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The Hegemony of English in Academia: Exploring Language, Identity and Legitimacy, among Social Sciences professors in a private bilingual university in Quito, Ecuador, 2025.

Proyecto de Investigación y Desarrollo

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DEDICATION

To all those who have supported me along this journey providing me company, support and perhaps the most importantly: Patience. To my parents for being there since I was born and teaching me the meaning of faith. To my brothers, not of blood but of bond, Mateo, Max, Carlos & Leandro, for reminding me life is a wonderful game. To my teachers and classmates of this master's program for showing me that the future of education lies in our hands.

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"Our work is never done in isolation" is one of the first comments I received when I submitted this draft to my director, Scott Gibson. And the following Capstone project is a testament to that comment. I would not be here without a group of people that supported me throughout this process.

My Parents, who have supported me from the moment I was born.

My Friends, who are there for me as brothers and companions.

My Classmates, who inspired me and I admire immensely.

My Professors, who taught me and understood me.

This project is not mine alone, because it belongs to each and everyone of you. Thank you is a pair of words that cannot encapsulate how grateful I feel for having shared this time and this project with you all.

Thank you.

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora cómo los académicos no nativos de habla inglesa navegan las tensiones entre el dominio del inglés en el ámbito académico y la creciente demanda de diversidad epistemológica, centrándose en cómo estas dinámicas dan forma a la legitimidad académica. Basándose en entrevistas en profundidad con académicos no nativos de habla inglesa en una universidad privada de artes liberales en Ecuador, la investigación proporciona información sobre la relación entre el dominio del inglés, la legitimidad académica y la producción de conocimiento.

Los hallazgos muestran que las relaciones de los académicos con el inglés son altamente contextuales y evolucionan a lo largo de sus carreras. El dominio del inglés opera como una puerta de entrada y una barrera: facilita la colaboración y la visibilidad internacional, pero margina a los académicos con acceso limitado a los recursos en inglés, lo que refuerza las jerarquías académicas globales y las desigualdades estructurales. El estudio desafía la noción de que la conformidad con las normas de publicación en inglés implica una rendición epistemológica y sugiere que el inglés también se utiliza para afirmar la legitimidad, obtener reconocimiento e introducir el conocimiento local en el discurso académico global.

Sin embargo, la investigación subraya que el inglés no es simplemente una herramienta práctica o una lengua franca neutral, sino una forma de capital lingüístico que estructura oportunidades, legitimidad e inclusión en el ámbito académico. También sostiene que el acceso al inglés no es un recurso neutral o universal, es una forma de privilegio profundamente ligada al estatus socioeconómico, la política institucional y el contexto histórico, lo que confiere una ventaja académica y profesional significativa a quienes lo poseen.

El estudio insta a las instituciones de educación superior a reconocer y abordar cómo los requisitos del idioma inglés perpetúan el privilegio y la exclusión. Aboga por políticas institucionales y sistemas de apoyo que abracen la diversidad epistemológica y desmantelen activamente las inequidades incrustadas en las jerarquías lingüísticas, fomentando un entorno académico global más justo e inclusivo.

Palabras clave: legitimidad académica, académicos no nativos de inglés, dominio del inglés, lingua franca

ABSTRACT

This study explores how non-native English-speaking scholars navigate the tensions between the dominance of English in academia and the growing call for epistemological diversity, focusing on how these dynamics shape academic legitimacy. Drawing on in-depth interviews with non-native English-speaking scholars at a private liberal arts university in Ecuador, the research provides insights into the relationship between English proficiency, academic legitimacy, and knowledge production.

Findings show that scholars' relationships with English are highly contextual and evolve across their careers. English proficiency operates as both a gateway and a barrier: it facilitates international collaboration and visibility, yet it marginalizes scholars with limited access to English-language resources, reinforcing global academic hierarchies and structural inequalities. The study challenges the notion that conforming to English-language publishing norms entails epistemological surrender and suggest that English is also used to assert legitimacy, gain recognition, and bring local knowledge into global academic discourse.

However, the research underscores that English is not merely a practical tool or a neutral lingua franca, but a form of linguistic capital that structures opportunity, legitimacy, and inclusion in academia. It also sustains that access to English is not a neutral or universal resource—it is a form of privilege deeply tied to socioeconomic status, institutional policy, and historical context, conferring significant academic and professional advantage to those who possess it. The study calls on higher education institutions to acknowledge and address how English-language requirements perpetuate privilege and exclusion. It advocates for institutional policies and support systems that embrace epistemological diversity and actively dismantle the inequities embedded in linguistic hierarchies, fostering a more just and inclusive global academic environment.

Keywords: academic legitimacy, non-native English scholars, English dominance, lingua franca

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized academic environment, English has been established as the lingua franca for scholarly communication, publication, and institutional prestige. This linguistic dominance has evolved over recent decades, transforming from a matter of convenience to a fundamental requirement for academic recognition. The internationalization of higher education has accelerated this trend, with universities worldwide adopting English as a primary medium for research dissemination, teaching, and institutional advancement (Zeng & Yang, 2024; Alhasnawi, 2021). This shift has been framed as a necessary and practical tool for international collaboration, allowing scholars across diverse linguistic backgrounds to engage in shared knowledge production.

Simultaneously, academic institutions increasingly promote diversity, inclusion, and the representation of previously marginalized perspectives. This trend aims to decolonize and diversify the production of knowledge by creating spaces for epistemological stances that have historically been excluded from mainstream academic discourse (Mama, 2024). Universities and scholarly communities worldwide have begun acknowledging the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge systems, non-Western philosophical traditions, and culturally specific methodologies to enrich global academic understanding and address historical imbalances in knowledge production.

However, these two seemingly aligned narratives—(1) global linguistic unification through English and (2) the pursuit of academic diversification—enter into conflict in practice, particularly in the lived experiences of scholars in the Global South. The dominance of English as the language for academic production has created a narrow framework in which academic recognition is closely tied not only to professional merit but also to linguistic performance, giving an advantage to those who possess or acquire English-language capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Bocanegra-Valle, 2019). For scholars working in multilingual, postcolonial

academic contexts, this tension manifests in the daily navigation of professional identity, institutional expectations, and the desire to contribute authentic, contextually relevant knowledge. Non-native English-speaking scholars experience this tension directly as they must navigate their professional identities and academic legitimacy in institutions that increasingly link expertise to English proficiency. These dynamics demand emotional and intellectual investment from these scholars, who are often required to meet linguistic norms grounded in English-speaking academic traditions while simultaneously striving to represent local or culturally specific knowledge systems (Hyland, 2016; Englander & Corcoran, 2019).

While existing literature has explored the broader implications of English linguistic hegemony and the internationalization of higher education, there remains a critical gap in understanding how these global pressures are internalized, resisted, negotiated, or adapted in the lived realities of individual scholars. In particular, there is limited empirical research on how scholars working in multilingual, postcolonial academic contexts navigate the tensions between English dominance and the push for epistemological diversity.

Recognizing this complexity, Weisner and Harfst (2022) argue that empirical research is essential for uncovering how academic legitimacy is constructed and understood in practice. They caution against relying solely on normative or theoretical frameworks, emphasizing instead the need to investigate how institutional norms, linguistic expectations, and power structures are experienced by scholars in specific academic and cultural settings.

