation of new knowledge to fit it along with previously known information. During this process, teachers should identify struggles, ask questions, and clarify concepts so effective learning can take place.

- **Social Constructivism**

Vygotsky states that knowledge is constructed with the aid of the community, in which learners will always find a more knowledgeable other to guide them, thus being exposed to interaction. For him, the process of learning is collective. Students internalise social activities before they become mental activities. This, in addition to critical thinking, is the foundation for the optimal development of students in all areas (Vygotsky and Cole, 1978).

One of the pillars of Social Constructivism theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept can be briefly understood as the gap between learners' abilities and what they can become with proper help and guidance. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) are adamant that this initial definition does not extend to the group's influence and its culture, as it seems as if learning would only occur from one individual to another. The cultural interpretation of the ZDP views it as the gap between knowledge of cultural aspects learned through instruction and constant exposure to that same culture (Davydov and Markov, 1983).

A newer interpretation is the one proposed by Engeström; this conception of the ZDP is a reinterpretation of Vygotsky's original ideas. He posits that everyday actions, provided that they are deeply embedded in established societal norms, can harbour inherent tensions or contradictions that limit progress and adaptation. The ZPD, in this context, is the critical space where these challenges can be addressed through collaborative learning and joint problem-solving, allowing groups to bridge the gap between familiar practices and new, historically emergent solutions. In essence, it is within this space that collective activity transcends routine behaviours to generate transformative practices capable of resolving the embedded double binds, thereby fostering broader organisational and societal change (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, 1999).

3.2 Active Methodologies

As stated before, current methodologies for language teaching place students as the central pivots of education. They are the protagonists of learning and, as such, teaching methodologies are constructed on that notion. Active language learning methodologies emphasise the importance of communication in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

- **Communicative Approach**

Roberts, in 2004, defined the Communicative Approach (CA) as a student-centred approach grounded on interaction. Communicative approaches are the most accepted in contemporary classrooms since they aim to improve student's confidence in the target language, maintaining their interest while simultaneously working on communicative skills. (Cite to corroborate that the CA is indeed the most effective or accepted.)

One methodology developed under the CA is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which aims to teach a second—or foreign—language by helping learners develop communicative competence. Its importance lies in the fact that knowing a language goes beyond understanding and using the right language at the right time or with a purpose. Being a competent user of the target language cannot be done by simply developing grammatical awareness (Richards, 2005).

Like CLT, Task-Based Learning (TBL) is also built on the communicative approach. This means that language is taught through a series of tasks that help students comprehend, experiment, and interact with the target language, making it a communicative act through and through. TBL also allows students to produce their own language after a process of internalization (Oxford, 2006).

Steaming from cognitive theories, cooperative learning aims to encourage students to engage in their community—classmates—and exchange information to increase learning. In other words, students learn in groups and are evaluated according to their performance in the team. This teaching model allows communication and helps develop social skills, which is beneficial for language acquisition in a natural-like environment (Chen, 2021).

3.5 EFL Ecuadorian Curriculum

In the Ecuadorian Context, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Methodology figures as the backbone for the teaching of English in public education. Marsh (2013) considers CLIL as a "dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of content and language" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010, p. 18). Its main objective is to achieve competence in both content and language for which it features four pillars, also known as the 4C framework: content, culture, communication, and cognition. The Ecuadorian Curriculum takes a particular approach to these four pillars.

- **Curricular Threads**

The Ecuadorian EFL curriculum aims to complement the 4C framework through the integration of five curricular threads: Oral Communication (includes speaking and listening), Reading, Writing, Communication and Cultural Awareness, and Language through the Arts. The latter two support the others by being pits of authentic material ideal for practice (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Due to the extent of the objectives of this work, this research will only elaborate on the third Curricular Thread mentioned before.

- **Communication and Cultural Awareness**

This curricular thread contributes to the pillar of Culture/Citizenship in the CLIL methodology within the EFL Ecuadorian curriculum. It aims to help students understand and

experience the socio-cultural reality of the country insightfully. Thus, they are expected to develop a sense of identity to better comprehend foreign cultures apart from theirs.

    o   Curricular sub-thread: Intercultural Awareness and Identity

Interculturality refers to the interaction between people coming from a variety of cultural backgrounds. A successful interaction of that kind can only be possible with the adequate use of authentic language in a way that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the cultures. Students must be aware of the culture they belong to first before attempting to know someone else's. This involves developing a sense of identity defined by the values and principles of their culture. In other words, being aware of one's culture will help them comprehend a different one. In this way, students acquire a broad perspective of the world and become sensible to culture. Thus, communication is genuine, and interaction is mindful and meaningful (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

3.6 What is Cultural Identity?

- Identity

Identity is that which defines a person or group of people, and it forms within the community. It is moulded by relationships between members of the community and interaction with external individuals. In this sense, identity is a dynamic and ever-changing notion that can be contradictory, multi-framed or fragmented at certain times. (Teng, 2019).

- Culture

A formal definition for culture, given by Schein in 1991, is that it is a "pattern of shared basic assumptions" created and developed by humans (p. 333). Culture can also be understood as a human characteristic that all members of a group share, be it history or shared experiences. It shapes the perception people have toward life, interconnected to language and understanding it.

In the setting of language teaching, Englebert (2004), as cited by Ali (2020), stated that learning a foreign language is also learning a foreign culture. It is what determines how people live and think, and it is what unites people as part of a society. However, to understand someone else's culture, it is essential to comprehend one's own first. This will provide students with advantages such as having a sense of individuality and regard for what is theirs so that they become sensitive and open-minded towards others' realities.

- Cultural Identity in Language Teaching

Cultural identity can be understood as the connection to a group that shares a similar set of cultural values and beliefs. It develops by means of environmental interaction and is formed through elements such as ethnicity or religion. According to Jia, Cultural Identity is acquired and in constant construction, thus it must be taken care of (2019).

In language teaching, teachers have the most influence on shaping students' cultural identity. Learning a new language involves comprehending and immersing in the target

language culture for its acquisition, however, this practice could endanger student's perception of their mother tongue. If a teacher considers the target language, namely English, a superior or greater language than the one their students speak, they may replicate this belief. This may unintentionally create feelings of rejection or scorn toward students' native culture (Zabetipour and Baghi, 2015).

