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Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

AUTOR: Santana Medranda, Byron Leonardo

DIRECTOR: Benítez Correa, Carmen Delia, Dra.

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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Doctora.

Carmen Delia Benítez Correa.

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: "Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools", ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, enero de 2014

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Autor: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo

Cédula: 1204656340

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my parents, Isidoro Santana and Antonia Medranda, to my sister Jenny Santana and to my wife, Ruth Velis Amaya because they have given me all the support to achieve my goal of becoming a professional. They are my priority, and I am doing this for them and for myself.

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Eternal thanks to the Supreme Goodness for the wonderful gift of life and my family, to my thesis advisor: Dra. Carmen Delia Benítez Correa, for her patience and effort, to the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja to its teachers and directors.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The research was about the main factors that affect the English teaching learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools, and its purpose was to analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. This project was developed in five high schools in Santo Domingo. The aim was to obtain information about factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions that are affecting the teaching learning process in educational institutions.

The research process involved observing fifteen classes interviewing and surveying fifteen EFL teachers and students. The data obtained from teacher´s questionnaire was quantitatively presented, described, analyzed and discussed. The method used was quantitative.

The analysis of the data was supported as well as contrasted with the information from the student´s responses to their questionnaires, class observation, and teacher´s interviews. The results provide evidence that the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools are being affected mainly by the large size of classes, lack of skills in teaching, class size and technological resource, unvaried or wrongly applied teaching methodology, low percentage of English usage in class, and lack of professional monitoring.

KEYWORDS: factors, classroom space, teaching resources, EFL teachers, students.

RESUMEN

La investigación versó sobre los principales factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés en colegios públicos del Ecuador, su propósito fue analizar los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo en cinco colegios de Santo Domingo. El propósito fue obtener información acerca de los factores relacionados a los profesores, estudiantes, aulas e instituciones educativas y que están afectando el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje en nuestras escuelas.

Para el desarrollo de la investigación fue necesario observar quince clases y llenar las fichas de observación, entrevistar y encuestar a los profesores de inglés y a los estudiantes. La información obtenida fue presentada de manera cuantitativa, descrita, analizada y discutida. El método usado fue el cuantitativo.

El análisis de la información fue argumentado y contrastado con la in formación obtenida de las respuestas de los estudiantes. Los resultados evidencian que el proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje del Inglés en nuestras escuelas está siendo afectada debido a los grupos de estudiantes que son numerosos, el espacio físico de la clase, la falta de recursos tecnológicos, metodología inadecuada, falta de uso de inglés en las clases y falta de monitoreo
PALABRAS CLAVES: factores, espacio en la clase, recursos de enseñanza, docentes EFL, estudiantes.

INTRODUCTION

There is an important amount of students who enter the University with inappropriate English language skills in Ecuador. In consequence, many young people do not have opportunities to advance their academic and professional lives. This constitutes a serious problem since being able to communicate in English is a necessity nowadays as it is considered a world language. Speaking English gives access to better educational and professional opportunities nationally and internationally. This research titled "Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools" has been carried out to analyze main factors affecting the English language teaching-learning process.

The specific objectives for this research were firstly, to determine classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; secondly, to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and finally, to determine the teachers' instructional competence. This study is important because through it we can know the problems existing in the teaching-learning process of English and take some action in order to improve the quality of our students.

Previous researches related to the theme have been conducted in different countries to analyze various aspects concerning factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. The first study was one done by Şad (2010) who investigated about theory–practice dichotomy: Prospective teachers' evaluations about teaching English to young learners. The purpose of the study was to inquire the possible problems and difficulties in teaching English to young learners. During the research of the study, the author did not find any limitations.

In relation to the teacher's performance, when managing the class, Farooq (2011) carried out a research about factors affecting classroom management. In this study the purpose was to: explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about the factors affecting the

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classroom management; investigate the difference in the perception of male and female prospective teachers in relation to factors influencing classroom management; and to compare the perceptions of prospective teachers of three teacher training institutions about the factors contributing towards the classroom management. During the research of the study, the author did not find any limitations.

The third study was done by Deneme (2008) who researched about the language learning strategy preferences of Turkish students. The purpose of this study was directed primarily on the language learning strategy choices of Turkish students, and to detect what language learning strategies Turkish students apply while they are learning English. During the research of the study, the author did not find limitations.

It is also necessary to point out that this research project tries to be a contribution to English teachers, students, authorities and Ecuadorian public high schools, since it identifies the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. This study will allow educational attainments and a better quality of English language learning in public Educational Institutions, so that Ecuadorian students have a formation that not only allows them to be competent in both the national and international environment, but also allows them to be a treasured contribution for future research.

Finally it is important to mention that there was a limitation in this research, this was the lack of classroom observations. Only one observation does not provide enough evidenced of classroom management and methods used, so for further research on this topic it could be advisable to observe more classes.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in five public high schools in the city of Santo Domingo, in the province of Santo Domingo of the Tsáchilas. The participants were fifteen English teachers and fifteen students, three teachers in each high school and one student from each course of six different grades from 8th year of basic education to 3rd year of Bachillerato. There were girls and boys from 12 to 16 years old.

Procedures

This research started with the investigation of the literature about topics related to the theme. It was also required to investigate five previous studies related to the researched topic. The information was obtained from several sources as journals, google books, books from different authors and the didactic guide provided by the university.

The methodology applied in this study was quantitative. The data obtained was described, analyzed, and interpreted to reach the objective previously stated in this investigation. The techniques used for this study were survey, observation, interview and note-taking. To gather the data two questionnaires were administered, one for teachers and another for each student surveyed. The teacher's questionnaire contained 20 questions and the students one 14. Also it was necessary to observe a class in which the corresponding observation sheet was filled in. The information gotten from these sources was described and analyzed

The analysis of the results included the analysis of the 20 questions given in the teachers' questionnaire. These 20 questions were classified according to each one of the factors. The rest of the information on the other resources was used to support the analysis of each one of the questions proposed. At the end conclusions were written as well as some recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Today English is so widely used as an international language that most parents want their children to learn it. In Ecuador, as well as in many countries, English is the language that is officially taught in various public and private educational institutions.

However, in relation to public education, the Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior Ciencia y Tecnología (SENESCYT), based on a research conducted by The Ministry of Education of Ecuador (MEC), affirmed in 2012 that the English level of Ecuadorian students of public high schools is poor. The reasons reported are follows: the lack of teachers with a high level of proficiency; insufficient number of professionals in the English language; a national curriculum not designed in accordance with international standards; and the lack of a policy to hire new teachers.

Therefore, the SENESCYT emphasizes that English teachers must be well-instructed and trained to teach through an adequate teaching and learning methodology. It suggests that teachers in Ecuador teach EFL in accordance with international standards technically established that allow students of public education to make their knowledge of English apparent. For this reason, the SENESCYT is at present offering scholarships to EFL teachers of public high schools to provide them with the opportunity to study abroad so that they can improve the teaching-learning process (SENESCYT, 2012).

Teaching Methods and Approaches

Many tendencies in teaching English were developed in order to improve the teaching process. An example of this is the Grammar Translation Method, where a language can be studied by means of a full analysis of its grammatical structure focusing in the translation of texts and sentences into the second language. This method focuses on reading and writing.

The vocabulary is acquired by means of reading books and new terms are taught through a word list in two languages (Richard & Rodgers, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000)

Another method is the Natural approach. This emphasizes the exposure or input rather than the practice; it focuses on written material for input and what the students are more prepared emotionally to learn. Besides, they pay attention for a period of time listening to the language before producing it. Therefore, written material is used as a source for understanding the learner's input (Salim, 2001).

In addition to this, the Whole Language Approach focuses on learning to read and write in a natural way; focusing on real communication. Consequently, the main principles of this method are reliable literature and are used instead of artificial approaches in order to focus events of daily life rather than stories without pupils experience content (Richard & Rodgers, 2001).

On the other hand, the Total Physical Response method emerged as one where teaching is based on action and speaking. Therefore, actions are performed while students are speaking. In this way, Nagaraj (1996) said that most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor.

Another used method in the language classroom is Task –Based Language Teaching (TBLT). This is based on a group of planned tasks and instructions to teach a language were set up. In this context one of the main points of the TBLT method is focused on process rather than product. The basic elements of this language method are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning. A last point in this method is that learners learn the language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks (Harmer, 2007).

Teaching techniques

A technique is a procedure to complete a task. Larsen-Freeman (2000) mentions several used techniques, these are: eliciting, brainstorming and prompting share the characteristic of loading the learners to provide most of the information by themselves; in the first case the teacher aids the pupils with follow up questions; in the second the teacher gives a topic and the learners provide as many ideas as they can about it and in the third with more precise cues, for example sounds (Blacio, 1996; Carrasco, 2004).

There are some techniques based on the use of pictures, for instance, picture description, spot the difference, and jigsaw tasks. Other techniques rely on sharing stories, tales, and experiences just like those named storytelling and narrating.

Two techniques that lend themselves for group talk are guide discussion, in which pupils are offered with guidelines on a topic, and consensus in which they must reach agreement on a controversial situation (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

When a focus on speaking is needed, skits and role plays are suitable; here the students interpret an assigned character as actors do. On the other hand, if listening and writing requires practice dictation and note taking are appropriate techniques.

Managing learning

Managing learning is a fundamental element in the process of teaching English. Some of the most important factors to consider for classroom activities in order to succeed with what the teacher has planned are: giving instructions, giving feedback, and set time. Giving instructions does not just mean that the teacher tells the students what to do, but check if they understand the instruction, model the activity with an example, walk around the classroom monitoring if they are doing the activities correctly (Smith & Laslett, 1993).

Harmer (1998) agrees with Duquette (2001) on the importance of giving instructions. He considers as crucial how the teacher talks to students when instructions are given, and he believes that the best activity or classroom exercise is a waste of time if the teacher does not

check if the students understand what they have to do. This can be done by asking a student to explain what they are supposed to do or asking a student to model with an example. He says that instructions must be as simple as possible and logical.

According to Duquette (2001) giving instructions play an important role when the teacher sets up an activity. He states that the tasks should be monitored, and this monitoring may involve feedback on what they are saying or writing while Harmer (1998) refers to feedback not from the teacher to the students, but the students to the teacher. In this kind of feedback the students tell the teacher what they understood, what they need or how they feel. As a result of this, the teacher contributes to establish a positive classroom atmosphere where the students feel free to give feedback to the teacher.

Another aspect that must be considered in class is time. Harmer (2010) points out that balancing the time allotted for different activities might be for teachers a key role in achieving success in a lesson. Teachers can consider how much time is necessary for each activity. Indeed, planning the time of a lesson enables the teacher to have good judgments in making choices that affect the timing.