To address this gap, through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this research aimed to explore how scholars at a private liberal arts university in Ecuador construct their professional identities, negotiate academic legitimacy, and make sense of their place in the global academic landscape. As scholars such as Norton (2000) and Darvin (2015) have noted, the construction of identity in language learning and academic contexts is always situated and deeply personal. It is through listening to these narratives that researchers can begin to

understand how abstract concepts like legitimacy, power, and linguistic capital operate in everyday academic life. This research, therefore, aims to bridge theoretical understandings with grounded experiences, offering insights into how non-native English-speaking scholars construct and experience academic legitimacy under English-dominant conditions while simultaneously navigating the imperative to contribute diverse perspectives to global knowledge production.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current global academic landscape features two influential narratives on academic diversity. One narrative promotes diversity and the inclusion of previously unheard perspectives, aiming to expand understanding of diverse contexts worldwide. The other establishes English as the dominant language of academic discourse, framing it as the linguistic common ground for global knowledge production. Theoretically, these narratives appear complementary, as English could serve as a unifying tool to broaden academic participation. However, in practice, these two narratives conflict. English's dominance has narrowed academic publishing standards, making English proficiency a prerequisite for visibility and legitimacy. Furthermore, academic institutions in non-English-speaking countries have prioritized English in curricula and hiring, creating a new requirement for academic and professional recognition. Consequently, non-native English-speaking scholars must navigate their academic legitimacy and professional identity within an English-centric system, a reality that contrasts with the pursuit of diversity and inclusion.

While existing literature has examined the linguistic dominance of English in academia, as well as the experiences of non-native English-speaking scholars, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these factors interact and how the two narratives introduced at the beginning come into direct contention. This literature review surveys relevant scholarly work and sets the basis to understand the intersection of linguistic capital, professional identity, and academic legitimacy in higher education, particularly focusing on how non-native English-speaking professors construct and maintain their own professional identity, and academic legitimacy.

English as the Academic Lingua Franca

The increasing domination of academic publishing by the English language has

become a defining feature of global academia, sparking critical debates about linguistic privilege, knowledge production, and academic legitimacy—particularly in Latin America. While English was once one of several scholarly languages, its rise to hegemonic status began in the aftermath of World War II, when American influence expanded through political, economic, and educational channels (Fyfe et al., 2017). Altbach (2007) and Alhasnawi (2021) trace a key turning point to the 1950s, when roughly 50% of academic publications were produced in English. Since then, globalization, the internationalization of higher education, and the increasing reliance on global university rankings have transformed English into the dominant language for scholarly communication, conferences, and publication. This means that the linguistic capital of English has increased exponentially in the last 50 years. Linguistic capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1991), refers to the power granted to individuals through proficiency in a dominant language, leading to enhanced professional recognition, academic legitimacy, and career advancement.

This linguistic dominance is reinforced by institutional mechanisms that embed English proficiency into academic infrastructure. Universities across non-Anglophone countries increasingly adopt English in hiring practices, curricula, and publication expectations (Bocanegra-Valle, 2019). English-speaking faculty are highly sought after—not only because of language proficiency but because it allows universities to elevate their status, as well as, accessing and contributing to the vast amount of scholarly literature, research papers, and academic journals published in English. Consequently, academic expertise alone no longer ensures legitimacy; scholars must also navigate English-language standards to gain visibility and recognition. Yet, as Azkiyah et al. (2023) show, the correlation between English proficiency and academic success is not always direct. Still, the assumption persists, feeding the demand for English-proficient academics worldwide. While some defend English as a common platform for scholarly exchange (Mama, 2024), the push to align with English

norms often eclipses the drawbacks of linguistic homogenization and the challenges scholars face in meeting these new expectations. However, the desire to meet those goals often overshadow both the drawbacks of English being the global academic language as well as the challenges faculty face under these new requirements.

One of the primary drawbacks of having English as the academic lingua franca has to do with a homogenization of perspectives and research practices. Several studies have suggested that by stablishing a single language, academia is forcing a procedural adaptation to all non-English speaking research contexts. For example, to avoid academic marginalization, scholars are expected to choose research topics that not only address local or regional concerns but also demonstrate relevance to the global English-speaking discourse and methodologies (Zeng & Yang, 2024). As a result, culturally specific topics and methodologies may be avoided if they are difficult to explain or translate into English (Canestrino, Magliocca, & Li, 2022). These choices raise the question whether English is a unifying linguistic tool for producing and sharing academic knowledge or a catalyst for academic uniformity. B. Neelambaram et al. note that the emphasis on English in universities can inadvertently prioritize certain languages and cultural practices over others, leading diverse perspectives and knowledge systems to be academically undervalued and ultimately ignored by global academia, and even among the students studying in those universities.

This emphasis manifests by the pressure that scholars face to publish in English-language journals, a practice that has become a requirement for securing tenure, career advancement, and academic recognition (Curry & Lillis, 2018). However, publication success is influenced by more than just English language proficiency. Factors such as access to institutional resources, familiarity with publishing norms, and professional networks play a crucial role in determining whose work gains international recognition (Meneghini & Packer, 2007). The influence of these factors suggest that even scholars who meet linguistic

expectations may still face structural disadvantages due to unequal access to research funding, mentorship, and editorial gatekeeping practices. This disparity is particularly evident when comparing the experiences of native English-speaking scholars and non-native English-speaking scholars. Although certain scholars like Piller (2015) argue that attributing publishing success exclusively to native-speaker status promotes a flawed, monolingual idea, the disparity is difficult to deny. In fact, non-native English-speaking scholars around the world describe facing prejudice for non-standard language use, scholarly isolation stemming from unfamiliarity with journal expectations and previous literature, and a lack of awareness of "publishable research," all of which result in higher rejection rates (Hyland, 2016). It is important to note that even the word choice in the previous citation, relating to what is considered "publishable," is directly related to English proficiency and standardization. In fact, in that same article, Hyland (2016) suggest that geographical location, publishing experience and collaborators have more impact in publication success than linguistic expectations.

However, the drive for publication success in English creates difficulties for non-native English-speaking scholars. This is because English proficiency can serve as a substitute for actual scholarly merit, thereby minimizing the importance of other academic excellences like research quality, innovation, and local relevance. These challenges are especially pronounced in the South American context. For instance, Mexican scholars struggle with the linguistic and rhetorical expectations of international journals, leading to the underrepresentation of their work (Englander & Corcoran, 2019). Similarly, in Colombia, the necessity of publishing in English for international visibility is justified and encouraged, despite a desire to preserve and promote Spanish in academic contexts (Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020). This trend parallels what occurs in Brazil, where, despite being a regional leader in academic publishing, multilingual journals are encouraged to combine local languages with

English (Céspedes, 2021). These cases illustrate the contradictory nature of positioning English as the global academic lingua franca; while it is presented as a unifying language for academic legitimacy and recognition, its use is constrained by dominant linguistic and epistemological standards. This contradiction results in highly qualified scholars struggling for academic legitimacy, not because of the quality of their research, but because their linguistic capital does not align with the dominant standards of global academia. As a result, an implicit academic hierarchy is reinforced in which English proficiency becomes a determining factor in professional mobility and institutional recognition, taking priority above other measures of academic merit or professional experience.

As English continues to shape academic landscapes, non-native English-speaking scholars are faced with difficult choices about how to pursue recognition without compromising the integrity of their work or cultural identity. The ongoing struggle to negotiate legitimacy within an English-dominated system requires deeper examination. The following section will therefore focus on the intersection of English's linguistic capital and academic legitimacy.

Academic Legitimacy and the Role of English in Global Academia

In the current global academic environment, academic legitimacy—defined as the recognition and validation of scholarly contributions by peers and institutions (Bourdieu, 1988)—increasingly depends not only on scholarly expertise but also on linguistic proficiency, particularly in English. The concrete impacts of English hegemony on knowledge production and academic legitimacy manifest in multiple, interrelated ways that extend beyond publication metrics to deeply influence scholars' self-perception, institutional participation, and career trajectories. This sense of self-perception is deeply linked to professional development, as it is essential for sustaining a scholar's relevance and credibility in their field (Muthanna & Khine, 2024).