Language is not only a medium for communication, but also the means humans have for expressing and building their identity. Therefore, teachers must guide their students to understand the culture of their target language but not forget their roots. Thus, teachers must work on developing students' intercultural communication skills. These skills go beyond understanding the target language and culture (English) as it implies using that language to share students' own experiences with people who also speak it. In the words of Jia "Intercultural communication should be a two-way communication based on equality, so cultural output is as important as cultural input" (p. 4, 2019).

3.7 Situated Learning

Defined for the first time by Lave and Wenger in 1998, Situated Learning is a theory that states that learning is a "trajectory into a community of practice". In other words, knowledge is constructed through social interaction with more knowledgeable members of a community, who are not necessarily instructors or authority figures. Moreover, learning takes place by doing activities in the same context where they normally occur. Situated Learning conceives learners as the main actors in the construction of their knowledge. It is learners who know their needs, learning styles and strengths the best. Thus, it is their responsibility to partake actively in the learning process. This is done by placing EFL learners in Communities of Practice (CoPs) with other students who share the same goals and basic values. Creating these communities will benefit learners as they can rely on their peers and learn from them. Additionally, constant interaction and exposure to the language within contextualised environments will improve their English communicative skills (Abdallah, 2015).

When talking about this theory, it is possible to mention three pillars that help explain what Situational Learning is about, these are: Cognitive Apprenticeship, Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), and Communities of Practice (CoP). Each one will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.7.1 Cognitive Apprenticeship

Introduced by Collins, Brown and Newman in 1987 this concept illustrates the cognitive cycle that all novices undergo during the process of learning and the acquisition of cognitive and metacognitive skills through observation and experience. According to the authors, the term refers to "learning through guided experience" (p. 5) and focuses primarily on the use of conceptual and factual knowledge in problem-solving tasks. Thus, Cognitive Apprenticeship involves providing a context to situate the learning and sufficient help to guide students through the process until they become independent and producers of their own knowledge. The process highlights the role that teachers or more experienced mentors

play in guiding learners through all stages: Modelling, Coaching, and Fading. However, these can be expanded into six stages.

The first three are Modelling, Coaching and Scaffolding, and they are the foundation for Cognitive Apprenticeship. These steps will guide students from observers to actors by showing, teaching and building on the knowledge students acquire. The following two, Articulation and Reflection, allow the learner to become aware of their problem-solving process and contrast it to the process developed by an expert. The last, Exploration, is aimed at autonomy, meaning that the teacher's aid will have faded, and the learner will be fully responsible for not only the complete process of problem-solving but also its arrangement and control (Collins, et.al., 1987).

3.7.2   Legitimate Peripheral Participation.

When talking about Situated Learning, it is important to establish the concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). This pillar refers to the process new learners or "newcomers" undergo until they become experts or "old-timers". They go from being side participants to full members of the Community of Practice new learners always start on the periphery of a community and become more knowledgeable through collaboration, experience, interaction, and practice of the community values (Lave and Wegner, 1991). All the aforementioned permit newcomers to move and escalate the levels in a Community of Practice and eventually become old-timers, who will be able to help and guide eventual newcomers.

Figure 1. Legitimate Peripheral Participation: From Newcomers to Oldtimers
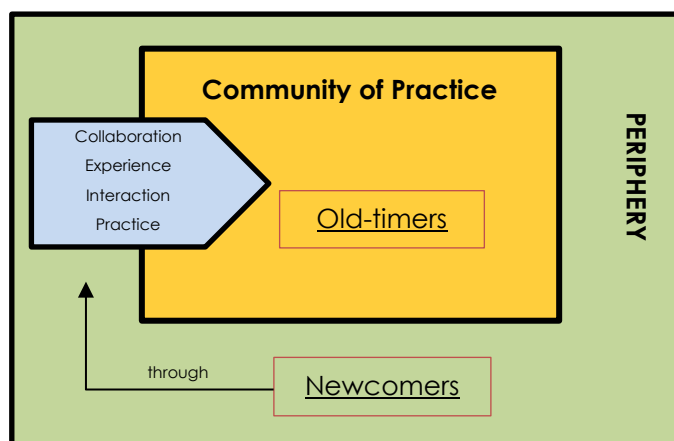
Figure 1 Legitimate Peripheral Participation

3.7.3   Communities of Practice

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share valuable knowledge about a particular topic and have the same goals and interests. Learning occurs within one of these communities. Their members, who are active participants in them, help newcomers move from peripheral to full participation. This can be done by constant interaction and sharing from both types of participants (Lave and Wegner, 1991). It is important to remark, however, that not all communities are CoPs, for instance, a group of friends who like the

same videogame and join regularly to play it are not a CoP since it only presents one of the three characteristics that render any community a CoP, the other two are community and practice (Wegner, 1998).

The first one, the domain, refers to the interest all members of the CoP share and it is what keeps the community bonded and committed to maintaining strong relationships. Likewise, it creates a sense of identity and belonging as each member contributes to its creation by bringing their own perspectives and abilities, which gives the community a purpose.

The second characteristic is the community. All members join regularly and engage in discussions to help each other out and exchange information. Thus, the community ensures that everyone is willing to learn from the other and teach them in turn, making it mutually beneficial for every party involved.

The practice is the final one, and it helps decide if a community can be considered a CoP or not. In a Community of Practice, all members must be practitioners, meaning that, apart from sharing an interest and being willing to collaborate, they must present similar sets of skills and experiences that add to the CoP. These similarities also help create an identity within the CoP as all members bring their thoughts into the CoP, shaping it to fit its purpose.
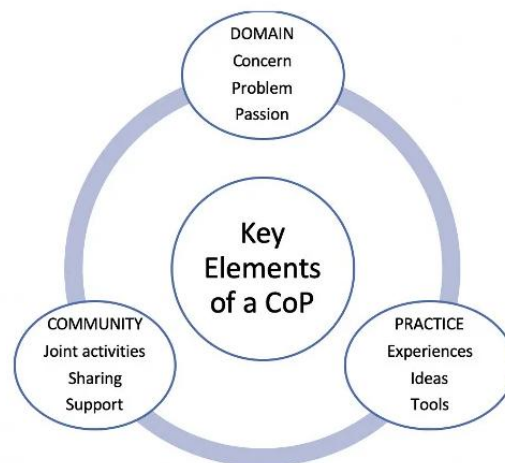
Figure 2 Key Elements of a Community of Practice
(Parrish, 2022)

- The role of students and teachers

  o Student's role

According to Besar (2018), students take the role of practitioners. Both newcomers and old-timers are active participants in the communities. All of them must interact and engage in learning activities instead of being passive recipients of information. They collaborate according to their condition. Those more knowledgeable act as guides to those newly initiated. The latter group, start by observing their more capable peers and eventually contribute with their insights.

  o Teachers' role

Teachers are facilitators, they oversee activating knowledge and guiding students. They are mediators and providers of unknown concepts. At times, they can even act as co-learners if the situation calls for it. Teachers should encourage students to interact within their communities and create spaces where the language is used, and the identity is developed (Besar, 2018).