Lesson design

According to Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2005, p. 133-134) "A lesson plan is set notes that help us to think through what we are going to teach and how we are going to teach it. It also guides us during and after the lesson." Teachers plan their lessons among other reasons to avoid hesitating during the class about the topic or activities, to give the students a sense of gradual evolution, and even to distinguish their particular way of teaching (Doff, 1988).

The components most lesson plans ought to have are: aims or objectives: this refers to what we hope our students to achieve; most lessons usually include a series of primary and secondary aims because it makes it easier for us (and anyone who may observe our class) to

see whether or not we have achieved those aims. Sensitize students to uses of pitch and intonation to indicate enthusiasm (or lack of enthusiasm); anticipated problems: teachers may list some potential difficulties they may foresee and add suggestions about what to do if they arise; procedure, which refers to the description of how the plan will be executed. In other words, the actual procedures (i.e. methodology) proposed. This section can include information about patterns of interaction (e.g. teacher-students, student-student, whole class, groups, pairs, etc.) and timing (to describe how long teachers expect things to take) as well; success indicators: where the teacher indicates how s/he will be able to measure the success of what happens (it may also be called evaluation); homework/further work: it shows what teachers have thought about beyond the actual lesson. It is advised neither over-plan nor under-plan but to find an intermediate point (Harmer, 2010).

Class size

Flood et al., (2003, p. 517) state "Teachers have always wanted smaller classes. Over the years, they have been uniformly insistent in their claims that smaller classes create a make desirable learning environment, result in better student achievement, and make their own professional lives more rewarding."

However, there are very big classes that can affect the types of activities the teacher wants to develop and the material that can be covered. Teaching to large classes present several difficulties, for instance, too much noise. Lack of resources for all the students do impossible to make arrangement changes, the necessity of applying teacher-centred methodology which in turn averts teachers from giving a personalized attention to the learners. This type of instruction may sometimes produce a kind of on stage feeling both to teachers and students (Saraswasthi, 2004; Martir, 2011). Additionally, over crowdedness affects the manner students behave and move about the classroom, also how much attention they pay in class.

Regarding small classes Molnar (2000) mentions some advantages of small classes, for example, teachers can work effectively catching student´s abilities and assess them more efficiently. Also, teachers adapt the syllabus and content to the student´s needs, interests, and learning styles. Another advantage of small classes is that feedback is easily performed, teachers can interact as much as possible with students, letting them work by pairs and groups, and provide more instructional support and extra focused teaching.

Classroom space

The classroom environment should be adequate for language learning and for the students. It should be an organized and clean environment with sufficient clarity to facilitate; for example, the reading of texts or to visualize clearly images or material use in the class. Martir et al., (2011) states that students are affected by what they perceive. They mention some aspect that the teacher should consider such as if the classroom is neat, clean, and orderly in appearance, if the acoustic is tolerated, if the classroom is free from external noises, among others.

McLaren & Giroux (2003) point out that organization of the space affects students' behavior, how they move around the classroom, and the attention to the teacher. They say that teachers should try to provide a well-organized classroom where the students can work individually, in groups or with the teacher. Jaramillo (2007) considers that the spatial organization of the classroom reflects how the teachers want to lay out the curriculum and pedagogy. It means the way teachers organize the space shows how they want to reach the objectives.

Seating arrangement

Seating arrangement has been found to be a significant factor influencing learning process. Woolfolk (2007) shows that there are many ways to arrange the seats in a classroom which differ mainly according to the type of interaction taking place between the class

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members, the features of the activities being carried out and the class size. For instance, orderly rows are used when there is a teacher to whole class interaction or when the class in numerous. Rows have the advantage of allowing visual contact between the teacher and the learners; still, it is considered a limiting arrangement.

Establishing the seats in circles and horseshoes is suitable for small classes; it promotes both teachers to students as well as students to students´ interactions as everyone can easily face each other (Ming-Tak & Wai-Shing, 2008). Another arrangement type is that of separate tables or café style which fits to small groups work; nevertheless, it is claimed that it does not favour whole class interactions as learners are usually too distributed around the classroom (Flood et al., 2003).

Classroom and/or teaching resources

Teaching resources are tools that classroom teachers use to help their students learn quickly and thoroughly. These can be as simple as a chalkboard or as complex as a computer program. Tuwuari (2001, p. 101) states that "Audio-visual aids are the different types of useful materials, devices and symbols that make the study of a subject more comprehensible and interesting." For instance, the board, which allows teachers to present content visually; the picture pack, a gathering of images aimed at adding visual impact to the lesson by developing activities around them (e.g. inventing a story); audio aids such as: tape recording, phonograph disc, the music tape, for playing background music and promoting a relaxed environment; and the coursebook in order to fallow a revised content sequence.

Blacio (1996) complement the list with the overhead projector, for the presentation of previously prepared content; realia, that is real objects used for explaining meaning more quickly and effectively than with words; worksheets/work cards, for distributing the class so that everyone works comfortably; the tape recorder, for using in the listening activities.

Carrasco (2004) also offers a list of supplementary materials, those intended for substituting no appropriate syllabus material or just for adding practice and change to the lesson, among of them are: websites, games, magazines articles, and so forth.

Classroom observation

Classroom observation carried out by principals either formally or informally is considered as the chief way for evaluating and understanding the teaching-learning dynamic taking place in the classroom. Zepeda, (2009, p. 15-18) states "Classroom observations allow principals to affirm what teachers are doing right by encouraging them to keep up the momentum. Moreover, observations allow the principal and teacher to celebrate successes in teaching and student learning." Teachers can enhance their teaching with the help of the principal´s views and get the feeling that they can count with the principal's support to remedy the troublesome aspects spotted. Similarly, principals are able to learn more about the complexities of teaching and how they are handled by teachers while also sharing with them strategies observed in other classes or arrangement for a special aid if required (Anguera, 1999).

Another kind of observation is the one performed by a peer. It has the advantage of being non-evaluative in nature thus being more welcomed by teachers. Besides, peer observation gives the opportunity to learn from other teacher´s practice, helps the observed teacher to realize of aspects of his teaching he could have not by himself and allows for reflecting on it.

However, observations present the limitation of just assessing what is observable such as timing, activities, classroom language, but not other aspects identified by conjectures or direct conversations like decision making, engagement, problems, and teaching principles (Wragg, 1999).

Student´s motivation

Motivation is another factor that makes a great difference between learners, and how they can achieve the new language. The students can be motivated in different ways, as an example: a kind of interesting materials and games can challenge the student´s capacity of learning.

According to Woolfolk (2006) motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something, she states that students are exposed to an extrinsic motivation that can be related to society, family or classmates, and to the intrinsic motivation, that is produced inside the classroom thanks to different factors as teaching method from the professor, the type of activities that are planned for the own lesson or any conception that students might have on themselves and their capacity for the success or the failure.

On the other hand, for Carter & Cook, (2001) there are two types of predominant motivation: the integrator one, that is related by the own desire of the person to learn, where the emotional or affective factors have preponderance; and the instrumental one, that is determined by the opportunities of work, by the greater desire to reach prestige, the access to greater information or, simply, by the need to be promoted in school or entity.

Learning styles

Woolfolk (2007) states that learning styles are the ways a person uses to learn, study, and for processing information in learning situations. Most literature defines learning style as the preferred way for studying a person has, it is to say that learning style should be called learning preferences instead. She also suggest that even though the studies on the relationship between learning style and language acquisition lacks enough support, considering them in instruction can aid students in assessing their own development and teachers in accommodating methodology as well as varying techniques to better fit the learners´ requirements.

Regarding learning styles, Kelly (2004) presents a classification that divides learning style in two categories, the first is: visual, aural and kinesthetic learners; and the second is: cognitive styles, which include field-independent students (those who separate information into its components). Students do not belong to just one style or category but usually one of them is dominant; moreover, different cultures value some styles over other (Page & Page, 2011).

Students' intelligence or aptitude to learn English

Conesa (1997) says that the intelligence one needs for succeeding in life as well as in foreign language learning must encompass analytical, creative and practical aspects. However, as claimed by Broughton (1978) IQ tests have usually addressed just metalinguistic abilities rather than communicative ones, thus giving an incomplete judgment of learners´ intelligence or aptitude to learn a foreign language.

In fact Harmer (2001) claims that low scores on IQ tests will affect the students´ motivation by pushing them to failure while also promoting under or over-estimation of their abilities from the teacher´s part. The current tendency is to view intelligence as made up of diverse skills as in Howard Gardner´s Multiple Intelligences theory (as cited in Harmer, 2001), which comprises linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily kinesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal, and naturalistic intelligences.

As people´s abilities greatly differ they will enhance their learning if those differences are considered in class (Candlin & Mercer, (2001).

Next, a brief description of five previous studies dealing about factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. The first study is the one by Nel & Müller (2010) who worked on a study whose purpose was to: explore the influence of teachers' limited English proficiency on their ESL learners (addressed in the qualitative component); establish to what extent identified factors — which feature in the various sections of the questionnaire

— contribute to the teachers' limited English proficiency affecting their learners' acquisition of L2 and their learning (the quantitative component of the research design); recommend possible intervention strategies to support these teachers in teaching their learners more effectively.

Relevant information on student teachers' language proficiency for the study was collected via a questionnaire designed for the purpose. The questionnaire consisted of five sections, including: Section 1 elicited information about the school environment where the student teacher was teaching and ESL learners' daily exposure to English, both within and out of the school context (11 questions); Section 2 elicited information regarding resources at the school (10 questions). Section 3 elicited information about the languages used at the school by both the learners and the teaching staff (9 multiple choice questions); Section 4 elicited information about the student teacher's work environment at school (4 sections of questionnaire items); and Section 5 probed information on the ESL learners in the student teachers' classes (4 closed and 5 open-ended questions).

The results of the study indicated that teachers were proficient in English, had adequate knowledge of ESL issues and that they did not require ESL teacher training, they indicated that they lacked the confidence to teach in English. Evaluation of the portfolios of the student-teachers in the qualitative component of the study also verified the contradictory findings of the quantitative study: evidence of poor English language proficiency and language error transfer from teacher to learner was indicated.

Another study was the one conducted by Higashi-Hiroshima (2002) whose purpose was to determine the factors that influence teaching skills. The methodology used to gather data was based on the use of a questionnaire and classroom observation. Data were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses.

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The results of the study showed significant relationships between teaching skills and pupils. Behavior relationship between teachers and pupils suggests that the classes in which the pupils' behavior was instilled properly, teachers could teach more efficiently, thus covering a better range of techniques and materials or vice versa, that is to say, good teaching helped teachers maintain a good classroom discipline.

A similar study was the one directed by Farooq (2011) whose purpose was to get an insight about the perceptions of prospective teachers about influential factors of classroom management.