In global academic settings, language proficiency—particularly English—plays a crucial role in determining how that professional development is achieved, especially for non-native English-speaking scholars. As discussed in the previous section, academic recognition is often tied not only to the quality of research but also to the scholar's ability to engage in English-language discourse at a high level. Benedict Anderson (1991) introduced the concept of an "imagined community," describing it as a social construction in which people imagine themselves as belonging to a group, even if that group is not formally established. Bonny Norton's (2001) work on language, identity, and the concept of "imagined communities" further illuminates the motivations of non-native English-speaking scholars. Her research suggests that, in pursuit of access to international academic networks and enhanced career prospects, many scholars deliberately pursue postgraduate degrees in English-speaking universities. This decision aligns with Norton's suggestion that these scholars envision themselves as active members of a global academic "imagined community" by demonstrating proficiency in its dominant language. This dynamic directly applies to my project, as it investigates the experiences of scholars navigating this specific academic "imagined community." This reinforces the notion that second language learners associate language acquisition with access to a wider range of symbolic and material resources, as well as with the expansion of their cultural capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015). These ideas have become foundational to the internationalization efforts of universities worldwide. Graduates often leave university with a firmly established professional development vision—one that positions English as a defining characteristic of quality, relevance, and, most importantly, legitimacy.

This understanding often leads students who wish to continue their academic careers to pursue postgraduate degrees at English-speaking institutions, as these universities and programs enjoy a higher status in global rankings and perception. Nevertheless, despite the

widespread adoption of English in postgraduate curricula, non-native English-speaking scholars still contend with a range of challenges such as fear, lack of confidence, grammatical complexities, pronunciation issues, and native language interference, all intensified by environmental pressures, peer expectations, and inadequate instruction (Rao, 2024). Non-native English-speaking students may already be experts in their fields seeking to further develop that expertise, but they must also learn the academic and linguistic conventions of a second language—a requirement for which many universities do not adequately prepare them. As a result, students come to understand how valuable English is for their professional growth, but often without the practical preparation needed for daily academic communication (Norton, 2008). As Norton and McKinney state, "the extent to which a language learner speaks or is silent, and writes, reads, or resists has much to do with the extent to which the learner is valued in any given institution or community" (2011). These experiences challenge the assumption that English proficiency alone is sufficient to 'belong' to the global academic community. English is no longer just a tool for communication; it has become the key to access academic networks, publication opportunities, and professional development.

However, accessing this "key" through English also shapes professional identity and self-worth. Norton (2000, 2008) argues that scholars pursue language acquisition not only to access resources but also to participate in imagined academic communities. This dynamic is evident in the trend of non-native English speakers pursuing postgraduate degrees in English-speaking universities. As they do so, they internalize the belief that English is a prerequisite for academic success. However, this belief often collides with insufficient institutional support. Rao (2024) notes that students face challenges such as grammatical complexity, pronunciation, and language interference, compounded by inadequate instruction and environmental pressures. Consequently, non-native English-speaking scholars may experience reduced confidence, often prioritizing language correction over substantive

contributions (Liu & Wu, 2021). These pressures are exacerbated by student biases favoring native English-speaking instructors (Peng & Kang, 2022), which further diminish the perceived legitimacy of non-native English-speaking faculty.

This dynamic reveals how English's linguistic capital translates into academic legitimacy. According to Beetham's (1991) model, legitimacy arises through three conditions: conformity to established rules, justification based on shared beliefs, and validation through collective recognition. In global academia, the use of English fulfills all three: it conforms to dominant publishing standards, is justified by the belief in a shared academic lingua franca, and is validated through publication, citation, and institutional advancement. However, this model masks the uneven burdens placed on non-native English-speaking scholars, whose legitimacy is often contingent on linguistic performance rather than intellectual merit.

This situation inherently links English's linguistic capital to power, which actively sustains linguistic imperialism. Norton (2000) defines power as "the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic [e.g., language, education, and friendship] and material [e.g., capital goods, real estate, and money] resources are produced, distributed and validated." Within this research context, power is concretely expressed through the validation of linguistic proficiency in global academia, directly enabling scholars who demonstrate English proficiency to gain access and participate in the global academic environment. These insights highlight the political dimensions of academic legitimacy. Phillipson (2008) critiques this system as a clear example of "linguistic imperialism," where the global dominance of English directly reproduces existing inequalities. In practice, universities often reinforce these inequalities through policies that prioritize English-language output for hiring, promotion, and funding. While these policies aim to enhance internationalization, they frequently neglect the significant linguistic and emotional labor required from non-native English speakers. As Norton and McKinney (2011)

argue, the extent to which a scholar is heard, published, or even silent depends on the extent to which their language practices are valued by the academic community.

Consequently, the lived experiences of non-native English-speaking scholars challenge the assumption that language proficiency alone ensures inclusion. Rather, inclusion depends on navigating a system where English proficiency becomes a symbolic resource tied to legitimacy, authority, and access. Wiesner and Harfst (2022) argued that, while theoretical conceptualizations can limit our understanding of academic legitimacy, empirical research is crucial for developing a deeper and more context-sensitive perspective.

This research study aimed to contribute to that understanding by conducting empirical research on how academic legitimacy is constructed, negotiated, and experienced by non-native English-speaking scholars. Understanding these complex dynamics is essential for comprehending how non-native English-speaking scholars assert their academic legitimacy and professional identity within an English-centric system, a reality that often contrasts with the pursuit of academic diversity and inclusion as reviewed in the next section.

Resisting English Dominance: The Latin American Academic Context

South America offers a distinct perspective on English dominance in academia, shaped by its colonial history and a strong tradition of academic regionalism. This perspective is influenced by the historical context of colonization and conquest. This influence has generated an "academic regionalism" which shapes the understanding and production of South American academic research. As Clayton and Aldeman explain, South American academic regionalism has evolved as both a resistance mechanism and an assertion of local perspectives against the dependency on dominant trends (2000). Within this framework, the increasing adoption of English as the lingua franca in academia is perceived by South American academic communities as a continuation of colonial dynamics that marginalize indigenous and regional knowledge systems (King, 2022). Rather than being

seen as a tool for collaboration, the academic regionalism portrays the use of English as a contribution or submission to its dominance.

This critique, however, extends beyond just the use of English; South American academics also question research perspectives from outside the region. Ávila-Reyes (2017) argues that the main point of contention with studies from authors outside of South America is their "external gaze," which fails to account for the nuanced realities of lived experience within the research context. As a result, this has led to the development of a self-referencing ecosystem within South American academia. A citation analysis by Schald and Todeschini (2015) revealed that South American scholars cite Spanish- and Portuguese-language sources at significantly higher rates than global norms. This suggests a reduced inclination to engage in international collaboration and a general caution toward adopting foreign academic frameworks. While this approach reflects a valid effort to maintain academic sovereignty, it also presents limitations in terms of integrating broader scholarly perspectives and methodologies.

This resistance to internationalization exists in tension with the growing global nature of academia. As Ávila-Reyes (2017) points out, the tendency toward regional self-citation, while protective of local epistemologies, may simultaneously restrict opportunities for cross-cultural methodological innovation and academic exchange. Additionally, when Latin American scholars encounter challenges in global academic spaces, these difficulties are often interpreted primarily through the lens of exclusion or prejudice. García-Landa (2006) argues that limited access to a foreign language—particularly English—constitutes a structural disadvantage in a world where publishing research predominantly in English has become the norm. However, Moritz and Narváez-Cardona (2023) offer a more nuanced analysis, suggesting that mismatches in publication outcomes stem not only from exclusionary practices but also from divergent academic cultures, theoretical frameworks,

and disciplinary expectations that differ across regional and institutional contexts.

In order to better understand how academic legitimacy, linguistic sovereignty, and English dominance are experienced by scholars, research cannot rely on theoretical critiques alone. As Weisner and Harfst (2022) suggest, the complexities of these issues must be explored through empirical investigation. The literature reveals a complex landscape where linguistic capital, academic legitimacy, and professional identity intersect differently depending on geographical, institutional, and historical contexts. While existing research has examined these elements separately, there remains a significant gap in understanding how non-native English-speaking scholars navigate these tensions in their lived experiences, particularly in contexts like Latin America where linguistic regionalism and global academic pressures coexist. Therefore, to gain a more nuanced understanding of how these factors operate and are experienced by scholars, this research focused on collecting empirical data through in-depth interviews, a methodology explained in the next section.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate how non-native English-speaking scholars construct and negotiate their academic legitimacy within English-dominant academic environments, this study employed a qualitative case study approach. Following Yin's (2003, 2006) case study methodology, this approach was selected because it enabled the examination of questions regarding the context of the participants and focuses on contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. The case study method is particularly appropriate for this study, which aims to understand how the linguistic capital of English has influenced academic legitimacy for non-native English-speaking scholars. This approach allowed for in-depth data collection via interviews, enabling a detailed exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies within their specific academic settings and careers. While interviews can capture the unique experience of each participant, analyzing individual experiences together can indicate larger phenomena and inform understanding of common circumstances (Wolcott, 2005).