3.8 Process for Implementing Situated Learning Methodology

Figure 3 Components of a social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998)

In his book Communities of Practice, Wenger mentions four components of the learning process, present in the Situated Learning Theory (1998).

1. Meaning: Learning occurs through activity or experience.
2. Practice: This indicates that learning takes place through mutual participation in action and the application of knowledge in a social environment.
3. Community: This indicates learning through the social environment of a situation and includes place, tools, people, and social interaction.
4. Identity: This underlines that learning takes place through changing thinking and knowledge in the context of society.

On the other hand, Stein (1998), citing Young, establishes a guide for educators to implement situated learning in the classroom. First, teachers need to choose engaging activities that students can perform or solve to support the acquisition of knowledge. Second, new learners should be considered and given guidance to complete the chosen activities. Newcomers, or less knowledgeable, need a scaffold to help them level up with the rest. Third, teachers must be aware of their role as facilitators and provide students with opportunities for asking questions and reflecting, both individually and collectively. In the end, it is important to assess progress every then and now to make necessary adaptations and changes for the student's benefit. Following this guideline will help the implementation of Situated Learning happen more smoothly.

On a similar train of thought, Vukovic et al. mention the utilisation of the six stages of Cognitive Apprenticeship as a way of implementing the Situated Learning Theory into educational settings (2022). These stages aid in creating authentic tasks that break seemingly complex processes into manageable activities and concepts.

1. Modelling

This stage should contain clear instructions that will help learners deal with the task. This could, for example, be achieved by creating a presentation including all the steps needed to finish the task.

2. Coaching

Here, learners are allowed to complete the task themselves, while the mentor supervises it and gives learners feedback, which helps learners improve their approach or take a look at a problem from a different point of view. Giving feedback is very important because it enables learners to learn what they did incorrectly and helps them move forward.

3. Scaffolding

While modelling and coaching set the basis for learning, scaffolding gives learners the tools needed to build their mastery of the task. Scaffolding involves activities such as group collaboration exercises, scenarios, and other supplemental resources. At the same time, feedback coming from peers can be a helpful tool for learners who are struggling with carrying out the tasks and filling out the gaps.

4. Articulation

This stage is formed by three methodologies:

a. Inquiry: a method introduced by Collins and Stevens in 1982 in which a mentor asks a set of questions which encourage learners to examine and refine their answers in correlation to a certain conceptual idea or model.
b. Thinking aloud, where learners try to articulate their thoughts while they are solving a problem; in certain cases, they can also be asked to observe groups and come up with their conclusions based on activities and conversations.
c. Separation: learners need to separate the skills and the knowledge from the tasks because this is the only way they can investigate them at length; afterwards, they are encouraged to demonstrate and put into words what they have learned with the help of the analysis of their thinking process.

5. Reflection

In this stage, learners compare their work with each other, peers and mentors. This stage might include self-analysis, peer feedback, or performance evaluations. Teachers can also provide more interactive reflection exercises, for example, video presentations containing two individuals executing the same task, while the teacher asks learners to contrast and compare them.

6. Exploration

This is the final stage where learners get the opportunity to investigate the task autonomously. Mentors should gradually take away all scaffolding resources so that learners

can complete the building process on their own. Here, learners try to carry out the task without any help from their peers or mentors. They use the gained knowledge and experience to overcome different challenges.

3.9 Activities for teaching English to develop cultural identity

- o Drama

In education, drama activities help support foreign language learning. For language teachers such as Yang (2022), it can easily be seen that drama offers spaces for student bonding and interaction with small groups as the drama unfolds. The teacher joins in the process by introducing new developments in the drama to which the students must react. To do this, students must reflect, express opinions, negotiate, make decisions, put feelings into words and act.

Through drama, students can emulate reality and incorporate their cultural identities into the activities. This is beneficial since drama is just as dependent on social interaction as Situated Learning, enabling the establishment of communities of practice that are interesting enough to keep students active and in constant involvement with the learning process.

- o Scenario-based learning

Scenario-based learning immerses students in complex, authentic social environments where real-world actions, actors, and situations converge to provide rich learning experiences. In this approach, mentors design realistic scenarios and offer tailored support that gradually diminishes as learners build confidence and competence (Origin Learning, 2015). This method emphasises the importance of continuous assessment through reflective discussion and evaluation, enabling students to develop strong problem-solving and decision-making skills. By navigating these simulated environments, learners are better prepared to apply their language skills in everyday interactions (Vukovic et al., 2022).

- o Role Play

This activity situates learners in everyday contexts—such as acting as a tourist in a restaurant or a customer in a shop—so they can practice language use in realistic, problem-centred scenarios. This method emphasizes contextual learning, as students gain knowledge that is directly transferable to similar real-life situations. With the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than a traditional instructor, role play encourages self-directed learning, continuous progress tracking, and reflective practice (Origin Learning, 2015; Ochoa, Gómez-Ullate, & Herman, 2015). The result is a collaborative environment where students become more adept at recognizing contextual cues and negotiating meaning.