This descriptive study was conducted by using survey methodology consisting of self-report research method. Self-report research necessitates gathering standardized information from all members of a population or sample. It means that the questions should be same for each and every member of the population. The well-known methods for collecting self-report data are the questionnaire study and the interview study.

The results were that the prospective teachers perceived that classroom environment is the most influential factor for classroom management followed by the factors student teacher interaction and confidence in students whereas assigning responsibilities without supervision to students is the least important factor to affect the classroom management followed by the factors group work and corporal punishment.

Another important study was the one by Deneme (2008) who worked on a study whose purpose was directed primarily on the language learning strategy choices of Turkish students, to detect what language learning strategies Turkish students apply while they are learning English.

The research was carried out by using descriptive method and data were collected by means of a SILL questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted on the learners of English as a foreign language; while the SILL questionnaire was conducted by the lecturers who had

already been informed about the function, steps and the conduction of the questionnaire beforehand.

The answers show that the participants apply all the strategies at different levels of frequency to remember more effectively. They usually connect the new information to what they already know, make use of mental pictures and locations of the new words to remember them. Besides, the participants seldom prefer to use rhymes and flashcards to remember new English words and they do not physically act out new English words.

Another important study was the one by Owoeye & Yara (2011) who researched about class size and academic achievement of secondary school in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The hypothesis at this study is that there is no significant difference in the performance of students in rural and urban secondary schools in term of whether they are in small or large classes.

To carry out this study, the used method was descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto type. In this study was used a Student Class Size Questionnaire (SCSQ) designed by the researchers. It has two sections, section A with seven items dealing with the profile of the respondents such as gender, age, school type (rural/urban), and grade among others. Section B has eight items that measured the number of students in class in rural and urban schools, number of periods taught by teachers among others. The respondents were asked to respond to the questions on a four point Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

The results compared the school certificate examination achievement score between rural large and rural small classes and also established the significant difference or otherwise in their scores. The result of the t-test statistic employed showed that the rural large and rural small classes were not significantly different.

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

In this section of the study, the data gathered during the investigation will be presented and analysed by following a quantitative approach. In order to do this, the responses to each question in the teachers´ questionnaire will be displayed in statistical graphs, to each of which will follow the corresponding analysis supported by and/or contrasted with the information from the students 'questionnaire, teachers´ interview and class observations.

Quantitative analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?
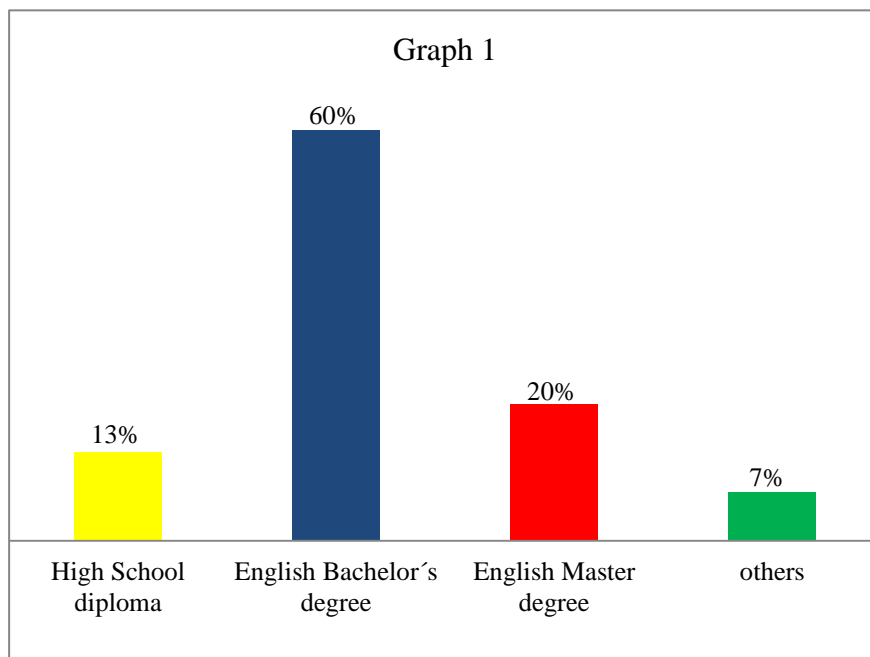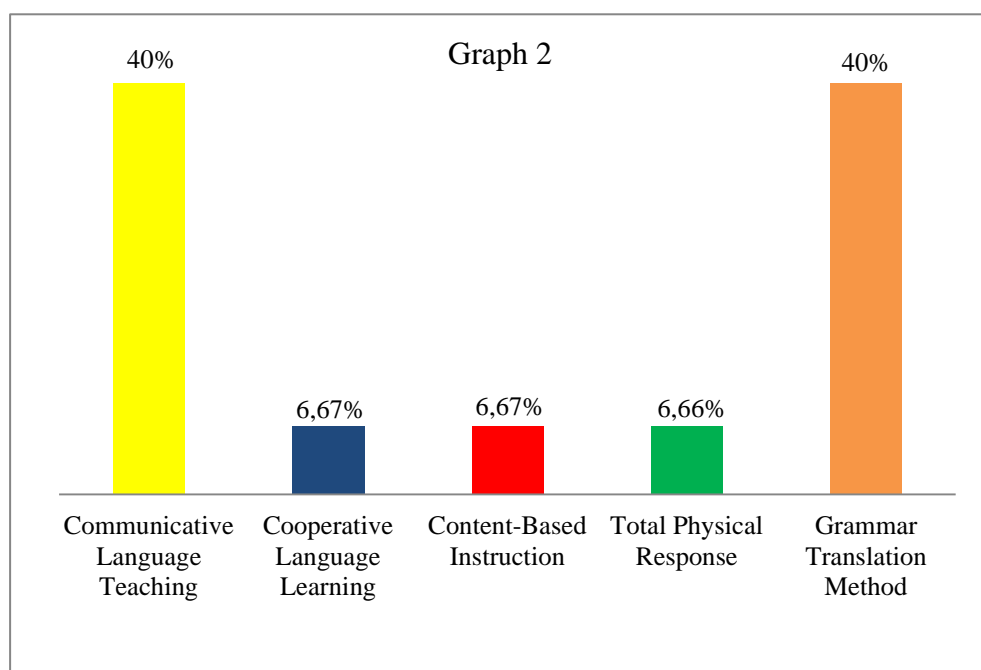

Graph 1

Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

This question pretended to know what level of education the surveyed teachers have. The results show that from the total of teachers that answered the questionnaire, two of them that represent the 13% have a High-School diploma; nine teachers that represent the 60% answered that they have an English Bachelor's degree as their level of education. Three teachers that represent the 20% have a Master in teaching English. And one teacher that

represents the 7% has two Bachelor´s degrees in different areas such as Social Studies and Tourism.

In the teachers´ interview, they mentioned that they would like to continue studying in order to get a Master´s degree, but unfortunately they do not have financial support. The answers and observed classes did not really coincide with the results because, although they all had a type of degree, most of them could not pronounce English properly.

Which of the following methods were used in this class?

Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Interpreting the results from this questions, graph 2 shows that six teachers, which represent the 40% use Grammar Translation Method, six teachers (40%) said that they use Communicative Language Teaching, one teacher (6,67%) stated that he uses Content Based Instruction, another teacher that represents the 6,67% mentioned that he applies Cooperative Language Learning, and another teacher, which represents 6,66% uses the Total Physical Response.

During the observed classes, it was seen that an average of 60% of the teachers (nine teachers) used Grammar Translation Method, while 40% of them (six teachers) used

Communicative Language Teaching. As it can be seen, the results obtained through observations do not agree with those mentioned by the teachers in the interview since only two of the above seven methods were used, especially Grammar Translation Method.

According to the students' survey, the 15 students surveyed mentioned that they like how English is taught since the teachers explain what is being learned correctly. Some students also mentioned that the teachers are patient while instructing them and others said that they learn English through games. However, in nine observed classes the teachers only made students learn English by doing grammar exercises, which shows that they focused just on teaching grammar.

Regarding this aspect Harmer (1998) says that teachers showed the importance of applying different methods and approaches which are considered as pedagogical packages. Considering what Harmer states, it cannot be assured whether the observed teachers are well aware of the great significance of using different methods and approaches teaching English because they used only two methods in their classes as it was already mentioned.

*Do teachers use whole group activities to teach their lesson?*
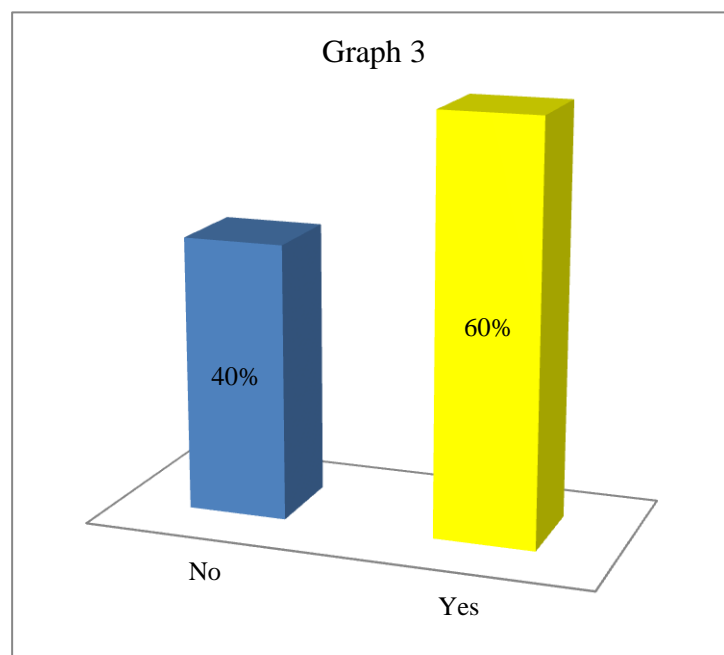
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Graph 3 shows that nine teachers, which represent 60% stated that they use whole-group activities to teach their lessons. There were different reasons given by teachers. An important reason is that whole-group activities are helpful to demonstrate the progress of their students into the same theme. Another reason given by teachers is that whole-group activities enable students to work effectively in cooperation. So, the students work with their classmates and teachers helping each other. Another important reason is that it is important to work as a community to improve the learning. On the other hand, a few teachers did not write the reasons why the use this activity.

The observation of the classes showed a different result. It was notorious that only two from the fifteen teachers applied a whole group activity into their lessons. One teacher prepared a lesson in which the students were asked to express their ideas about the topic. Later, the students were asked to answer some questions to demonstrate what has been taught or done in that lesson. Another teacher asked to the students fill a graph organizer with regular and irregular verbs. But the majority of teachers did not use whole group activities. So, the teacher's questionnaires differ from the observation of their classes.