Research Site

The participants were non-native English-speaking scholars who work in a private, bilingual, and high-ranking university in Quito, Ecuador, where English holds significant linguistic capital. The chosen university demonstrates a clear commitment to engaging with the global academic community through several initiatives. It fosters international collaborations with over 200 universities worldwide and hosts a significant number of international faculty members. This global outlook is supported by the university's dedication to knowledge dissemination through its freely accessible academic journals, many of which are published in both English and Spanish to reach a broader audience. Crucially, the university maintains a standard expectation for research publication in SCOPUS-recognized journals, considering it a clear demonstration of the expertise of their faculty. Not only that, by establishing its own publishing house, the university aims to share knowledge and

promote academic and cultural discourse, connecting local and global perspectives.

Participants and Sampling

Purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009) was employed to select participants who represent case examples fitting the central focus of this study. The scholars selected for this study were full-time tenure track professors, each of whom holds teaching, research, administrative and/or project development positions at the university. The study includes eight participants, two male and six female professors. Two of them completed all their training in Europe, having earned most of their degrees there. One of them completed most of their training in Europe and one of their degrees in Ecuador. Two others obtained their postgraduate degrees and received their university education in Ecuador. Three of them received their university education in Ecuador but received their postgraduate degrees from English-speaking universities. In this text, the participants' educational context is mentioned for comparison, but other identifying characteristics are intentionally omitted to protect their identity. All participants are professors and researchers of social sciences subjects, a deliberate choice made because research publication in these fields, unlike the exact sciences, often deals with qualitative data and nuanced language. This distinction is significant for language use, as social science concepts and their translation are often subject to differences in perception and interpretation rather than precise, one-to-one equivalents. Given that they also teach at least one class in English, the participants demonstrate a strong comfort level with English use. All participants This focused sample of eight information-rich cases permits both detailed individual analysis and meaningful cross-case comparison, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of linguistic capital, professional identity, and academic legitimacy through the participants' narratives and experiences.

Data Collection

Following approval from the Comité de Ética de Investigación en Seres Humanos de

la Universidad San Francisco de Quito [Annex 1], a protocol was established to conduct semi-structured interviews [Annex 2]. Each participant signed a consent form and gave verbal agreement for the interview to be digitally recorded [Annex 3]. All recordings and personal information were stored securely on a phone and laptop and deleted upon completion of the study presentation. Each participant engaged in a semi-structured interview lasting 45 to 60 minutes and had the choice of being interviewed in either Spanish or English. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and fully transcribed. The interviews explored participants' educational backgrounds, career paths, publishing experiences, and the influence of English on each of these areas.

Analysis Procedure

The analysis unfolded in two primary stages: first, a within-case analysis, drawing on the approaches of Alsup (2006), Amey (1999), and Clandinin & Connelly (2000), involved an individual examination of each participant's interview transcripts and field notes to construct a thorough understanding of their distinct experiences and perspectives within academic environments throughout their professional journeys; second, a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), informed by the initial within-case findings, identified potential themes emerging from the conversations and observations, subsequently exploring similarities and differences across the cases to identify overarching patterns and themes related to linguistic capital, academic legitimacy, and professional identity. This second stage, focusing on recognizing overarching patterns and themes, is central to understanding this research's results, as these patterns support the contextualization of the theoretical concepts explored in the literary review.

Following Weisner & Harfst's (2022) perspective stating that empirical data is necessary to understand the relationship between academic legitimacy and the global academic landscape, this study aimed to interpret the findings from the within-case and cross-

case analyses, guided by Avram's (2025) SNA framework. By using Avram's framework, this

research aimed to understand how non-native English-speaking scholars view their academic

standing in English-speaking academic settings. The framework considers how interviewees

position themselves, their contextual background, how they see themselves, and importantly,

compares their experiences to find common patterns. This framework allowed a nuanced

understanding of how non-native English-speaking scholars construct and perceive their

academic legitimacy within English-dominant academic environments.

ANALYSIS

This analysis explores how non-native English-speaking scholars with diverse linguistic backgrounds navigate the tensions between English dominance and epistemological diversity and its impact in their academic legitimacy. The data indicate that participants' relationships with the English language differed based on their national contexts, educational backgrounds, and professional aspirations. As participants progressed academically, the necessity and importance of English increased across all contexts, though their responses to this reality differ significantly. Through examining these experiences, we can observe how academic legitimacy is constructed, challenged, and reimagined by scholars working within and against dominant linguistic paradigms. The findings are organized around three major themes that emerged during the interviews: (1) trajectories of English acquisition and professional identity formation across different contexts; (2) how scholars negotiate academic legitimacy through language in English-dominated spaces; and (3) how understand the dominance of English in knowledge production. The findings highlight the complex ways scholars make meaning of their academic legitimacy within an English-dominant academic world, challenging simplistic binary perceptions of English use in academia.

Section 1: English Acquisition & Professional Identity

All participants showed increasing engagement with English as their careers advanced, but their starting points and relationships with the language differed considerably based on national and institutional contexts. These varied trajectories reveal how linguistic capital operates differently across contexts and directly shapes professional identity formation.

For most participants native to Ecuador, the process of learning English began in childhood and was closely linked to their family environment, and broader cultural perceptions of English as a prestigious or globally advantageous language. As one of the

participants summarized: "My parents never told me why English was important, but they made sure to enroll me in an English immersive school and encouraged me to pursue my education in institutions that used English as well." Even if they were not fully aware during their upbringing, their early exposure to the language functioned as a form of linguistic investment—one that later translated into tangible academic and professional capital. Their proficiency in English positively impacted their access to academic opportunities after completing undergraduate degrees. This aligns with Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, where language proficiency—especially in dominant languages like English—grants individuals increased access to professional recognition, institutional credibility, and upward academic mobility.

When asked if their English proficiency influenced their position/postgraduate program/project, all Ecuadorian participants agreed with minimal variation. One participant, despite lacking international credentials or multiple postgraduate degrees, attributed his position to his experience managing international collaborations at the university using English. This consensus reflected the fact that all Ecuadorian participants were involved in or managed international programs requiring English fluency. Their responses mirrored the literature's assertion that English functions as a gateway to academic legitimacy (Alhasnawi, 2021; Mama, 2024), particularly in contexts where hiring and publishing decisions increasingly rely on demonstrated linguistic ability over disciplinary expertise alone (Bocanegra-Valle, 2019). Their professional identities were, consequently, stablished not merely by their credentials but by their proficiency in an English-dominant academic landscape. This made their language skills paramount to both external perception and self-identity. Their answers strongly indicated a sense of belonging within the "imagined community" of global academia. Yet, their integration into this community was demonstrably influenced by the circumstances of their English acquisition. When discussing their

upbringing, the Ecuadorian participants highlighted their parents' deliberate investment in a bilingual English education. This intentional effort reveals that their personal backgrounds were already shaped by English's linguistic capital long before their professional journeys began. Furthermore, the financial means to access such private education in Ecuador suggests that early exposure to English acquisition and learning is directly tied to socioeconomic class and privilege. This association between access to private bilingual education and socioeconomic class continues to be evident in Ecuador today.

In contrast to the Ecuadorian participants' experiences, the scholars from Francophone and Spanish-speaking European countries presented a notable difference in their accounts. For example, two participants from francophone contexts, did not have the same level of immersion and exposure to English as their Ecuadorian colleagues. One participant from a francophone context explained:

> I did not learn English formally. When I started doing research—particularly during my master's degree and later in research positions—I began to be in contact more and more with English. Not just with colleagues who spoke English, but especially with the literature I needed to advance my research projects. I realized I had to start acquiring English on my own.