- o Dramatization

Dramatization transforms the traditional classroom into a dynamic, realistic space where students actively engage in simulated interactions. By converting abstract lessons into tangible, performative experiences, teachers help learners move beyond passive absorption

of information toward active participation. This technique not only enhances communicative competence but also builds confidence, as students practice language in scenarios that closely resemble real-life interactions. The use of dramatisation thus bridges the gap between classroom learning and authentic communication, fostering a more engaging and effective educational experience (Yang, 2022).

o   Improvisation

Improvisation challenges students to respond creatively and spontaneously to unexpected scenarios without the aid of pre-written scripts. In this activity, learners are presented with a situation and must quickly formulate dialogue and actions that suit the context, enhancing their ability to think on their feet (Bessadet, 2022). This spontaneous mode of expression not only cultivates linguistic flexibility but also sharpens critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By practising improvisation, learners gain confidence in their ability to communicate effectively under pressure, preparing them for unpredictable real-world interactions.

o   Simulation

The simulation activities places students in imaginary yet realistic scenarios where they assume specific roles and work to complete tasks or solve problems while staying "in character." This approach replicates everyday challenges, allowing learners to rehearse language skills in a controlled yet authentic context. Through these simulations, students can experiment with different communicative strategies and receive targeted feedback on their performance. As a result, simulations serve as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application, helping learners develop the fluency and adaptability required for real-life communication (Mosaddaq and Tahani 2021)

o   Field Trips

Group activities foster collaborative learning by encouraging students to work together on language tasks in an interactive environment. These activities promote the sharing of ideas, peer feedback, and collective problem-solving, which in turn enhance both communicative competence and social skills. By engaging in group work, learners benefit from diverse perspectives and cooperative learning experiences that support language development. This collaborative approach also builds a sense of community, making the learning process more engaging and effective.

Considering the aforementioned, field trips extend learning beyond the classroom by immersing students in authentic, real-world environments where they must apply their language skills practically. Whether exploring an actual restaurant, museum, or even a simulated administrative facility, learners are challenged to interact, solve problems, and adapt to new settings (Origin Learning, 2015). These excursions offer hands-on experiences that enrich language learning through contextual practice, helping students connect theoretical knowledge with real-life applications. The exposure to varied cultural and social contexts further deepens their understanding and fluency.

o   Task-Based Activities

Task-based activities place learners at the heart of their educational journey by engaging them in meaningful projects that require real-life language use. According to Tudor (1992), this learner-centred approach encourages active participation in developing learning plans and emphasizes practical communication skills. In one study, participants improved their Mandarin proficiency and interacted with native speakers through tasks that involved bargaining, product description, and small talk. This method not only builds linguistic competence but also instils confidence as learners actively navigate and negotiate real-world interactions (Sim, Rahmat, and Khin, 2021).

o   Online Communities of Practice

Online communities of practice leverage digital platforms to create interconnected spaces where learners collaborate, share experiences, and support each other's growth. These virtual environments foster continuous interaction and resource sharing, enabling students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. By engaging in discussions, sharing content, and participating in online projects, learners build a supportive network that enhances both language skills and cultural understanding. This approach underscores the importance of social learning in the digital age, making education a more flexible and inclusive process.

Facebook has emerged as a powerful tool for educational collaboration and innovation, providing a space where learners and pre-service teachers can experiment with new technologies and develop professional identities. As highlighted by Shaltry et al. (2013), Facebook facilitates the creation of interactive classroom websites, blogs, and multimedia projects that allow participants to design and share content reflective of their future teaching practices. This social media platform encourages creative exploration, peer interaction, and the development of digital literacy skills, all of which contribute to a more engaging and effective learning experience.

3.10   Pedagogical Guides

According to Aguilar (2004), a pedagogical Guide is an educational material that goes beyond being a simple tool. Instead, it is a key element for the adequate development of students as it is based on methodological foundations and created specifically to meet their necessities.

• Constructing a Pedagogical Guide

A pedagogical guide should follow a process of careful planning. First, it is compulsory to know how the method (Situated Learning) will reconcile students with the environment, what contents will be taught and what their purpose and reasons are. It must be sequential, and the time should be well designated. Other things to consider are the number of students and which other agents might be present in the place where the pedagogical guide will develop. (Calvo, 2015)

- Structure

To construct a good pedagogical guide, Calvo (2015) states that it is important to mind both the internal and external structures. The inner structure refers to the adequate selection of contents, and the external to the way these contents are presented.

- o Inner Structure

The pedagogical guide should have a solid theoretical foundation. This will make choosing the contents easier. The criteria to develop the inner structure are: definition of objectives, selection and sequencing of the contents, selection and sequencing of activities, selection and sequencing of evaluation activities, organisation and classroom management (Calvo, 2015).

- o External Structure

The external structure of the pedagogical guide refers to the logical organisation of the contents for a smooth integration of all of them. According to Calvo (2015), the criteria can be summarised as: a) informative data (Title, author, year, etc.), b) introduction, c) objectives, d) contents, e) activities and tests, and d) bibliography.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

4. Design

4.1 Approach

This project was conceived to be bibliographic research due to its objectives. According to Ocaña and Fuster (2021), bibliographic research involves collecting information from a variety of published sources and databases. Accordingly, the study aimed to gather information on the topic of interest through books, journals, websites and other similar sources.

4.2 Research Modality

Descriptive research was employed because it contributes to the present investigation's design. Even though descriptive methods are often associated with quantitative studies, qualitative descriptive research "aims to provide a comprehensive summary of events" by seeking answers to questions like who, what, where or how (Ayton, Tsindos and Berkovic, 2023). In this fashion, this study tries to describe the potential of Situated Learning from an epistemological point of view.

4.3 Level or type of research

Likewise, the investigation embraces the explicative research method. It helps fulfil the objectives of the investigation as it explores possible causes and increases the understanding of a phenomenon when limited information is available (Næss, 2018).

4.4 Study population

Due to the nature of this research, the resources corresponded to all bibliographic material and databases chosen to be analysed later in the study. The selected databases for this study were ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Pro-Quest, Science Direct, Scielo, Scopus, Wiley Online Library and Web of Science. These databases and online libraries were used for the research since they provide reliable and up-to-date information. Most of them offer free access or can be visited through institutional links. The data collected mainly involved research from the last decade in a similar context as the Ecuadorian. The work of authors such as Lave and Wenger is found in this project.

4.5 Data collection techniques and instruments

The principal objective of this research was to analyse the potential of Situated Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. To do so, a set of techniques and instruments was selected for each specific objective.

4.6 Techniques

This study aimed to accomplish the first objective, to describe the nature and approach of Situated Learning within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning, by carrying out a systematic bibliographical review. This type of review aimed to bring specificity by including several research studies to answer a research question. To reduce bias, a systematic review helps comprehend large pools of information and identify sets of studies fitting the criteria of the investigation (Linnenluecke, et al., 2020).