Finally, only an average of 40% (six teachers) said that they do not use whole-group activities because the students are more willing to work in individual activities. Throughout direct observation, the information was corroborated immediately because the observed teachers did not use whole-group activities during their classes. On the contrary, they used a group work activity. The teachers formed five groups, in which each group was asked to describe a picture and write sentences about that picture. During their classes, the students were excited and motivated to work in group. In addition, the teachers´ responses do not differ from the observation in those classes.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4

100%

0%

Yes

No
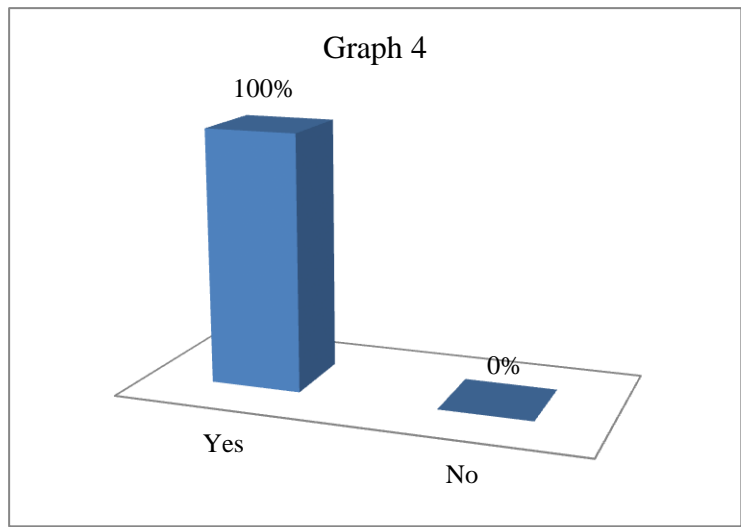
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

From the above graph one can observe that the fifteen teachers answered positively, which represent the 100% of the teachers.

However, in the observed classes, ten teachers used individual activities in their classes. They explained that individual work depends on the teaching activity they were using, and also they mentioned that individual work was used to evaluate students.

Through the individual activities that students did in the observed lessons, their knowledge was evaluated by some of their educators. In this case, it was observed that teachers checked the progress of the whole class, assessed the learning of the students, and assisted them when they needed some help.

Regarding the students´ survey, it is necessary to indicate that in the questionnaire they answered there was a question related to whether individual activities motivate them to learn English. Eight students answered this question positively; their response was confirmed because it was observed that when the students did individual activities, all of them were motivated to participate in the lessons in order to learn English.

Not all the observed teachers carried out individual activities. Five teachers did not use individual activities. In this regard Harmer (2007) states that the students need a time to work

on their own, at their personal pace, paying more attention to their needs and pedagogical development, and to do so without the pressure they might experience when working with others. Moreover, there is the fact that teachers need to assess each student progress separately, help them to overcome their learning difficulties (in the current Ecuadorian public education system, students with low academic performance have academic support), and score them individually.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5

60%

40%

Yes

No
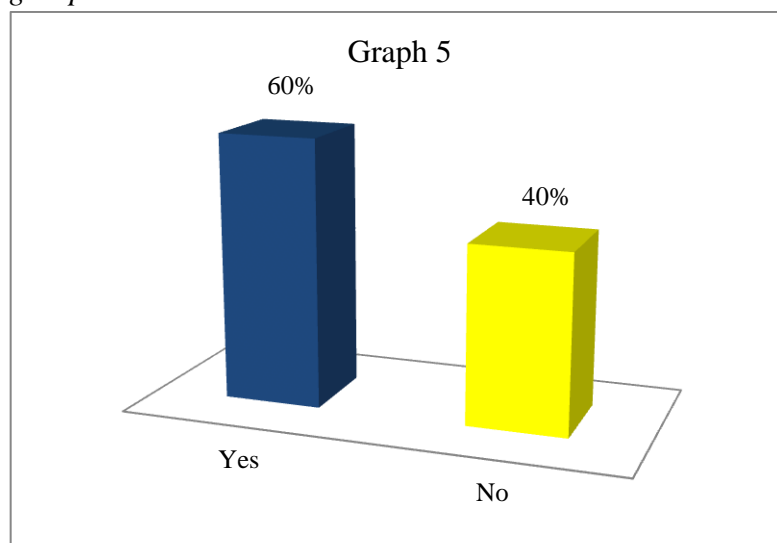
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Graph 5 shows that nine teachers (60%) answered that they apply group work tasks to teach their lessons. Some of them said that they use this type of activity because it integrates a positive dialogue among students, and it activates natural communication. Some teachers claimed that this activity helps to the interaction of students, and it involves different skills. One teacher stated that it is an interesting technique to enrich a spontaneous communication, and enable students to work as a community.

The observation of these classes showed that many teachers do not prepare group activities frequently. Only in two classes the application of group work activities was evident, they consist in working in small groups to accomplish shared goals. So, group work activities help students to work as community to resolve any complex situation. Despite that, most

teachers apply only individual activities and a few teachers used whole-group activities to teach their lessons.

On the other hand, graph 5 also reflects that only six teachers (40%) answered that they did not use group-work activity during their lessons. Five teachers had different reasons to oppose to group work activities such as, it is a boring process to form groups, it is a small classroom, in which there is not enough space to move the seats, and it is a bad decision to work because the students in groups do not pay attention.

The information gathered from these five teachers is similar to the information gathered from a few students. During the application of students' questionnaires, a few students stated that their teachers do not use a variety of activities, which allow the interaction with their classmates.

The observation of classes shows the reality of the teachers' answers. It was evident the little space to move the seats. In many classrooms there were more than 31 students. Therefore, it is a difficult and boring process to form groups. For these reasons, many teachers used individual activities and whole group activities instead of using group-work activities.

Do teachers use English most of the time in their classes?

Graph 6

66,67%

33,33%

Yes

No
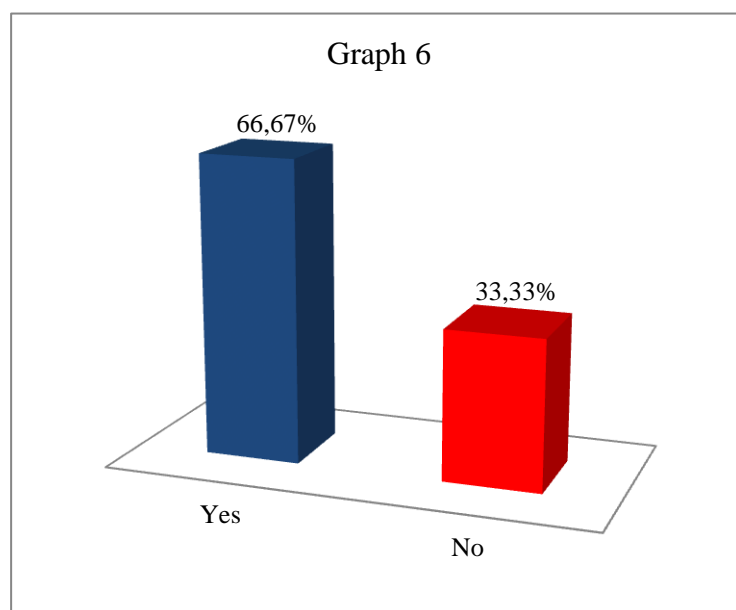
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
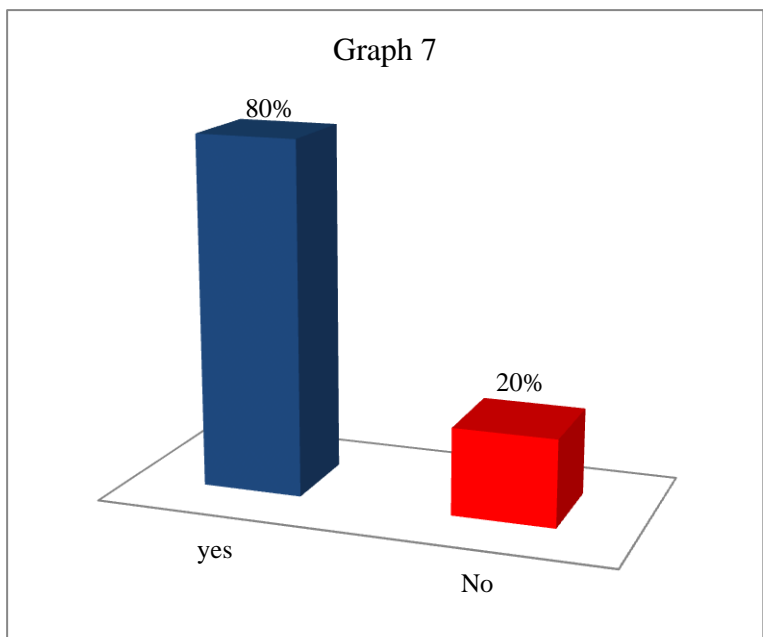Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Referring to the time of use of English in classes, 66.67 % of the surveyed teachers that corresponds to ten teachers responded that they use English most of the time in their classes, against 33.33%, that represents five teachers that answered that they do not use it for too much time.

It was found in the observations that five teachers used a 75% of English in their classes, and 10 teachers used it in a 50%. As it can be seen in graph six, the results of the observed classes are different from those outlined by the teachers in the survey. It is worth saying that some teachers only used a little English in their classes instead most of the time they spoke Spanish. They explained the activities in their native language to make the students understand; besides, these teachers sometimes did not express the ideas fluently and clearly when speaking English.

Regarding the students´ survey, the fifteen students affirmed that their teachers use English most of the time in their classes. In fact, it was mentioned that the teachers teach the target language by speaking a little English and by explaining or giving the meaning of words in Spanish. As mentioned above, what the students said was confirmed during the observed classes since they use a little the target language.

According to Candling & Mercer (2001) a place where English is being taught should be surrounded by English and it should be employed as the main medium of communication, because of this, he suggests that educators favour the use of English most of the time, while reserving the pupils´ first language -in monolingual classes, as in the Ecuadorian context-to those situations where using English would not be too helpful, or where it supposes an unnecessary waste of time; for instance, when giving too complex instructions which the students are not in the level to understand.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7 shows that most of the surveyed teachers plan their lessons with an average of 80% (12 teachers); while 20% (3 teachers) do not design lesson plans. During the observed classes, it could be seen that a great percentage of teachers improvised their lessons because there were not clear objectives and procedures to develop the classes. That is, the teachers taught English based on their teaching experience. Therefore, it sadly can be said that only three teachers developed the class by using a lesson plan.