The other two scholars from the European context echoed a similar experience. Despite having some English classes during their undergraduate program, the academic focus remained primarily on their national language. Publishing and conducting research were still expected to be done in the institution's dominant language—French or Spanish. This changed, however, when the scholars joined programs and/or research projects outside of their native environment. There, English became the medium of instruction and, for the first time, they were asked to teach in English as well. The fact is that all three European scholars noted that contact with English increased significantly as their academic careers progressed.

However, The European scholars noted that in their home countries or institutions, there remained strong institutional and cultural pushes toward publishing in their native languages. One participant explained that this was partly due to national funding sources which required or encouraged publication in the national language. In the francophone context, there was an explicit policy emphasis on preserving the status of French as a global academic language: "There is a kind of national and francophone protection of French for research publications to ensure it remains one of the recognized languages in global academia."

The contrast between the Ecuadorian scholars' early immersion and the European scholars' later, necessity-driven acquisition of English reveals the significant influence of context on the role and impact of English proficiency in academic careers. For the Ecuadorian participants, English functioned as a form of linguistic capital cultivated from childhood, directly translating into academic and professional advantages. Their perception of academic legitimacy was intrinsically linked to their English abilities from the beginning of their careers. Conversely, the European scholars' experiences highlight how the dominance of national academic languages and institutional priorities initially shaped their engagement with English. However, this emphasis on native-language publishing started to shift in specific research contexts, particularly when projects were funded by the European Union or institutions affiliated with it. In such cases, English became the default language of communication. As one participant pointed out,

> Given the number of official languages within the EU—currently 24—English emerged not as an imposed dominant language, but as a practical solution for cross-border collaboration. English isn't seen here as an imperial language. It's just the most useful tool for all of us to be able to communicate and collaborate. It allows us to share ideas and build dialogue in one common language without requiring everyone to know the native language of the other scholars.

These explanations validate the current trends of English use in European academia, where English is being used as a practical tool for communication and collaboration. In the European context English started to operate not as an "imperial" imposition but as a practical necessity, echoing the idea from the literature that English serves as the "linguistic common ground" for academic knowledge production across contexts (Zeng & Yang, 2024). This insight resonated with one Ecuadorian participant's experience. Before pursuing postgraduate studies in Ecuador, the participant had already been part of a large-scale international research project based in Ecuador. The initiative involved global data collection and collaboration among scholars from various countries. In his words: "If it weren't for English, I wouldn't have been able to participate at all. But, English wasn't just a communication tool—it was the language that made the project possible in the first place." This participant's reflection underscores the central argument that, regardless of the context (whether Ecuadorian or European), scholars engaged in international collaborations often find English to be an indispensable and enabling tool. A comparative look at the Ecuadorian and European contexts underscores a shared trajectory: regardless of when and how English is acquired, it often becomes essential for advancing in academia, particularly in publishing and international collaboration. However, scholars do not always frame their engagement with English as a form of cultural surrender or strategic calculation. Rather, English use is perceived as a necessary and even empowering medium through which international academic participation becomes possible them.

These findings illustrate that the context in which English is introduced, whether through early exposure or academic necessity, influences how scholars come to perceive and use the language. While Ecuadorian participants often encountered English earlier in life through personal or institutional efforts, European scholars tended to engage with English more intensively as their academic responsibilities expanded. Despite these different

trajectories, postgraduate education emerged as a shared turning point across contexts: a moment when English shifted from a complementary skill to an essential tool for academic engagement. This shift not only marked a practical change in the language of instruction and communication but also began to influence how participants positioned themselves within global academic networks. It is within this transition that the linguistic capital of English begins to determine academic legitimacy, albeit through different pathways depending on national and institutional contexts.

Section 2: Negotiating Academic Legitimacy Through Language

For Ecuadorian scholars, English is configured as an indispensable gateway to global academic legitimacy and belonging. Their decision to pursue postgraduate programs in English was driven by the "international prestige" and "specific academic opportunities" offered, a choice often sustained by their upbringing and positioning English proficiency as a prerequisite for entry into the "imagined community" of global scholarship. English transitioned from merely a subject to the primary medium of instruction, research, and scholarly exchange. Participants described this transition as both challenging and disorienting. As one participant narrated, "I thought I knew English well before I went to the U.S. But being fully immersed in that environment shows you there's more to English than what we learn in class." This quote effectively captures the dual nature of the scholars' transition: the opportunity to utilize English for advanced academic purposes alongside the disorientation of realizing the complexities of academic English.

This transition introduced a persistent power dynamic where participants found themselves perpetually navigating the dual nature of English: while it grants access, it simultaneously acts as a pervasive source of pressure. According to the scholars, the expectation to achieve mastery of academic discourse, rhetorical nuance, and disciplinary conventions in English has persisted throughout their careers, fundamentally shaping their

perception of their own legitimacy. As one participant explained: "We were all career professors, but that sense of not having 'good enough' English persisted in all of us while we were studying." This feeling of inadequacy reveals how English functions not merely as a linguistic tool but as what Norton (2000) defined as a symbolic resource that mediates academic power relations. Their disciplinary expertise provided academic credibility, but their ability to use English granted them symbolic legitimacy within the broader academic system—a legitimacy validated by their own participation in an English-dominant environment. As emphasized in the literature, academic legitimacy is conferred not solely by scholarly merit but also by linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1988; Norton & McKinney, 2011).

It is important to note, however, that not all Ecuadorian participants pursued postgraduate degrees in English-speaking countries. Two participants completed their degrees in Ecuador but had achieved high levels of English proficiency before and during their academic careers. One of them led a collaborative research project that, in his words, "would not have been possible without English," as stated previously. English served as the tool that allowed the participant to coordinate the project across institutions and borders, making the project viable from its inception. The other participant became deeply involved in his the university even before completing his postgraduate studies. His growing responsibilities placed him in charge of international initiatives, including student exchange programs and collaborative events with U.S.-based universities. When asked whether English played a defining role in him having that role in the university, he stated without hesitation that it was "absolutely essential" for the position he currently holds. This ability to use English fluently allowed these participants to bridge their subject-matter expertise with the linguistic norms of the academic world—effectively positioning themselves as both credible and globally relevant. As the literature review discusses, this dual legitimacy—being experts in their fields and being able to use the language of academia—enabled participants to meet the

institutional and social expectations of academic professionalism (Adams, 2018; Lillis &
Curry, 2010).

This dual conceptualization was consistent across all participants from both European
and Ecuadorian contexts. Each scholar emphasized that English had become a central asset in
navigating institutional expectations. Ecuadorian scholars affiliated with the university were
all currently leading or actively contributing to projects where English was fundamental—
whether for writing grants, publishing papers, teaching content-based courses, or organizing
international collaborations. Similarly, the European participants emphasized how English
had become indispensable in their professional lives, enabling their participation in academic
conferences, publication in international journals, and networking with researchers abroad.
Their proficiency in English allowed them to conform to the implicit "rules" of participation
in international academia, thereby reinforcing their place within that "imagined community"
without the need of international degrees to belong to it (Anderson, 1991). Similarly, the
European participants also emphasized how English had become indispensable in their
professional lives. Several mentioned that their ability to participate in academic conferences,
publish in international journals, and network with researchers abroad hinged on their English
proficiency. Their careers had been significantly shaped by their ability to communicate their
work beyond their native language contexts, and doing so in English.