The second objective sought to identify activities and resources required for the implementation of Situated Learning in correspondence with the study target. To achieve this, an Integrative Literature Review (ILR) was employed since it allows the usage of sources such as opinion articles, discussion papers, and policy documents or amendments. These sources served to support the analysis of the primary sources to aid a more detailed comprehension of the topic (Lubbe, et al., 2020).

The third specific objective of this investigation was to construct a pedagogical-didactic guide, based on bibliographical sources, illustrating the academic benefits of Situated Learning in the construction of cultural identity. As a means to accomplish this, a process of registration and systematisation of information was followed. This process eased the collection, generation and analysis of information. According to Galeano (2008), registration and systematisation techniques facilitate the organisation of collected data to find the most fitting for the study and its socialisation.

4.7 Instruments

The first and third objectives employed a systematic bibliographical review and registration and systematisation of the information process, respectively. Thus, a bibliographic matrix was used to help collect the data needed for both techniques. On the other hand, the second objective was achieved through an ILR, for which a checklist with criteria based on the literature about Situated Learning and the development of cultural identity, was designed.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the current research presents the results and discussion obtained through the literature review about Situated Learning and how it factors in Cultural Identity development. Additionally, since this theory has been considered and employed as an active, modern teaching methodology, its application through adapted activities is also present in the following pages.

5. Results

o **Situated learning: the fundamentals**

The first specific objective of this research is to describe the nature and approach of Situated Learning within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning. A bibliographical matrix was needed in order to collect enough data to support this research's theoretical framework. The said matrix included the title, author, year, editorial, type of research, URL/DOI, purpose, methodology (Situated Learning and its applications), findings and comments.

In this regard, it is necessary to recall a definition of this theory first. In their book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Lave and Wenger (1991) established that authentic learning occurs within communities of practice. Thus, its acquisition is the process of becoming part of that community and said process is defined as *Legitimate Peripheral participation*.

Wenger calls Situated Learning a Social Theory of Learning. This means that knowledge construction does not simply arise from "learning by doing", as it relies greatly upon interacting with other members of a community. In education, it implies that students can go to a classmate in case of doubt instead of directly addressing an instructor. Consequently, the role of a teacher is transformed, and the focus is placed on the learner. Teachers, then, are facilitators, models, guides, prompters, etc., but they are not the sole transmitters of information. They adapt to the learner's necessities, assist and provide support, which is gradually withdrawn as learners achieve independence; they can even become co-learners depending on the situation (Besar, 2018).

Similarly, Situated Learning conceives learners as the main actors in their knowledge acquisition process. Since learners share a common goal, they must be active and interactive so they can best identify their needs, learning styles, and strengths. Thus, their role consists of actively working to become members of a Community of Practice.

For Lave and Wenger (1991), Legitimate Peripheral Participation is the learning process that all learners undergo to reach proficiency. Based on the Cognitive Apprenticeship model, this process consists of becoming a member of a community: first, learners start at the periphery as newcomers; they are observers of the modelling provided by someone more seasoned, usually a teacher or a more knowledgeable classmate (Modelling, coaching). Then, they continue by partaking in small tasks that allow them to practice, collaborate, experience, and —most importantly— interact with other members (Scaffolding, articulating).

This process is done gradually until they undertake "more" responsibilities by performing bigger tasks by themselves (reflecting and exploring) with minimal support. In this last stage, learners or newcomers have already wormed a path into a Community of Practice, thus becoming Oldtimers.

The Cognitive Apprenticeship Model works as follows: initially, the Modelling component has the learner on the role of the observer as they limit themselves to witness an expert's (a more knowledgeable) performance. Then, during the Coaching process, the teacher provides easy tasks to familiarise students with the context, it is done with the assistance of an instructor or a classmate. The next, Scaffolding, involves withdrawing support to a minimum and allowing the learner to make up their own knowledge. Since scaffolding allows learners to gain certain independence, they might still need assistance; thus, teachers encourage them to develop an internal monitor which will allow them to self-regulate in case they make mistakes or learn new things. This step is called Articulating, as it helps learners voice and examine the reasoning behind the process they followed to get a result. The reflecting stage is similar to the articulating one since it also involves examining and analysing overall performance. This occurs through self-reflection, peer feedback, etc. Finally, the last stage is Exploring. Here, learners are encouraged to consider how the skills or knowledge they just worked on acquiring can be adapted or transferred into new or simply more complex scenarios (Woolley and Jarvis, 2007).

Situated Learning in EFL Context

As mentioned by Abdallah (2015), language learning is an inherently social task that can only be achieved through collaboration and contextualised practice, two characteristics of the Situated Learning theory. Lave and Wenger themselves motion that all activities done for learning are situated thus, language learning can only happen by participating in a community that provides contextualised tasks in the target language —namely English— with no options for hiding.

This is done by placing EFL learners in Communities of Practice (CoPs) with other students who share the same goals and basic values. Said communities are beneficial for learners as they interact and learn from peers; this way, they will acquire communicative skills and use them in situated environments (Abdallah, 2015).

Situated Learning for Enhancing Cultural Identity.

As previously stated, the Situated Learning methodology establishes that learning occurs through experiencing and interacting with members of a community, and it is tied to context. This methodology favours the creation of classroom spaces where students can learn naturally by implementing their knowledge in groups (CoP) with a common goal. On the same train of thought, Communities of Practice, a pillar of Situated Learning, are formed by people with shared interests (domain), experiences (practice), and willingness to exchange knowledge (community) (Lave and Wenger, 1998).

On the other hand, cultural identity is related to people's sense of belonging to their culture of origin and everything related to it—values, traditions, etc. Thus, leading students to develop intercultural communication skills will allow them not only to learn the target

language and its culture but also use it to enhance students own by giving them tools to share it with others.

Considering that Situated Learning thrives on interaction and Communities of Practice allow newcomers to exchange their cultural background and knowledge with others and become experts (old-timers), cultural identity can greatly benefit. By constantly interacting with people from a similar, or even the same, cultural origin, students will be immersed in a situation where they use the target language to reinforce their understanding of their own culture and show it to people from different backgrounds.