At this point, it is important to mention that Harmer (2010) states that the main parts of a lesson plan include objective (s), target language, anticipation of problems (for learners) and its possible solutions, stages, objectives of each stage, timing, interaction, procedure, the length of the lesson, and the level of a class. Using this information as a reference, it was observed that only the 20% (3 teachers) applied all the aspects of lesson plan; nine teachers representing the 60% developed some parts of it; and three teachers (20%) did not follow almost anything of the content of the lesson plan since they put into practiced their teaching experience.

Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons?

Graph 8
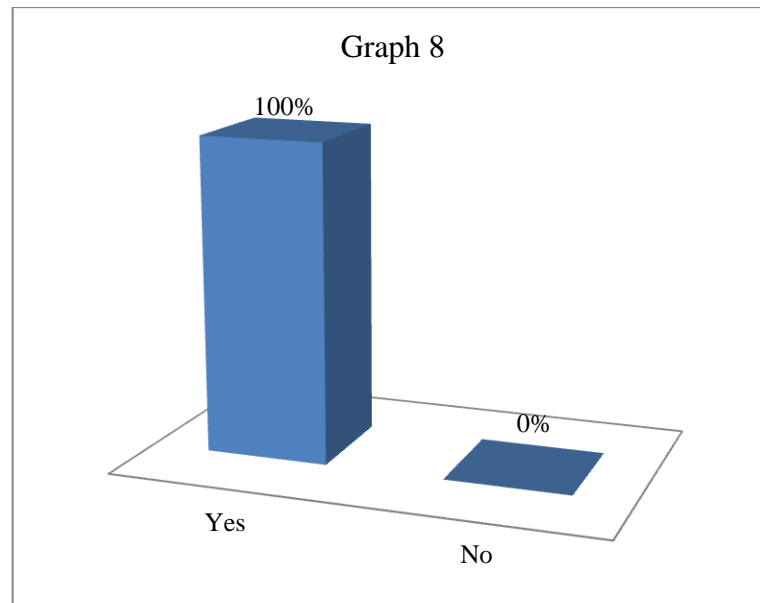
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

The question had the purpose of determining if the teachers consider important aspects as discipline, feedback, instructions, and timing when an activity is assigned. The fifteen teachers, it means that the 100% answered that they do consider these aspects to teach the themes that cover the corresponding English program.

This result expresses the worry of teachers to be aware of the context in which teachers work. It helps the work of teaching and responds to the characteristics of the group in which they work in a specific moment. The classroom observation showed that discipline is the aspect that teachers most consider at the moment of teaching their lessons. The 100% of the surveyed students agree on that teachers consider discipline in the classroom.

Regarding timing, all the surveyed teachers affirmed that they set time for the activities they assign in class and this result is supported by the fifteen students that answered that their teachers do set time for class activities. However, during the observation it was noted that teachers had difficulty in setting time for the activities which means that timing was not completely considered.

In regard to setting time, Harmer (2007) considers that the aspect of setting time must be taken into account at the moment of assigning activities and avoid the waste of time. Saving time, concentration, and reaching the goals planned are the result when students know what to do and the time that they have to do it.

Another aspect that was part of this question was if the teachers provide feedback to their students. The 100% of the teachers, it means the fifteen teachers, answered "Yes" and 100% (15 students) confirmed that teachers explain them the errors and how to correct those errors after each activity done in class. Nevertheless when teachers were observed just two of them gave feedback to the students; while thirteen teachers did not give feedback.

The last aspect discussed in this question is giving instructions. The total of the teachers answered that they do consider how they give instructions to the students when they are teaching. The 53,33% of the surveyed students (8 students) confirmed what teachers responded, and seven students, which represent 46,67% of them answered negatively. In addition to the observed classes showed that thirteen teachers, which represent the 86,67% used appropriate instructions that were considered by the students as clear and effective whereas two teachers that represent 13,33% of them did not consider the instructions. This means that teachers do not just have to tell students what to do, but they have to check if the students understood the instructions. They also have to model the activity with an example and walk around the classroom monitoring if the students were doing the activities correctly.

Regarding instructions, Harmer (2007) agrees with Tuwuari (2006) on its importance. They consider important the way the teacher talks to students when instructions are given. They also believe that the best activity or classroom exercise is a waste of time when the teacher does not check if the students understand what they have to do.

Factors concerning classroom

How many students are there in the observed classes?
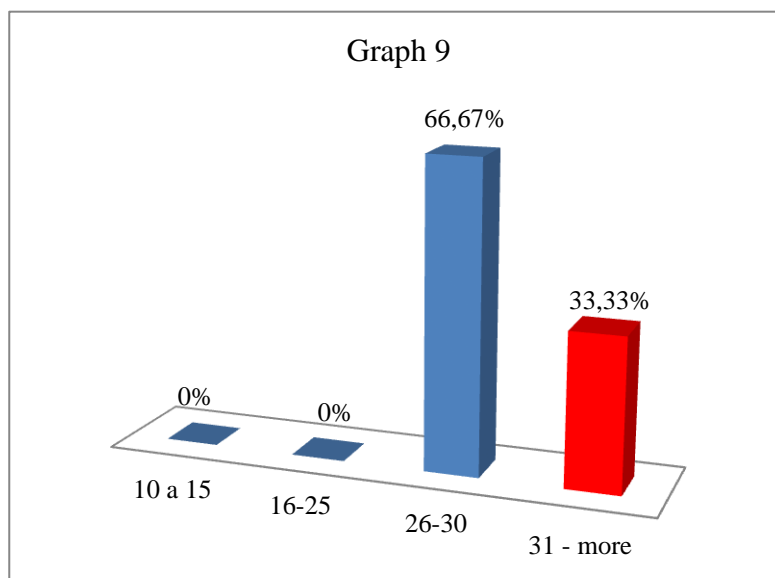
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Concerning the number of students which teachers work with, five of the surveyed teachers that correspond to 66,67%, responded that they work with an average of more than 31 students per classroom; while ten teachers, equal to 33,33% answered that they work with an average of 26-30 learners.

In addition, from the students' questionnaires, one can see that 40% of the students (corresponding to six students) said that the number of students in the class favored their learning of the language, while 60% of the students (equivalent to nine students) replied that this was not conducive to their learning.

On the other hand, the results registered in the observation sheet showed that in seven classrooms there were more than thirty-one students (matching 46,67%). Also, in eight classrooms the number of students was more than twenty-six students (equivalent to 53,33%).

From the results one can see that many students perceived that this number of students (on average 30) did not stop them from learning English. In fact, Flood et al., (2003) corroborates this by stating that large classes are widely considered to be problematic for

language learning and yet some teachers effectively manage large classes in which students learn successfully.

Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with?

Graph 10
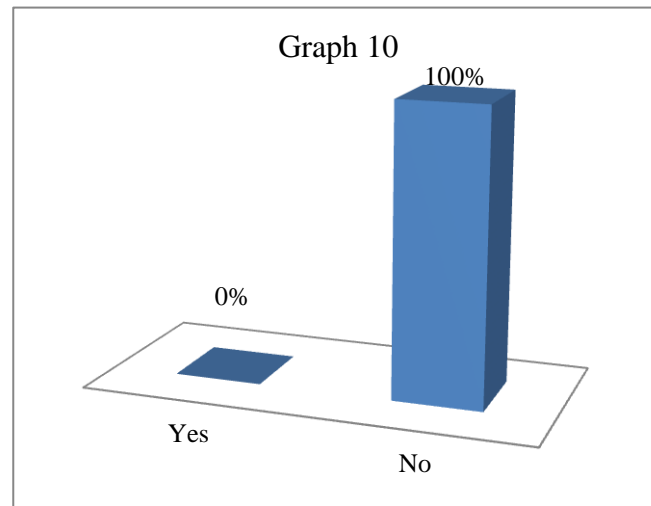
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

From the fifteen surveyed teachers, which represent 100%, answered that they do not feel comfortable with the number of students they work with.

Amazingly, 53,33% of the students (8 out of 15) answered in their questionnaire that the number of students in their classes do favour them to learn English, while 46,67% of them (7 out of 15) said the opposite, even though 66,67% of the observed classes (10 classrooms) had up to 30 students, and five classrooms, which represent 33,33% with 26 learners. So, there has not been an agreement between the students and teachers´ perceptions on this respect.

In the observed classes, it was seen that large classes negatively affect the teaching-learning process. For example, teachers showed frustration and annoyance because they had difficulty moving inside the classrooms where there were a lot of students; these teachers did not monitor the students´ tasks in a comfortable way. In addition, dealing with these types of classes is difficult for teachers, maintaining the discipline, convincing students to use English when they work in pairs or in group, and monitoring students´ classroom activities is also

hard for educators. Regarding to large classes Saraswasthi (2004) said that this kind of circumstance usually forces educators to adopt not very effective ways of teaching, such as teacher-centred interaction.

Indeed, teacher-centred methodology was predominant in the classes observed, with the subsequent consequences mentioned in the paragraph above. Moreover, the classes with more than 30 students presented other drawbacks such as, poor group and pair work monitoring in the classes in which this type of activity was used, for example, learners ended up using more Spanish than English, thus leading to poor speaking practice as well.

In conversations with some of the teachers, they said that having too many students per class makes them uncomfortable as they have the feeling that no matter their efforts, they will never get everyone, not even most of them to learn enough. Educators also pointed out the fact that with large classes they need to talk louder more often, and that even though in the classes observed the students showed a satisfactory behavior, as they felt a bit inhibited by an outsider's presence, it is usually a hard task to maintain discipline. Finally, others mentioned the difficulty in bringing extra material as their students are numerous and they must invest their own money if they want to do so.

Do teachers have enough space to work with their group of students?
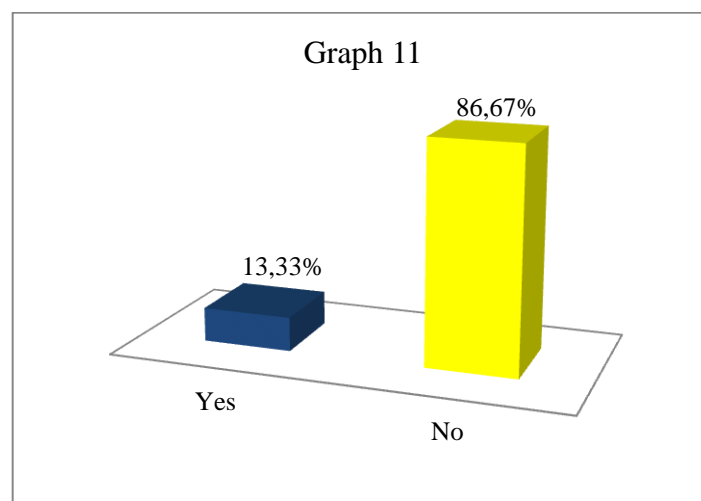
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

32

Graph 11 shows that two teachers, which represent the 13,33% stated that they had enough space to work with the group of students, and thirteen teachers that represent the 86,67% manifested that they did not have enough space to work with the number of students they had.