The institutional practices at the university where these scholars work reveal the
profound implications of that dynamic. All participants—regardless of national
background—currently teach in English, with hiring decisions often hinging on this
capability alongside disciplinary expertise. As one European scholar's experience
demonstrates, English proficiency was not merely supplemental but essential to securing an
academic position. This reflects the university's strategic emphasis on bilingual and English-
medium instruction, positioning faculty as both knowledge disseminators and embodiments

of successful linguistic negotiation in global academia. What emerges from these experiences is a nuanced understanding of academic legitimacy as neither fixed nor uniformly determined, but rather as continuously negotiated through linguistic performance. The scholars' narratives demonstrate that academic legitimacy operates as a complex interplay between institutional power structures and individual agency. While the dominant position of English creates hierarchies that privilege certain linguistic backgrounds, these scholars actively reconfigured their relationship to these power dynamics by strategically deploying their multilingual resources. Their experiences illustrate how academic legitimacy is not simply conferred through institutional recognition or publication metrics, but is actively constructed through the scholars' ability to navigate disciplinary knowledge and linguistic expectations simultaneously. This conclusion suggest that academic legitimacy is fundamentally relational—determined not in isolation but through ongoing negotiation between scholars' linguistic capital, disciplinary expertise, and the institutional contexts that validate both.

Section 3: Understanding the Dominance of English in Knowledge Production

As stated in the literature, the perspective between the European context and the Latin American context regarding the dominance of English is significantly different. This difference is not just a matter of language, but of historical, ideological, and regional positioning. South American scholars, influenced by a colonial context and a strong sense of academic regionalism (Clayton & Aldeman, 2000), often regard the dominance of English as a continuation of practices that marginalize and exclude local knowledge systems (King, 2022; Ávila-Reyes, 2017). By contrast, European scholars, particularly those engaged in EU-funded collaborations, tend to view English pragmatically—as a functional lingua franca that facilitates scholarly dialogue across linguistic and national borders.

The findings both affirm and challenge these literature-based distinctions. Participants

from both regions acknowledged English dominance, but two voices—one Ecuadorian and one Francophone—revealed previously unconsidered complexities in how scholars conceptualize English in knowledge production. The Francophone scholar, while recognizing the functional role of English, expressed concern over the self-referencing trend within some South American academic circles: "The problem is that they only reference each other…Even in conversation they bring authors that can only be known by someone within their own context, dismissing scholars from outside the South American context." This perspective directly aligns with Ávila-Reyes' (2017) concept of the "external gaze"—the tendency to dismiss perspectives originating outside South America based on the belief that non-South American scholars cannot truly understand local contexts and realities. The Francophone scholar's observations confirm how this external gaze manifests in citation practices and scholarly discourse, creating intellectual isolation and missed opportunities for methodological exchange across contexts. Furthermore, the experience of this Francophone scholar suggests that academic regionalism, while important for protecting and supporting local academic sovereignty, may simultaneously hinder South American scholars' engagement with the broader academic community when it becomes excessively insular. This tension reveals the complex balance between preserving contextual integrity in research and maintaining productive dialogue with global scholarly perspectives.

An Ecuadorian participant with graduate degrees from South American institutions offered a complementary perspective echoing the European's scholars observation about regional writing styles but presented a different interpretation regarding adapting to international norms. This participant, having earned graduate degrees solely within South American institutions, identified a prevalent tendency in local South American academia to privilege and encourage regional writing styles and research practices. As the participant explained: "Research here [South America] always comes with an opinion on the findings

rather than focusing on the facts or findings themselves. This is present even in science publications but in the social sciences is the norm [sic]. […] But international journals don't want the opinion of the researcher, they want the findings and the analysis of those findings." This commentary suggests that publishing disparities may stem not solely from linguistic exclusion (García-Landa, 2006) but from divergent academic traditions and epistemological approaches (Moritz & Narváez-Cardona, 2023). The scholar added that: "Despite [professors] expressing and supporting references from South American contexts, they still share English-language sources from Western contexts due to the depth of analysis these sources have developed." This observation reveals the tension between recognizing the analytical value of international scholarship while simultaneously maintaining commitment to regional knowledge production practices.

Notably, Ecuadorian scholars in this study did not perceive their adaptation to international writing norms as the surrendering of their regional knowledge production practices. Instead, several participants described English as a tool for epistemological sovereignty and authentic expression. As one participant stated, "being proficient in English allowed me to use my own voice when publishing." This framing positions English not as a tool of colonial replication but as a medium for academic self-affirmation and epistemological agency. One participant even maintained that English enabled her to better present her ideas to a global audience, not by conforming but by claiming space within that discourse. As discussed in the linguistic capital literature, this use of English contributed to all of the participants' own sense of academic legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991; Norton, 2000).

This finding is crucial for understanding how scholars negotiate the inherent tensions between English as a force of linguistic academic domination and a medium for participation. Rather than viewing English solely as a tool of oppression, participants' experiences demonstrate a strategic reframing toward epistemological empowerment and active

participation. This negotiation aligns with Norton and McKinney's (2011) emphasis on language's role in constructing voice and agency within institutional contexts. While the literature highlights how English functions as a symbolic resource that can impose standards and create hierarchies, participants' narratives illustrate the active agency scholars exercise to participate in global academia while maintaining epistemological authenticity.

However, the path to this empowered participation is not without its challenges. Although participants from both European and Ecuadorian contexts reported receiving feedback related to writing style and English use, this feedback's intent—whether targeting non-proficiency or stylistic variations—remains ambiguous, highlighting a persistent tension in evaluating linguistic competence. Notably, some Ecuadorian participants specifically mentioned relying on their academic community and seeking support and feedback from native English-speaking colleagues during the publication process of their work. Once again, just as their upbringing contextualized the access to English, these scholars work for a bilingual private university where they have access to native English-speaking colleagues and resources.

Despite the evident connection between English and issues of accessibility and privilege, a consistent theme emerged across participants: all scholars, both European and Ecuadorian, agreed that gaining more experience in publishing in English facilitated more effective collaboration with peers from other contexts, regardless of their baseline English proficiency. This suggests that ongoing engagement with English, even when accompanied by critical feedback, fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity through shared academic practice. Participants actively navigated the space between conforming to dominant linguistic norms and shaping their roles within the global academic community, revealing the complex interplay between the demands of linguistic capital and scholars' proactive construction of academic legitimacy. Moreover, participants emphasized the value of creating

spaces for collaboration, such as the multilingual journal one scholar developed with colleagues from other universities. These collaborative initiatives serve as crucial bridges connecting researchers with varying access to and experience with English, directly addressing the central questions of this research about how scholars negotiate academic legitimacy within linguistically unequal academic environments.

The experiences of these scholars reveal the complex ways linguistic capital, academic legitimacy, and epistemological diversity intersect in global academia. English emerges not as a fixed barrier or simple tool, but as a negotiated space shaped by institutional, national, socioeconomic, and personal contexts. Their accounts complicate simplistic narratives around linguistic imperialism, instead highlighting the role of agency, context, and collaboration in constructing academic legitimacy within an uneven but negotiable global academic landscape. However, the pervasive structural barriers tied to English accessibility and its association with socioeconomic privilege remain a significant and undeniable factor when negotiating academic legitimacy in the current global academic landscape. These are challenges that participants attempt to address not solely through individual linguistic adaptation, but also by actively fostering collaborative spaces and support networks that extend access and opportunity to other scholars navigating similar constraints.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how non-native English-speaking scholars navigate the tension arising from English's role as the dominant lingua franca in scholarly communication versus the push for epistemological diversity and knowledge decolonization, and how these dynamics influence their academic legitimacy. Through in-depth interviews with scholars at a private liberal arts university in Ecuador, this research provided insights about the relationship between English proficiency, academic legitimacy, and knowledge production. The analysis of the results suggests that the influence of English as the academic lingua franca is far more nuanced than binary characterizations of English as either a tool of oppression or collaboration would suggest.

The research site and participant sample offered a unique opportunity to explore this complexity, revealing both convergence in the functional use of English among scholars from Ecuadorian and European contexts and divergence from theoretical perceptions of English hegemony. The empirical evidence suggest that English functions within a complex interplay of institutional context, disciplinary norms, individual ideology, and self-perception, demanding a departure from separated conceptualizations of English as either a tool of linguistic imperialism or academic collaboration. The study suggests that scholars' relationships with English are highly contextual and evolve throughout their academic careers. Early exposure to English, often linked to socioeconomic privilege in the Ecuadorian context, provides different advantages compared to the pragmatic acquisition of English in European scholarly contexts. Yet, across all backgrounds, participants described English as increasingly central to their professional identities and academic legitimacy as their careers progressed—a finding that underscores the pervasive nature of linguistic capital in shaping academic opportunity structures. Analysis of the findings suggest that English proficiency functions as both a gateway and a barrier in academic knowledge production. Participants

described how English facilitated international collaboration, increased the visibility of their research, and allowed them to engage with global scholarly communities. Simultaneously, they acknowledged how linguistic expectations in publishing, teaching, and academic discourse could marginalize important contributions from scholars with limited access to English-language resources.