A Community of Practice fosters a sense of belonging within itself. However, teachers can enhance it by employing activities that enable students to participate and experience their culture more deeply. For instance, having students form a community where they recreate popular festivals or rituals (such as carnival or Inti Raymi) as if they were performing them for a foreign public. These types of activities situate the learning, having students use the target language, and enhance students' sense of belonging to both the community and the culture.

o **Implementing Situated Learning**

The project's second objective is to identify activities and resources required to implement Situated Learning in correspondence with the study target. The activities chosen were analysed through a checklist designed as a tool to help the researcher decide if it could be adapted so that it benefits the development of awareness and cultural identity. Among the criteria used for the selection were aspects like authenticity (reflective of real-world scenarios), cultural relevance, inclusivity for diverse backgrounds, adaptability, and self and peer-assessment opportunities.

Situated Learning was initially conceived as a social learning theory in which interacting and doing are the best ways to learn. The theory is also based on the notions of cognitive apprenticeship, which is one of the pillars of this theory. A view by Collins et al. (1991) expresses that traditional apprenticeship consists of demonstrating a task in front of the apprentice and gradually transferring more and more tasks with less assistance each time. Contrary to this traditional approach, cognitive apprenticeship implies a certain level of thinking and reflection on all activities performed. This step is performed in order to both help teachers make the teaching process visible to learners and to aid teachers in visualising students' internal learning process. Thus, the cognitive approach is divided into six steps: Modelling, Coaching, Scaffolding, Articulating, Reflecting and Exploring. The chosen activities followed these steps since some authors mention applying the Situated Learning Theory through the model of Cognitive Apprenticeship.

The aforementioned process was used during the design of the chosen activities: TBL, Drama Activities, Field Trips, and Online Communities of Practice. They were also adapted to represent Ecuadorian culture through the election of the topics covered in them as a way of promoting cultural identity.

Task-Based Activities

Al-Ahdal and Alqasham consider that Task-Based Activities actively promote "communication, collaboration, coordination, observation, analytical thought, and realistic idea execution from the 21st century" (p. 8, 2020). They enable students to engage in communities where they will interact with other students so they can discuss the task. In this instance, it serves to recall that Lave and Wenger established that no activity is without context. Thus, any Task-Based Activity can be changed and adapted to fit the Ecuadorian reality, as it has been done in the Pedagogical Guide.

Drama Activities

Vukovic et al., suggest that drama, namely roleplays and scenario-based activities, permits the use of everyday situations where learners either play certain roles or are placed in a staged environment that will require them to adopt a role and immerse in the situation (2022). Since knowledge is acquired and transferred in context. This is where teachers should involve cultural identity in the activity. Creating roles and scenarios that students already know will lower their Affective Filter since the task does not look too impossible. For instance, instead of placing a roleplay between a barista and a customer at a café, they can reenact a situation between a vendor at a market and a recurrent customer.

Other drama activities like improvisation have the potential to be Situated Activities, as well. Simply by their nature, they both present opportunities for communication in context and are easily adaptable to cultural identity. Since drama, in general, is a form of communication, participants will interact with each other, especially so if the supposed environments are based on or taken from their reality.

Field Trips Activities

Situated Learning involves interaction and hands-on action; group activities are the perfect setting for situatedness. Field trips, for instance, are an opportunity to balance a familiar community with a completely new environment. These types of activities can be simulated or carried out in real settings, depending on diverse factors such as feasibility. An activity like a field trip will maintain students' attention and will foster their acquisition of knowledge through practical experience. Concerning the cultural aspect, these activities can be easily situated and will allow students to engage with and express their beliefs, customs and traditions, creating a sense of belonging within a community (Vukovic, et al., 2022).

Online Communities of Practice

These involve digital platforms creating interconnected spaces where learners not only collaborate and share experiences but also explore and affirm their cultural identities. By engaging in continuous dialogue through discussions, multimedia content, and collaborative projects, participants build networks that extend learning beyond the classroom and foster both cultural exchange and cross-cultural dialogue.

These virtual environments enable individuals with similar backgrounds and experiences to connect, validate their unique cultural narratives, and celebrate language nuances, traditions, and values, thereby reinforcing a shared sense of identity and belonging.

Platforms like Padlet further exemplify this process by offering interactive spaces for educational collaboration, creative exploration, and the development of professional identities, permitting learners to strengthen their heritage through sharing their experiences in a different way other than just through spoken word (Shaltry, et al. 2013).

o **A Pedagogical Guide for Teachers**

The guide responds to the third objective of this research, which is to construct a pedagogical-didactic guide, based on bibliographical sources, illustrating the academic benefits of Situated Learning in the construction of cultural identity. The guide presents first an explanation of what is Situated Learning and its pedagogical benefits. Then the objective of the whole guide is presented: To provide Ecuadorian teachers of English as a foreign language with useful applications and culture-centred activities based on the Situated Learning Theory. Additionally, each activity has a clearly defined topic, objective, and language focus to enable teachers to understand their purpose beforehand and adjust them according to their students' needs. This information is presented at the beginning of every activity in the Guide:

Let's write: Biography

Students will be able to identify the main parts of a biography and develop one using sequencing words.

Level	A2
Completion Date:	2 Hours (80 min)

Vocabulary

1. Sequencing words

Material

Figure 4 Information Table, Pedagogical Guide

All activities were designed for students of an A2 level (Beginners) since the exact beneficiaries were unknown at the moment of their creation. However, all activities are developed under the Cognitive Apprenticeship six-step model (Modelling, Coaching, Scaffolding, Articulation, Reflection, and Exploration), which was reviewed in depth previously in the second part of the results section. The activities are distributed in four sections.

Task-Based Activities

The first section is focused to Task-Based Activities, and it centres especially on reading and writing. The Modelling part presents a biography of a famous Ecuadorian figure; each part of the text is labelled to show students what a biography should include. The next step (coaching) involves presenting guide questions for teachers to elicit an answer from students, additionally, vocabulary is introduced through a matching and writing task. Afterwards, the scaffolding and articulation segments will have students read a set of "bio

cards" with basic information about other important Ecuadorian figures. Then they will draft a short text about one of them and explain why they chose each detail. Finally, the reflection and exploration steps present questions and prompts that will help students understand their learning process and elicit ideas on how they can further improve the acquired knowledge by themselves.