Concerning the students' opinion, twelve of them (80%), considered that the classroom size was appropriate to work in a comfortable way, and only three students (20%) did not consider it appropriate.

From the observed classes, it was evidenced that in nine classrooms (60%), the students did not have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities. On the contrary, the students had adequate space to perform the tasks in six classrooms (40%).

With regards to the space of the classrooms, the teachers' perception and the results of the observed classes corroborated each other. In contrast, the answer of the students show a marked difference, where they perceive that, for most of them, the space was sufficient.

Although the students' perception is limited to what they have experienced, Woolfolk (2007) states that spaces for learning should invite and support the activities that teachers plan in their classroom, and they should respect the inhabitants of the space. This respect helps students identify themselves with their class.

Also, Jaramillo (2007) agrees with the above, by stating that the physical arrangement of the furniture, supplies, and resources in a classroom is a critical factor in promoting positive behavior. In a well-designed classroom, the teacher can see all the students and they can all see the teacher. The students can also see presentations and displays such as agendas, behavioral expectations, strategy posters, and information on the board. Everyone can move about freely.

Do teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes?

Graph 12
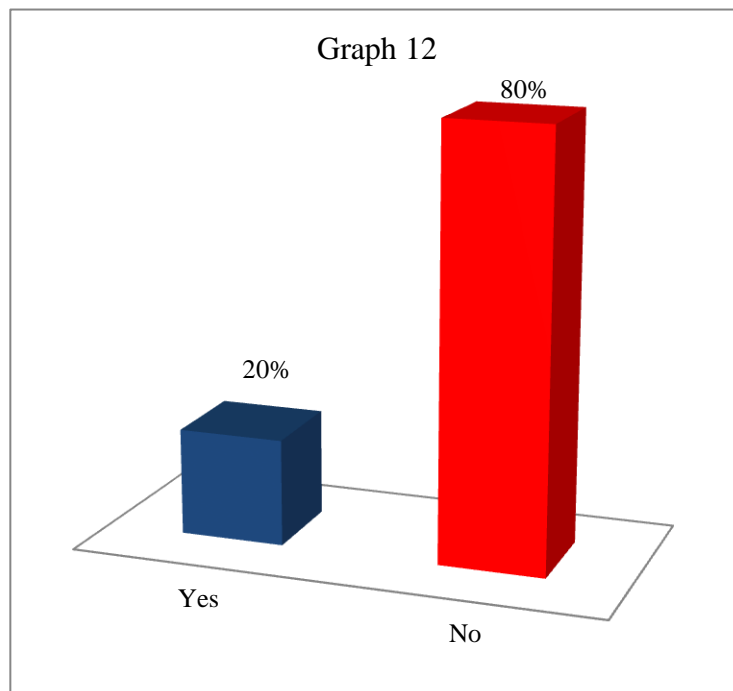
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Regarding students' seating arrangement, it can be concluded that three teachers, which represent the 20% of the educators, planned activities in relation to the furniture. In contrast, twelve teachers (80%) said that they do not move the furniture around.

The learners also answered a question about their attitude towards the way in which their teachers arrange the seats for carrying out the different activities; in fact (5 out of 15), that is to say 33, 33% of the pupils, said they like their teachers´ seating arrangements, while (10 out of 15) which represents the 66, 67% of the students did not feel the same thing.

During the observations, the commonest arrangement was that of orderly rows, while only in one class the pupils were seated in a different type of arrangement, namely in the form of a horseshoe; it is important to note that this class had no more than 26 learners, which made this organization suitable, whereas the other teachers might have chosen orderly rows due to the number of pupils, which in 66, 67% of the classes ranged from 26-30 students. In

those circumstances where there are numerous pupils in a classroom, the most practical or even unique option the educators have is just arranging the seats in orderly rows.

Categorically, these pupils are losing the benefits of more integrative arrangements such as circles, horseshoes, or separate tables due to the inconvenient size of the class; however, the educators need to create as much opportunities as possible for valuable interaction in the benefit of the students´ learning.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?

Graph 13
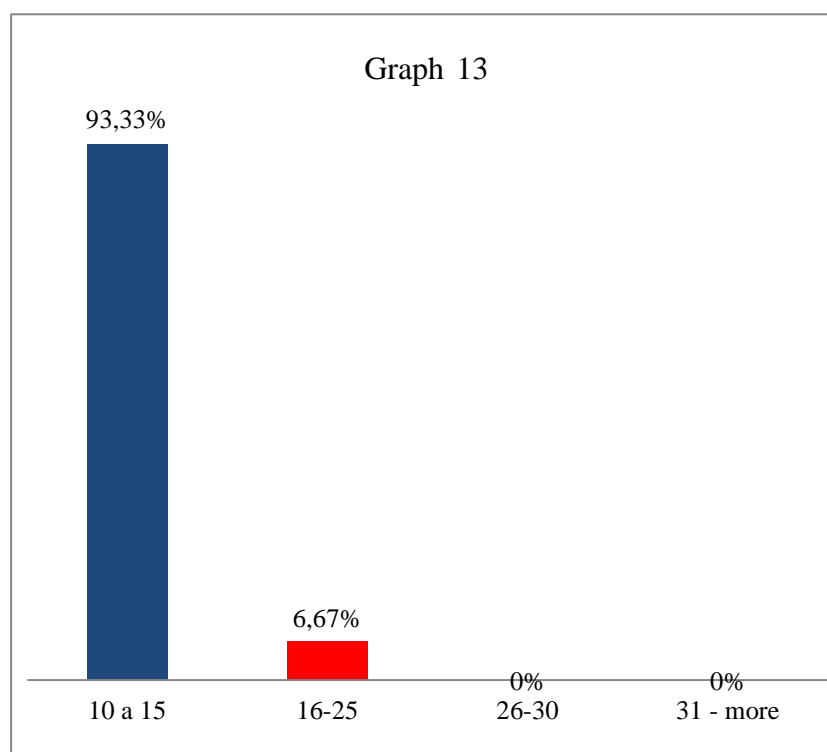
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

According to the teachers' answer, it was revealed that fourteen teachers, which represent the 93,33%, think that the students' appropriate number in the classroom should be ten to fifteen students. Nevertheless, one teacher that constitutes the 6,67% considered that sixteen to twenty-five students constitute a suitable number to teach English.

From the students' answers, six students (40%) said that the number of pupils in their class was good for them in the English teaching-learning process. In contrast, nine students (60%) thought it inappropriate.

Contrary to the above, the obtained and registered results in the observation sheets evidenced that in eight classrooms (53,33%), there were more than thirty-one students. In seven classrooms there were twenty-five learners (46,67%).

In spite of this argument, it is undeniable that smaller classes would help to avert some common problems related to large classes; for example, it would decrease noise, allow the educators to better answer to the particular pupils´ learning requirements, organize the seats in a more integrative and workable way, as well as increase the use of target language (Martir et al, 2011). All of this would inevitably lead to a learning improvement. Besides, the teachers who really live the reality of the classroom feel that large classes more than advantages have disadvantages. Daily experience is praised by several people as the best research; thus something true must be in it.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?
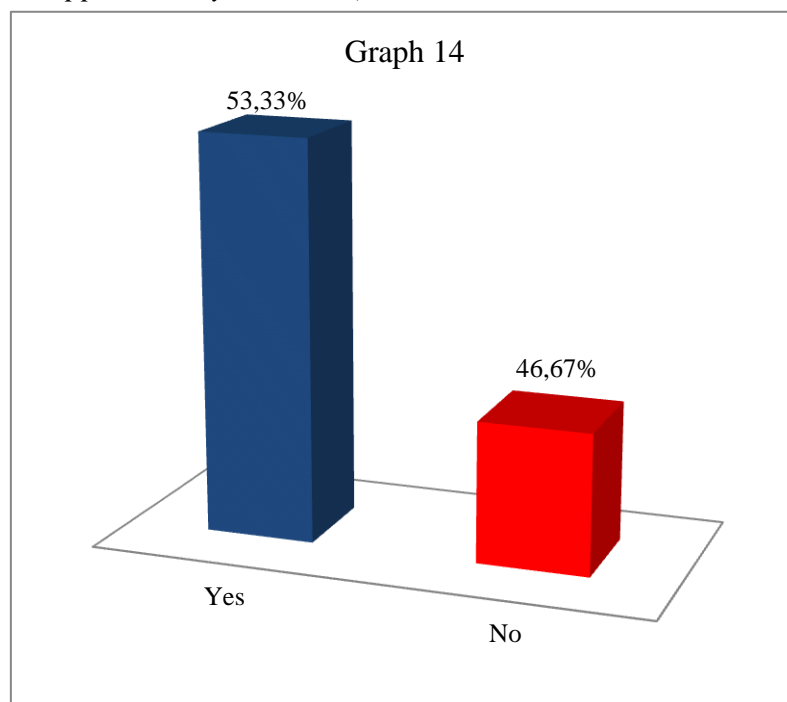
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

It was consulted to the teachers if they use resources such as television, computer, projectors and other supplementary materials. The answers reflected that the 53, 33 % (eight

teachers) do use them. On the other hand, seven teachers equal to 46, 67% do not use these resources. This result is contrasted with what the students said. Four of the surveyed students, which represent 26, 67% of the students referred that classroom resource such as television, CD player, computers, among others are used. Nevertheless eleven students answered that these kinds of classroom resources are not used in class.

The majority of the teachers said that there is a high percentage of English teachers who do not use these resources in the classroom because in the institutions where they work at there is not a properly equipped environment to insert technology. On the other hand, the ones that use them do have those implements although they do not have all current innovations. Few institutions have laboratories with the infrastructure required for an optimum English language teaching process. As support of this, it could be evidenced during the observation that only one teacher applied these resources during the process of the class and only two institutions out of the fifteen selected for the study had an English lab. This permitted to apply activities with audiovisual help. The majority of institutions only included a board and they work in common classrooms, without pedagogical resources to promote the language teaching.

Regarding this topic Conesa (1997) emphasizes the importance to select pertinent resources that work with the needs, interests and styles of learning of the students. Harmer (2007) points out the existence of modern laboratories used in language teaching, where teachers can use audiovisual materials to innovate their classes.