Significantly, several participants challenged the assumption that adapting to international publishing norms necessarily constitutes a form of epistemological surrender. Instead, they described strategic engagements with English that allowed them to assert their voices and represent their contexts on a global stage. This finding complicates narratives about linguistic imperialism by highlighting the agency scholars exercise in navigating dominant language structures.

The findings suggest several important implications for higher education institutions seeking to balance internationalization with epistemological diversity. First, universities should recognize that English proficiency requirements can reproduce socioeconomic inequalities and limit access to academic opportunities. Second, institutions should develop support mechanisms that acknowledge the intellectual and emotional labor non-native English-speaking scholars invest in meeting linguistic expectations. Finally, academic publishing and evaluation systems should critically examine how language requirements may inadvertently privilege certain forms of knowledge and exclude others.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The research was conducted at a single private university with explicitly internationalized policies that actively encourage English use, which may not represent the experiences of scholars in other Ecuadorian or South American institutions, particularly public universities where institutional approaches to language and international collaboration may differ significantly. Given that the participants also teach at least one class in English, this context implies a certain level of comfort with the

language. Additionally, the modest sample size, while enabling in-depth analysis of individual experiences, restricts the generalization of the findings. A more robust sample might reveal additional patterns or challenges not captured in this study. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating larger, more diverse samples from multiple institutions, both public and private, and consider including participants from various linguistic and disciplinary backgrounds. Comparative studies examining how different institutional policies regarding language and internationalization affect scholars' experiences would be particularly valuable. Additionally, longitudinal research tracking how scholars' relationships with English evolve throughout their careers could provide important insights into the dynamic nature of linguistic capital in academic contexts.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of empirical research in uncovering how mechanisms of academic legitimacy and linguistic dominance operate in the lived experiences of scholars. Rather than categorizing English use in binary terms, a more nuanced understanding is needed—one that considers the varied ways scholars engage with English depending on their context, goals, and professional histories. English should be viewed not solely as a vehicle of linguistic imperialism—though this remains a valid concern—but as a potential tool through which scholars can share knowledge, represent their contexts, and assert their voices globally.

By recognizing the complex interplay between linguistic capital, academic legitimacy, and epistemological diversity, academic institutions can work toward more equitable and inclusive environments that value diverse forms of knowledge while facilitating meaningful global dialogue. This balanced approach is essential for creating an academic landscape where scholars from all linguistic backgrounds can contribute to the collective advancement of knowledge.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: CEISH Research Approval

USFQ | **COMITÉ DE ÉTICA Y DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN SERES HUMANOS**

Oficio N. 032-2025-CA25008TPG-CEISH-USFQ
Quito, 14 de marzo de 2025

Paulo Emilio Yánez
Investigador Principal
Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Presente

Asunto: Aprobación de Investigación
Referencia: Investigación 2025-008TPG

De nuestra consideración:

El Comité de Ética de Investigación en Seres Humanos de la Universidad San Francisco de Quito "CEISH-USFQ", notifica a usted que, evaluó los aspectos éticos, metodológicos y jurídicos de la investigación **"La hegemonía del inglés en el ámbito académico: explorando lenguaje, identidad y legitimidad. Quito, 2025"** con código 2025-008TPG, acordando su **Aprobación**.

Título de la Investigación	**La hegemonía del inglés en el ámbito académico: explorando lenguaje, identidad y legitimidad. Quito, 2025**		
Tipo de Investigación	Investigación que incluye interrogar, observar y/o medir cara a cara a los sujetos de investigación de manera anónima		
Campo de Investigación	Ciencias de la Educación		
Equipo de Investigación	**#**	**Rol**	**Nombre**	**Institución**
	1	Investigador principal	Paulo Emilio Yanez Merchan	USFQ
	2	Tutor de Tesis	Scott Thomas Gibson	USFQ
Duración de la investigación	4 MESES		

Como respaldo de la aprobación, reposan en los archivos del CEISH-USFQ la documentación presentada por el investigador principal y la empleada por el Comité para la evaluación de la investigación.

En tal virtud, se adjunta a la presente la siguiente documentación con certificación del CEISH-USFQ:

	Documentos aprobados	**Idioma Versión**	**Fecha**	**# Págs.**
1	Protocolo de investigación	E02	13/03/2025	09
2	Consentimiento Informado (Entrevistas anónimas)	E02	13/03/2025	03
3	Instrumentos de la investigación (HOJA DE REGISTRO DE DATOS).	E02	13/03/2025	01

La vigencia de aprobación de la investigación es de 4 meses, desde el 30 de marzo de 2025, hasta el 14 de agosto de 2025, tomando en consideración las fechas de inicio y finalización descritas en el protocolo de investigación aprobado.

Recordamos que usted deberá:

− Conducir la investigación de conformidad a lo estipulado en el protocolo de investigación aprobado por el CEISH-USFQ.
− Aplicar el consentimiento informado según los procesos y formatos aprobados por el CEISH-USFQ.

DIEGO DE ROBLES ENTRE FRANCISCO DE ORELLANA Y PAMPITE,
CUMBAYÁ. P.O.BOX: 17-12-841 QUITO-ECUADOR
T.: (593 2)297-1700 AL 708. FAX.: (593 2)289 0070.
WWW.USFQ.EDU.EC

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- Solicitar al CEISH-USFQ la evaluación y aprobación de enmiendas a la investigación y/o documentación relacionada, previo a su implementación con al menos 60 días de anticipación.
- Presentar informe de inicio y final de la investigación.
- Emitir al CEISH-USFQ publicación científica oficial de la investigación.
- Cumplir con las demás obligaciones contraídas con el CEISH-USFQ en la *"Declaración de Responsabilidad del investigador principal"*.

La documentación presentada ante el CEISH-USFQ es de responsabilidad exclusiva del investigador principal, quien asume su veracidad, originalidad y autoría.

Con sentimientos de distinguida consideración.

Atentamente,

firmado electrónicamente por:
XIMENA PATRICIA
GARZON VILLALBA

Ximena Garzón Villalba MD. PhD.
Presidente CEISH-USFQ
ceishusfq@usfq.edu.ec

VIVIANA
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Viviana Guerrero Benalcázar Mgs.
Secretaria CEISH-USFQ

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form

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EN SERES HUMANOS

VE02, 13 de Marzo 2025

Modelo de Consentimiento Informado (Entrevistas anónimas)
(NO APLICA EN INVESTIGACIONES DE SALUD)

A. Datos de la investigación	
Título de la investigación:	**La hegemonía del inglés en el ámbito académico: Explorando lenguaje, identidad y legitimidad.**
Investigador principal:	**Paulo Yanez**
Patrocinador:	**No aplica**
Correo electrónico:	**pyanezm@estud.usfq.edu.ec**

Nos dirigimos a Usted para invitarlo a participar en esta investigación.

El propósito de este estudio es: Este estudio de investigación explora cómo los profesores cuyo idioma nativo no es el inglés desarrollan y mantienen su identidad profesional y legitimidad académica en el contexto académico actual. Esta investigación busca comprender las experiencias de profesores que navegan entre las expectativas lingüísticas institucionales y el desarrollo de su carrera académica.

Antes que decida participar le solicitamos que lea cuidadosamente este documento. Si decide participar en esta investigación, le solicitamos responder una entrevista en persona que tomará aproximadamente *una hora* y que incluye preguntas acerca de su experiencia como profesor no nativo parlante de inglés y sus experiencias profesionales tanto en el exterior como en la actual institución en la que trabaja.