Drama Activities

The second section of the guide is dedicated to Drama Activities (Improvisation, Scenario-Based Activities and Roleplay). Since these activities have similar settings, they start with an audio or a reading providing information about a topic related to Ecuadorian festivities, products, legends or cities, as well as questions to ensure understanding (students take notes, highlight words, and formulate questions for the teacher). After the modelling part, the coaching starts by introducing vocabulary and prompts articulated by the teacher, who will assume a role according to the topic and interpret a character so students can see what the activity is about and how to perform.

The scaffolding and coaching steps are dependent upon students using their previous notes to choose a character and prepare a performance according to the drama activity; they are allowed to talk and ask questions to other classmates. During the articulation step, students will explain how they prepare for their drama activity right before performing to the class by portraying their characters on stage and assuming roles. Lastly, the reflection and exploration segments happen in a similar fashion to the previous activity, which shows questions and tasks for students to continue their learning on their own.

Field Trips (Simulation)

The third section displays group activities like Field Trips or a Simulated Field Trip. These activities are inherently situated and should be done in a real setting. However, some constraints may arise, and they need to be tackled; that is why the teacher could set up a simulation, so students feel and experience the same things while in the classroom. In this regard, the Field Trip or the simulation starts with the modelling part, where the teacher will go over the route they will take to get to the destination (a museum), then the teacher will go over what they will see, what questions students should ask or what comments to make. Vocabulary will be presented during the coaching segment, so students already know how to conduct themselves.

During the scaffolding, students will practice giving and following instructions as if they were at the place they chose and will use the language they went over with the teacher to prepare questions and comments. The articulation part may occur in the classroom as further practice to consolidate their plan and be sure of their performance. Students express their feelings or comments, ask questions and answer someone else's doubts. Next, during the reflection, they will say how they came up with their comment or what elicited the question they asked. Finally, the exploration part is also done at the destination, first in groups and as a class and then as individuals; they are allowed to roam the museum on their own while taking notes and gathering information to share later before finishing the trip.

Online Communities of Practice

The fourth and final section shows online activities that can be done through virtual Communities of Practice. During the modelling step, the teacher will demonstrate how students can create a Community of Practice using blogs (Padlet), Facebook groups, Discord servers or any other social media they have access to. They will explain what role each member of the group can take to keep the community going and how they plan to include new members. During the coaching and scaffolding activities, students will choose one of the social media platforms presented and will form groups. In each group, they will decide their objective and collective interest, assign roles and plan activities so that members can interact. After that, the articulation and reflection steps will allow them to voice and understand the process they underwent and realise what they learned. Finally, they will carry out their communities and use them to interact outside of the classroom limits.

6. Discussion

Lave and Wenger's Situated Learning Theory was developed as a theory of social learning after extensive work on several forms of apprenticeship. However, for them, this theory is detached from formal education and therefore, not a pedagogical methodology for teaching. Instead, it is an explanation as to the way people acquire knowledge or skills (1991).

Despite this initial detachment and the authors' consideration that learning is not necessarily the product of a pedagogical structure, there have been others who propose the implementation of Lave and Wenger's theory in education. As early as 1996, researchers like Anderson and Simon considered that implementing Situated Learning could help close gaps left by schools, such as teaching students how to transfer their skills or reflect on the process of their own learning.

Further research has shown that this theory can be applied in several educational settings. For instance, Naeemi et al. analysed in 2011, the impact on motivation and knowledge acquisition of a situated learning-based curriculum designed for medical and law degree programs. The results showed that it increased academic achievement ($p<0.001$) and motivation ($p<0.001$) in comparison to lecture-based learning, thus making it a suitable method for training programmes. Similarly, Fraihat and Al-Barakat studied the effect of a situated learning environment in enhancing mathematical reasoning and proof among tenth-grade students in 2022. Based on the results of the study, the researcher concluded that Situated Learning Activities provided subjects like geometry with an enriched experience where teachers could visualise and guide students' learning.

On this same line of thought, other authors like Vukovic, et al. (2022) and Hseieh (2022) talk about Situated Learning as a methodology or ideal for reducing anxiety in students while speaking, creating contextualised spaces for teaching, and interacting, especially when teaching foreign languages.

These studies show the strong usefulness of the theory in education. Some authors have developed activities for specific pedagogical purposes similar to the ones created for this research. They followed the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model, which is divided into six

steps, to follow a logical path for teaching. This model emphasises learning autonomy and encourages the learning of transferring skills through its stages. Specifically, for EFL, this model has been found effective for engaging students and creating learning experiences so that they can employ their target language in a sustainable way (Tsiriotakis, et al., 2021; Vukovic, et al., 2022; Ostovar-Namaghi, Morady, and Veysmorady, 2024).

Based on the Cognitive Apprenticeship model, each activity was chosen as it allowed easy adaptation to the aforementioned model as well as giving leeway for fostering cultural identity through the topics upon which they were created. First, TBL activities are suggested by authors like Al-Ahdal and Alqasham (2020) in their investigation of "EFL writing tasks and the application of the concept of situatedness", where they implemented Situated Learning as an approach for improving writing skills. The results showed that contextualised tasks enhanced students' practical abilities for writing. Additionally, Sim, Rahmat, and Khin, (2021) posited that authenticity and meaningfulness are the keys to language learning, thus the activities should encourage students to use certain aspects of the target language in clearly planned activities. Additionally, a sense of cultural identity can be developed if TBL activities are designed to foster interaction, thus making them communicative tasks where cultural exchange can happen.

Drama is often presented as an ideal outlet for fostering Cultural Exchange through Situated Learning activities (Andersen, 2004; Besar, 2018; Vukovic, et al., 2022). The nature of drama permits strategies such as improvisation, dramatisation, simulation or role-play to be easily adjusted into contextualised, culturally rich activities for EFL learners. Communication and interaction are key elements of drama and, as such, participants will be set in an environment where they have to draw on their own and others' experiences, creating a sense of belonging and helping shape an identity through it (Yang, 2020).