It can be concluded that the lack of these resources establishes huge differences when the academic results are achieved among institutions that do have technologic innovations. It is necessary to implement better tools to optimize the English teaching.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?
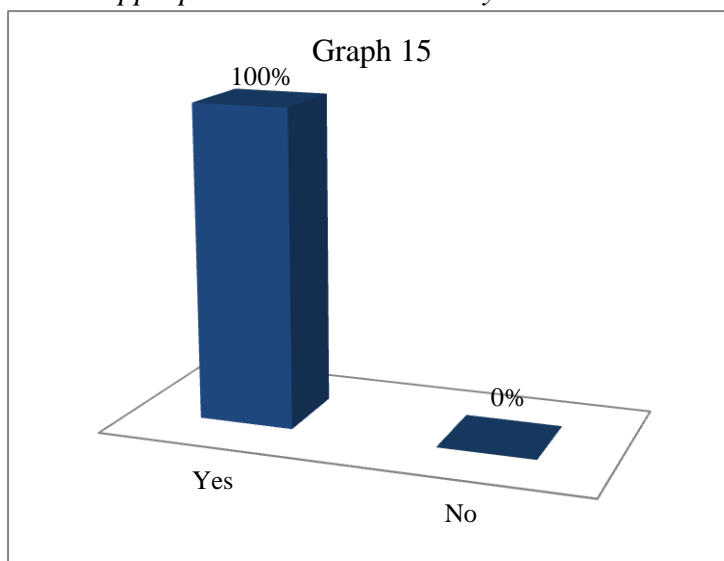
Graph 15

From the 15 teachers, which represent 100% indicated that they consider appropriate the resources they have in class.

In conversations with some of the teachers, they explained why they considered the resources in their classes are appropriate, all indicated that it is because they are necessary, facilitate learning, and add interest to the class.

On the contrary, through the observed classes it could be evidenced that six teachers (40%) used textbooks in their classes. And four teachers (26,67%) used a CD player. two teacher (13,33%) used supplementary material. Two teachers (13,33%) used an overhead projector, and lastly, another teacher (6,67%) used a laptop.

Moreover, from the observed classes, there was a lack of supplementary material in the classrooms. The establishments did not have audiovisual equipment, projectors, laptops and an English language laboratory. The only teaching resources used by the Educational Institutions visited were textbooks, CD players, markers, whiteboard and erasers. Certainly the use of resources contributes to make the teaching-learning process fun and allows students to enhance their language skills (Carrasco, 2004).

Factors concerning students

Do you consider students´ needs to teach English successfully?
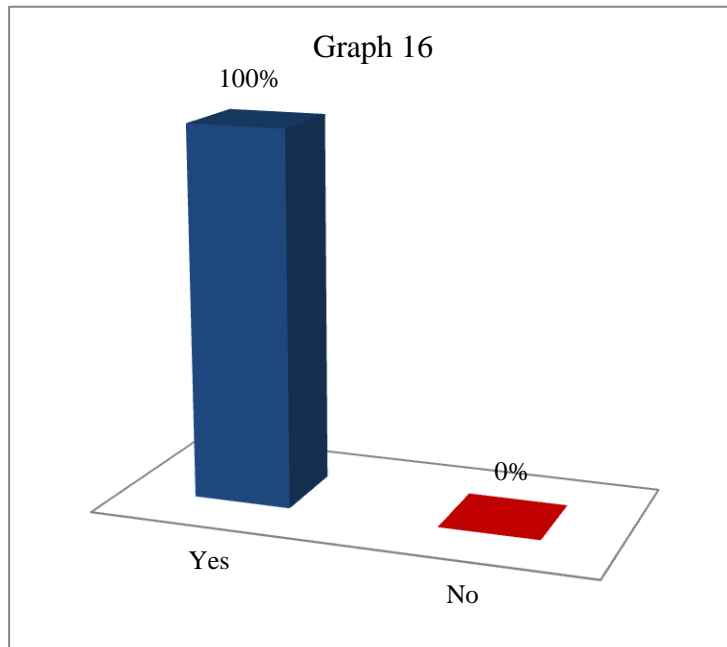
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Regarding this question, the total of the surveyed teachers (fifteen teachers) answered "Yes". It means that the 100% of teachers said that when they teach, they consider the different needs that students have. The alternative NO did not have any answer.

However, this was hardly done by most of them during the observed lessons. For instance, from the needs considered in the present study (age personality-attitude-aptitude-motivation-and learning styles) the mostly considered by the educators was age, since no one of them brought in topics that were not related to their pupils´ age or too difficult for them to understand; in this respect most of the educators were aided by the workbooks they use, which as being developed by professionals, have their content quite properly selected and sequenced; nonetheless, some educators had developed their own syllabuses or modules, so they have been the ones who have selected the topics, materials, and activities according to the age range of their pupils.

If it comes to learning styles, personality and aptitude, a similar situation was observed; for instance, there was not much variation of activities and techniques to address the different learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic, individual, group, reflective, and impulsive, etc.), personal characteristics, and language skills so heterogeneous that the students possess.

After all, the truth is that the classes observed lacked in attention to these aspects, and these teachers must have in mind that even though not all has been said about the influence on language learning exerted by learning styles and attitude, students do need to be stimulated to use any strategy they feel is helpful to them, and that as teachers they ought to avoid thinking that all these students´ requirements will be addressed by employing just one method the whole time (Page & Page, 2011).

Do teachers consider students´ level to teach English successfully?
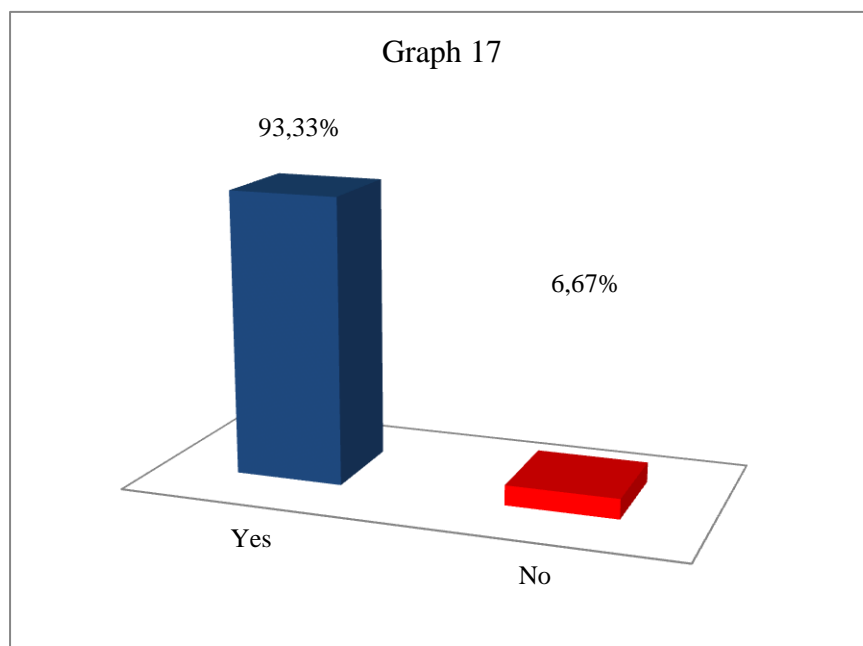
Graph 17

93,33%

6,67%

Yes

No

Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

This question pretended to know if the teacher considered the student's previous knowledge to teach English. Fourteen teachers that correspond to the 93.33 % answered YES while three teachers equivalent to 6.67% responded NO.

Almost all the teachers stated that they take into account their student's proficiency level, which was basic for all of the students observed, for teaching their lessons accordingly. Nonetheless, a great deal of the teachers might be associating the basic student's level to making the class activities as simple as possible, and thus believing they are matching proficiency level with instruction. At least this is what could be perceived from the observations.

In conversations held with some teachers this was justified by claiming that a considerable number of students would just refuse to do harder tasks as they say that they neither understand nor like English; besides, these teachers also added that most of their students do not want to do anything that demands an effort on their part.

The pupils were inquired on their perceptions about the difficulty of the activities done in class, to which 14 out of 15 answered that the activities were easy whereas only 1 said they were difficult; the interesting thing here is that this student also said that he liked his teacher's way of teaching and praised her in a nice way which clearly showed his admiration and respect for her. This fact makes it clear that the students not only need but also wish to be challenged by the activities proposed to them even if they do not ask for it.

In fact, according to Vygotsky (as cited in Woolfolk, 2010) the tasks or problems proposed to the learners must lie on their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the area where the learners are able to understand and solve the tasks presented to them if provided enough support and assistance from the educator. This zone is placed between the knowledge the students have already mastered and the knowledge that even if provided detailed explanations they would not understand yet.

Which is the level of their Students?

Graph 18
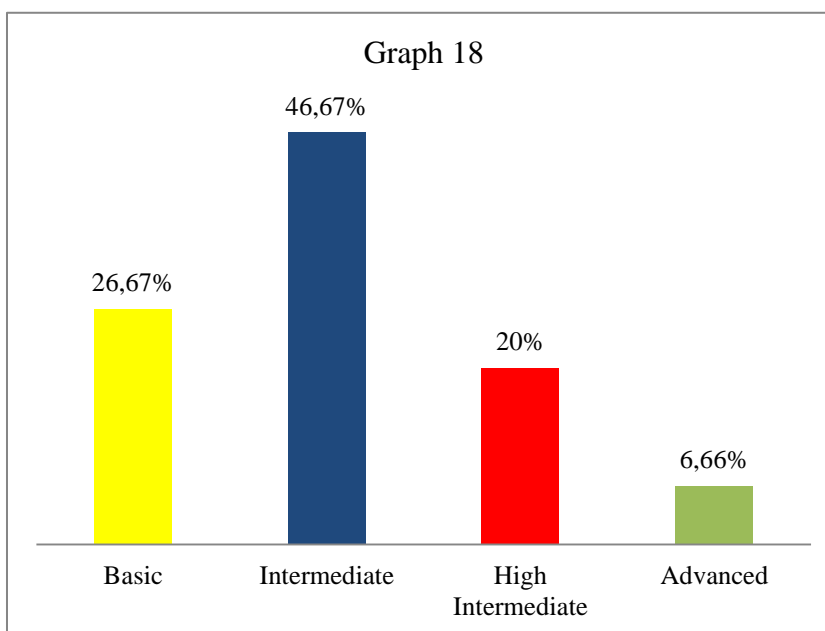
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Graph eighteen shows the English level of the students. Thus, four teachers (26,67%) answered that their students have a basic level, seven teachers (46,67%) stated that their students have an intermediate level, three teachers (20%) mentioned that their students have a high intermediate level; and one teacher (6,66%) said that English level of their students is advanced.

From what has been observed, the teachers are right when they say their students´ level is overall basic, intermediate, high intermediate. This reality was repeated across the five high schools and 15 classes visited (from 8vo Año EGB to 3ero de Bachillerato).

Contrasting the observations with the scales from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): learning, teaching, assessment, the observed learners were effectively in the level A1 (Basic User); those at this proficiency stage are supposed to produce and understand common everyday expressions, talk about personal information, and communicate in an elemental basis given their interlocutors accommodate their speech to their level.