Usted puede contestar todas las preguntas de la encuesta o no contestar aquellas que no desee.

Adoptaremos las medidas necesarias para asegurar la seguridad y confidencialidad de sus datos:

- La entrevista es anónima, se le otorgará un código. No se recopilarán datos que puedan identificarlo ni se grabará la entrevista.
- Sólo los investigadores de este estudio tendrán acceso a la información recopilada.
- Los investigadores principales serán los responsables de la custodia de la información que servirá para la elaboración de artículos y presentaciones académicas.
- La información se almacenará en un celular con grabaciones encriptadas de manera digital por un periodo de un mes. Una vez concluido este tiempo la información será destruida.
- La información recabada se mantendrá confidencial y no se usará para fines distintos a los de esta investigación.
- Es posible que los resultados de la investigación sean publicados o se discutan en charlas científicas; sin embargo, no se utilizarán datos individuales, solo grupales.

BENEFICIOS:
Esta investigación provee la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre sus experiencias profesionales en un entorno estructurado. El objetivo principal de esta investigación es contribuir al entendimiento de las dinámicas lingüísticas en la academia global y cómo ese entendimiento puede mejorar las políticas institucionales y/o académicas globales basada en los hallazgos del estudio.
Su participación en esta investigación es libre y voluntaria. Usted puede negarse a participar, su decisión de no participar no causará la pérdida de sus derechos y/o beneficios. Aunque usted decida participar, puede cambiar de opinión en cualquier momento y retirar su consentimiento sin tener que dar explicaciones.

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Para revocar su consentimiento, deberá comunicarse con *Paulo Yanez* a través de los números de contacto descritos al final de este documento. Deberá informar al investigador su decisión de retirar su consentimiento y firmar la sección de revocatoria.

Si tiene dudas sobre la investigación o sus procedimientos, por favor contáctese con el investigador principal Paulo Yánez número *0984644221* o a través del correo electrónico pyanezm@estud.usfq.edu.ec

CONSENTIMIENTO
Declaro que:

1. Me han explicado claramente el propósito de esta investigación.
2. Entiendo los riesgos y beneficios de participar en esta investigación.
3. Comprendo que mi participación en esta investigación es libre y voluntaria.
4. Han respondido satisfactoriamente a todas mis preguntas.
5. Me han dado tiempo suficiente para tomar una decisión.
6. Se me ha entregado una copia de este documento.

CONSIENTO: **Si   No**

De forma libre y voluntaria participar en esta investigación   ☐   ☐

Firma:

Lugar y Fecha:

REVOCATORIA DE CONSENTIMIENTO	
Yo _____ por el presente informo mi decisión de **retirarme** de la investigación descrita en este documento y Elija un elemento.	
Nombres y apellidos del sujeto de investigación	**Firma o huella digital del sujeto de investigación**
Cédula de identidad	
Lugar y Fecha:	
Cédula de identidad	
Lugar y Fecha:	
Nombres y apellidos del responsable de recibir la revocatoria	**Firma del responsable de**

2025-03

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EN SERES HUMANOS

VE02, 13 de Marzo 2025

	recibir la revocatoria
Cédula de identidad	
Lugar y Fecha:	

Paulo Emilio Yanez Merchan
Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Correo electrónico: pyanezm@estud.usfq.edu.ec
Telf.: 0984644221

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APPENDIX C: Interview Questions

VE02

jueves, 13 de marzo de 2025

Instrumentos de la Investigación

Protocolo de Entrevista: Identidad Profesional de Profesores no Nativos del Inglés en la Academia

Pregunta de Investigación

¿Cómo construyen y mantienen su identidad profesional los profesores no nativos del inglés en un panorama académico centrado en el inglés?

Introducción

Gracias por aceptar participar en nuestro estudio. Estamos interesados en comprender cómo los profesores no nativos del inglés navegan su identidad profesional dentro del entorno académico actual donde el inglés sirve como idioma dominante. Esta entrevista debería tomar aproximadamente 45-60 minutos. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que no está obligado a responder ninguna pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo, y puede terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento. Una vez terminada la investigación usted tendrá acceso a los borradores de la investigación y una vez presentado el proyecto toda la información recopilada sera eliminada permanentemente de todos los instrumentos de almacenamiento includio celular y laptop.

Antes de comenzar, me gustaría su permiso para grabar en audio esta entrevista para ayudar con la transcripción y el análisis. ¿Es esto aceptable para usted? [Esperar respuesta] Gracias. [Iniciar grabación]
¿Podría por favor indicar su nombre y la fecha de hoy para el registro?

Antecedentes y Trayectoria Académica

1. ¿Podría contarme sobre su formación académica y rol actual?
 - ¿Cuál es su área de especialización?
 - ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva enseñando en esta universidad?
 - ¿Qué lo motivó a seguir una carrera académica aquí?
 - ¿Dónde completó sus estudios de posgrado?

2. ¿Podría describir su relación con el idioma inglés?
 - ¿Cuándo y cómo comenzó a aprender inglés?
 - ¿Qué lo motivó a perseguir trabajo académico en contextos angloparlantes?
 - ¿Cómo se preparó lingüísticamente para su experiencia académica internacional?
 - ¿Qué preocupaciones, si las hubo, tenía sobre el uso del inglés en entornos académicos?
Experiencia Profesional e Identidad

3. ¿Cómo describiría su experiencia adaptándose a entornos académicos de habla inglesa?
 - ¿Cuáles fueron los desafíos iniciales que enfrentó?
 - ¿Cómo navegó las relaciones con colegas nativos del inglés?
 - ¿Hubo momentos en que su dominio del inglés influyó en las interacciones académicas?
 - ¿Cómo estas experiencias moldearon su enfoque del trabajo académico?

4. En su rol actual, ¿cómo se intersecta el inglés con sus actividades profesionales?
 - ¿Qué tan cómodo se siente usando inglés en diferentes contextos académicos?
 - ¿Qué estrategias ha desarrollado para enseñar en inglés?
 - ¿Cómo aborda la escritura académica y la publicación en inglés?
 - ¿Cómo influyen las consideraciones lingüísticas en su participación en conferencias o reuniones profesionales?

5. ¿Podría describir su experiencia específicamente en esta institución?
 - ¿Qué expectativas respecto al dominio del inglés ha encontrado?
 - ¿Cómo percibe el enfoque de la institución hacia la diversidad lingüística?
 - ¿Cómo navega el trabajo colaborativo con colegas nativos del inglés?
 - ¿Qué papel juega el idioma en su efectividad docente y las interacciones con estudiantes?
Identidad y Desarrollo Profesional

6. ¿Cómo ha influido su relación con el inglés en su desarrollo profesional?
 - ¿De qué manera el idioma ha moldeado su trayectoria profesional?
 - ¿Cómo equilibra su identidad lingüística con las expectativas institucionales?
 - ¿Ha experimentado tensiones entre estos aspectos de su identidad?
 - ¿Cómo ha cambiado su perspectiva sobre esto con el tiempo?

7. Reflexionando sobre las prácticas institucionales:
 - ¿Cómo percibe la relación entre el dominio del inglés y la legitimidad académica?
 - ¿Qué sistemas de apoyo institucional han sido útiles en su trayectoria?
 - ¿Qué apoyo adicional beneficiaría a los académicos no nativos del inglés?
 - ¿Cómo impacta el énfasis en el inglés a la diversidad académica?
Pensamientos Finales

8. Basado en su experiencia, ¿qué consejo le daría a otros académicos no nativos del inglés?

9. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir sobre su experiencia como profesor no nativo del inglés que no hayamos cubierto?

Cierre
Gracias por compartir sus experiencias y perspectivas con nosotros. Su participación nos ayudará a comprender mejor cómo los profesores no nativos del inglés navegan su identidad profesional en la academia. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta para mí?

Notas Post-Entrevista
Fecha: _____
Entrevistador: _____
Ubicación: _____
Duración: _____
Observaciones notables: _____

Página 1

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