On a similar note, field trips are excellent group activities that can be modelled according to the Situated Learning theory. Field trips are immersive experiences that motivate students to examine how their own identities are influenced by societal structures, norms, and expectations (Procter, 2012). These Field trips are ideally done by moving students to a different location. However, monetary, logistical and other constraints could arise, thus they could be simulated within the classroom (Vukovic, et al., 2022). In this regard, the possibility of creating an Online Community of Practice is worth mentioning. The research titled "Situated learning with online portfolios, classroom websites and Facebook", by Shaltry et al. 2013, depicts how students can share experiences and immerse themselves in contextualised activities through technological tools like Facebook or Padlet.

Collaborative environments, then, can be set up in these Online Communities, and students could have access to the net for creative exploration, permitting learners to strengthen their heritage by sharing their experiences in a different way other than just through spoken word.

All the activities are compiled in a pedagogical guide to demonstrate the academic benefits of Situated Learning in the construction of cultural identity. Authors such as Aguilar (2004) and Calvo (2015) concur that pedagogical guides are fundamental tools specifically designed to accommodate students' educational needs. All guides are grounded on a particular methodology or approach, such as Situated Learning in the case of this research.

Additionally, Guides follow the principles and sequences established by the method it is based upon but also adapt to the number of students, times or learning goals.

Calvo (2015) points out that a good pedagogical guide is well-structured, both internally and externally. Thus, the internal structure presents the objectives, and activities in sequence, evaluations, organisation and classroom management. On a similar note, the external structure of the guide can be reduced to informative data, an introduction, learning goals, contents, activities and tests adapted for enhancing cultural identity, and a bibliography.

All in all, the inclusion of these activities in a Pedagogical Guide has the objective of providing educators with a modern and innovative approach to teaching a foreign language. Thus, this guide is intended to be used by Ecuadorian educators, as they are designed to foster cultural identity through the subjects upon which they are developed.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Conclusions

Situated Learning, through an emphasis on interaction and gradual immersion within a community of practice, transforms the traditional role of the teacher from a sole knowledge transmitter to a facilitator and even a co-learner at times. This shift helps learners take an active role in their learning process, fostering independence and collaboration. As learners engage in Legitimate Peripheral Participation, they progressively gain proficiency by observing, practising, and gradually taking on more responsibility within the community, eventually becoming full members or "Oldtimers." This process not only promotes deeper knowledge construction but also encourages learners to adapt and develop through social interactions.

When applied through activities such as Task-Based Activities, Drama Activities, Field Trips, and Online Communities of Practice, it provides a powerful framework to promote cultural identity in foreign language teaching. By adapting these activities to reflect local cultural contexts, teachers can create authentic learning experiences that not only enhance language acquisition but also foster a deeper sense of cultural awareness and identity among learners. These activities encourage active participation, interaction, and reflection, allowing students to engage with both the content and their cultural heritage in meaningful ways.

The pedagogical guide integrates the principles of Situated Learning and the concept of Cultural Awareness to create adaptable and culturally relevant activities for teaching English. By focusing on activities such as Task-Based Activities, Drama, Group Activities, and Online Communities of Practice, the guide provides teachers with tools to foster both language development and cultural identity in Ecuadorian students. The clear structure and contextualization of each activity ensure that teachers can tailor the learning experience to their students' needs, enhancing engagement and reinforcing the cultural relevance of the content.

8. Recommendations

This approach fosters a collaborative environment where learners feel empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Thus, teachers should embrace their role as facilitators and co-learners by actively participating in the learning process alongside students. Additionally, regular reflection on support strategies should be done to match students' progress in Legitimate Peripheral Participation.

The activities presented, such as Task-Based Activities, Drama Activities, Field Trips, and Online Communities of Practice, should be adapted to reflect the local cultural context. This will make learning more relevant and meaningful to students, helping them see the connection between language learning and their cultural identity. Topics regarding local traditions, values, and customs should be incorporated into the activities s they will foster deeper cultural awareness and promote a stronger sense of identity.

Finally, the structure of the guide, the activity's objectives, topics, and language focus should be studied, well-known, and followed by instructors. This way, adaptations can

be tailored to specific needs and contexts. Additionally, activities should be assessed and adjusted based on students' progress and interests, ensuring that they remain engaging and culturally relevant while effectively supporting both language learning and cultural identity development.

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ANNEXES

> **Bibliographic Matrix**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="8" align="center"><u>Situated Learning</u></td></tr>
<tr>
<td>N°</td>
<td>Name of document</td>
<td>Author and year/ Editorial</td>
<td>Type of document</td>
<td>URL / DOI</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Findings and comments</td>
</tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
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> Checklist

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">CHECKLIST</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">AREA: Learning English as a Foreign Language</td><td colspan="3">LEVEL:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">DATE:</td><td colspan="3">NAME: Paola Yépez</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">TOPIC:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">OBJECTIVE:
• To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of Situated Learning in correspondence with the study target.</td></tr>
<tr><td>CATEGORY</td><td>ASPECTS</td><td colspan="3" align="center">OUTCOMES</td></tr>
<tr>
<td rowspan="3">Learning Context</td>
<td>Authenticity: Are the contexts used in the learning activities authentic and reflective of real-world scenarios?</td>
<td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Relevance: Do the contexts reflect the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the students?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interest: Are the contexts engaging and interesting to the students?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td rowspan="3">Instructional Design</td>
<td>Learning Objectives: Are the learning objectives clearly defined and aligned with fostering cultural identity?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Cultural Content: Is cultural content seamlessly integrated into the learning activities?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Learning: Do the activities promote active learning and student participation?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>Respect for Diversity: Are the activities designed with respect for cultural diversity and avoiding stereotypes?</td>
<td></td><td></td><td></td>
</tr>
</table>

	Inclusivity: Do the activities accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds?			
	Representation: Are various cultural perspectives and voices represented in the materials and activities?			49
Social Interaction and Collaboration	**Participation**: Does the activity allow for Communities of Practice where both beginners and advanced students can get involved in the task?			
	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?			
	Community Connections: Do the activities connect students with the local community and cultural resources?			
	Scaffolding: Does the activity support beginners and give more independence to advanced students?			
Assessment	**Self and peer assessment:** Are students encouraged to assess their and others' performance during the activities?			
	Evaluation: Can the activity be evaluated based on performance/portfolios/reflective journals?			
Reflection and Adaptation	**Reflection Opportunities**: Are there opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and cultural identity?			
	Adaptability: Are the activities adaptable to different cultural contexts and student needs?			