This situation reflects the great necessity of improvement that faces the English teaching in the Ecuadorian public education system; it would be unfair though to deny that there has been an increase in the students´ level compared to the reality several years ago, at least now the students seemed to be getting more used to listening to English instructions; however much more is needed.

Factors concerning educational institution

Does the institution review your lesson plan?

Graph 19

66,67%

33,33%

Yes

No
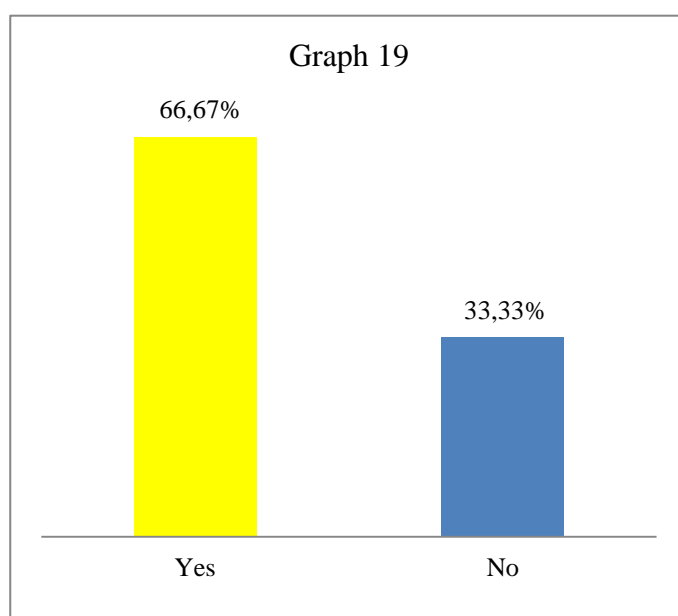
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

Graph 19 indicates that 66,67% (10 teachers) outlined in the survey that the lesson plans are reviewed by the authority of the institution once a week. On the other hand, 33,33% (5 teachers) indicated in the survey that the lesson plans are not reviewed by the institution.

As mentioned above, at times the poor quality of several of the lessons observed, looked as if this lesson review consisted in just taking a quick look at a pile of papers, and signing them for approval without any comment or advice, or it might be that the plans are perfect, but what is written there is actually not applied in class.

Talking about the frequency with which the institution review their lessons, from the 10 who answered positively on this question, four said their plans were reviewed once a week,

4 said it happened once a month, and 2 selected the option other within which one of them said his/her plans were sometimes reviewed, and the other said it is once in a while.

In those cases where the plans are reviewed once a week and once a month, the teaching was more organized than in those where the lesson plans are not regularly revised. Hence, consistent and sound revision of teachers planning helps to increase teacher´ commitment to accomplish the academic goals that have been set, as well as benefiting the students by receiving more organized instruction.

Does the Institution monitor your Teaching?

Graph 20

73,33%

26,67%

Yes   No
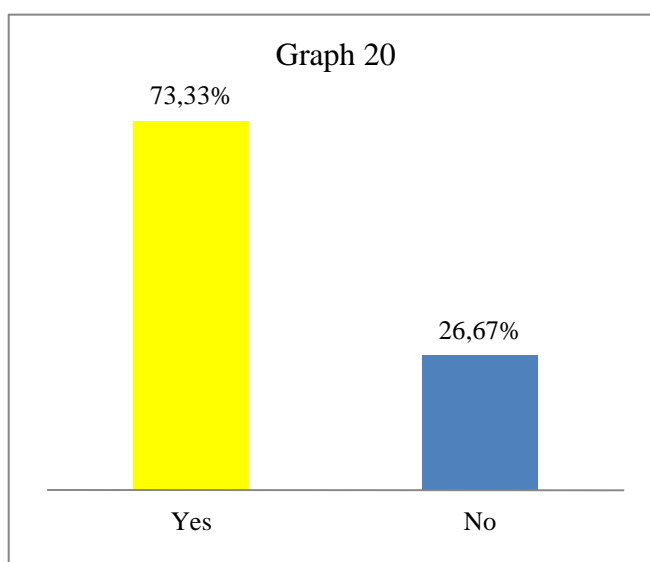
Author: Santana Medranda Byron Leonardo
Source: Teachers´ questionnaire

The question intended to determine if the institution supervises the language teaching process. Results show that eleven educators that represent the 73.33% responded YES. The 26.67% remaining, which corresponds to four teachers, answered that the institution does not supervise them.

Regarding the frequency in which this institutional monitoring occurs, the answers were varied; for instance, one teacher said it happens once a week, nobody selected the option once a month, and 11 selected the option other within which eight said they are monitored sometimes; one, each two months; one, seldom, and another one, said that she is always

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monitored, thus the situation seems to be very dissimilar, not only across the high schools, but also within each one, as the frequency of institutional monitoring did not coincide even among teachers from the same high school.

Although there seems to be a considerable degree of institutional monitoring in the high schools visited, as suggested from the statistical graph above, in the conversations held with the educators, they said that the kind of monitoring they receive is not so overt or formal. As a matter of fact, it was informed by the teachers that the administrators just walk around and check visually if they are working, but they rarely enter to the classroom and sit to observe the lesson and offer feedback. They also stated that usually this supervision is done by persons without knowledge about the subject, so they mainly focus on such aspects as discipline control but not in how the subject itself is being taught.

Conclusions

After having completed the research work the following conclusions have been realized:

➢ In spite that an important percentage of teachers have an English Bachelor´s degree, their proficiency in the English language is low.

➢ The space of the classroom limits the interaction among the students which difficult to develop activities such as language games, role plays, group work and other activities that encourage the whole class participation.

➢ The lack of a wide variety of teaching aids such as video, tape/Cd record, computer(s), smartboard, and other resources has a negative effect on the students' learning.

➢ Only a few lesson plans are reviewed by the authority in charge of the English area.

➢ The large number of students in each class makes difficult the correct management of the class.

➢ The authorities of the high schools do not monitor the English teaching process.

Recommendations

➢ Teachers should design lesson plans and apply them with creativity during the teaching process to encourage the students to learn English.

➢ It is also suggested that in the English classes, the teacher uses English in a 100% during the lesson, to reach the linguistic competence of the students.

➢ The monitoring of English language classes has to be done periodically and permanently in order to develop strategies that improve the process of English teaching.

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ANNEXES

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básica a 3ro bachillerato):	

1. Does the teacher consider Students' needs to teach English?

*Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

* It can be recognized based on the variety of activities (visual, audio, audiovisual, realia, and on-line) applied, and students' reaction to them.

2. Which is the level of the students? *(Check 1)*

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

* It can be recognized based on the material they are using or placement done by the institution.

3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )

Others	( )
_____	

4. Which of the following activities are used?

Whole-group activities	( )
Individual activities	( )
Group work activities	( )

5. Which of the following aspects of the lesson plan were applied in the class?

Time	( )
Lesson topic	( )
Objectives	( )
Warm-up activities	( )
Introduction of the new topic	( )
Guided or individual practice	( )
Review/Assessment/Feedback	( )
Materials and resources	( )

6. Which of the following aspects have been considered by the teacher?

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

10 - 15	( )	16 - 25	( )	26 - 30	( )	31 - more	( )

8. Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?

YES	( )	NO	( )

9. Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?

YES	( )	NO	( )
NOTES:			
_____			

10. Which of the following resources are there in the classroom to facilitate teaching?

TV	( )
Tape/Cd recorder	( )

Computer(s)	( )
Projector(s)	( )
Smartboard	( )
Supplementary materials	( )
Others	( )

11. In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

25 %	( )	50 %	( )	75 %	( )	100 %	( )

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

A1	Where are you from? Where do you live?
A2	Where did you learn English? How long have you studied English? Which subject was the most difficult during your major?
B1	How long have you been teaching English? Which skill is easier for you to teach? Would you like to continue studying? Why?
B2	What are the advantages or disadvantages of teaching English in a "non-English speaking country"? What are the main problems a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador?
C1	What social benefits are derived from learning English? What is the most important reward of teaching English as a profession?
C2	What are the benefits that come from teachers staying more time in the educational institutions? What is the difference between teaching English as foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as a second language (ESL)?

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:			

C2	( )	C1	( )	B2	( )	B1	( )	A2	( )	A1	( )

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. ¿Te gusta aprender inglés?

SI ( )	NO ( )

2. ¿Las actividades (juegos, trabajos en grupo y trabajos individuales) que se realizan en clase te motivan a aprender Inglés?

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muy difíciles ( )

4. ¿Te gusta la forma de enseñanza del idioma Inglés que usa tu profesor?

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

5. ¿Tu profesor realiza actividades variadas que te permiten interactuar con tus compañeros de clase?

SI ( )	NO ( )

6. ¿Tu profesor utiliza Inglés la mayor parte del tiempo en la clase?

SI ( )	NO ( )

7. ¿Tu profesor controla la disciplina en la clase

SI ( )	NO ( )

8. ¿Tu profesor les asigna un tiempo determinado para el desarrollo de cada actividad?

SI ( )	NO ( )

9. ¿Luego de cada actividad realizada, tu profesor te explica en qué fallaste y en qué debes mejorar?

SI ( )	NO ( )

10. ¿Las instrucciones que da el profesor para realizar las actividades en clase y extra clase son claras?

SI ( )	NO ( )

11. ¿Consideras que el tamaño del salón de clase te permite trabajar de una manera cómoda?

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____ _____	

12. ¿Consideras que el número de estudiantes te favorece para aprender de mejor manera el Inglés?

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____ _____	

13. ¿Te gusta la forma en la que el profesor adecúa los pupitres para trabajar en los diferentes tipos de actividades?

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____ _____	

14. ¿Se utilizan en clase recursos tales como televisión, grabadora, computadora, pizarras inteligentes, etc.?

SI ( )	NO ( )

GRACIAS!!!

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

High school diploma ( )	English Bachelor's Degree ( )	English Master's degree ( )
Others: _____		

2. Do you consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?

Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*
YES ( ) NO ( )
Why? _____ _____

3. Do you consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*
YES ( ) NO ( )
Why?_____ _____

4. Which is the level of your students?

*Students' Level		
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

5. Which of the following methods was used in this class? *(check only 1)*

Communicative Language Teaching	( )

The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

6. Do you use whole- group activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

7. Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

8. Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

9. Do you use English most of the time in your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

Why?

_____

_____

11. Do you consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why?	

_____

_____

12. How many students do you have in this class?

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

13. Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why?	

_____

_____

14. Do you have enough space to work with this group of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

15. Do you arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why?	

_____

_____

16. How many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English? *(check only 1)*

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )
Why?			

_____

_____

17. Do you use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?

YES ( )	NO ( )

Which ones?
_____ _____

18. Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____ _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!