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**Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning
process in Ecuadorian private high schools**

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Doctora.

Ana Lucía Quiñonez Beltrán.

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools realizado por Madruñero Egas, Martha Dolores y Mallama Mallama, Sara Andrea, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, Abril de 2014

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“ Nosotras Madruñero Egas Martha Dolores y Mallama Mallama Sara Andrea declaramos ser autoras del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo la Doctora Ana Lucía Quiñonez Beltrán directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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DEDICATION

This present study is dedicated to God who illuminated me to take the correct way and to choose the right career. To my dear husband Bladimir who has given me his unconditional help, support and comprehension. To my daughters Dianita and Gaby, and to my son Carlitos, who were my inspiration to reach my goals. To my parents, who with their help and patience have waited for this great day.

Martha.

First and before of all, I want to dedicate this study to God for being with me in every step I take and for giving me strength, patience, and wisdom to take advantage of the chances and opportunities to meet the right people in my life. To my loved mother Lupita, who with devotion, has always been there for me, and has been the core of my life in everything I do. To my dear husband Harold, who has supported me and has trusted me in my objectives. To my grandmother Carlota and uncle Milton who with their love and good example helped me to continue. Last but not least, to my “adoptive” parents Fred and Gloria who gave me great support, love, and advice during my studies.

Sara.

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Furthermore, to our thesis tutor who has oriented us to develop this study and gave us advice to work properly. To the private institutions which allowed us to carry out the surveys as well as classroom observations, and to the teachers who kindly permitted us to take note of their lessons.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current research is to analyze Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools. This investigation took place in six private high schools, five in the city of Ibarra and one in the city of San Gabriel. In these institutions, to collect data, fifteen teachers were interviewed and applied a questionnaire, fifteen students were surveyed, and fifteen classes were observed. The gathered data was tabulated and analyzed quantitatively by considering factors which concern teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions.

The results of the study show that factors which concern teachers and classrooms affect the process of teaching and learning English in a positive way because the conditions where the lessons take place are adequate, and the language proficiency of twelve teachers is good; however, factors concerning private institutions affect the teaching-learning process negatively, since such as institutions neither monitor the EFL classes nor review the teacher's lesson plans to promote their professional growth.

Key words: EFL Teaching, Factors, Private high schools.

RESUMEN

El propósito del presente estudio es el analizar Factores que influencian el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en instituciones privadas Ecuatorianas. Esta investigación tomó lugar en seis colegios privados, cinco en la ciudad de Ibarra y una en la ciudad de San Gabriel. En estas instituciones, para recolectar la información, quince maestros fueron entrevistados y además se les aplico un cuestionario, quince estudiantes fueron encuestados, y quince clases fueron observadas. La información fué tabulada y analizada cuantitativamente considerando factores que conciernen a maestros, estudiantes, aulas e instituciones educativas.

Los resultados de los estudios demuestran que factores que conciernen a los educadores y aulas afectan el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de una manera positiva ya que las condiciones donde se llevaron a cabo las lecciones son adecuadas y la competencia de lenguaje de doce maestros es buena; sin embargo, los factores concernientes a la instituciones afectan el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje negativamente ya que dichas instituciones no monitorean las clases de Inglés como lengua extranjera y tampoco revisan los planes de clase para promover su crecimiento profesional.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Factores, Instituciones privadas.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the basis of communication since people use it to express ideas and opinions. There is a wide variety of languages around the world, but the English language is the one that has been broadly standardized and internationalized because it is frequently used for traveling, communicating, doing business, etc.

In Ecuador, English is taught as a foreign language in both private and public institutions; however, previous research in this country has revealed that many students of high schools do not have a good level of English when they get a Bachelor's Degree; consequently, both their academic performance in the university and their access to updated English information is limited. Besides, as their language proficiency is poor, the students are not able to apply to international scholarships. Because of this, it is necessary to investigate factors that influence the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools so that authorities and teachers of these institutions know the causes of the problem in order to solve it in the most appropriate way.

One important point to mention is that the present research has specific objectives which are: to identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom, to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place, to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Another relevant point to indicate is that this investigation includes some studies on factors influencing the English teaching-learning process that have been previously investigated by other language researchers. For instance, Cakmak (2009)

conducted a study to identify the perceptions of student teachers about class size and its effects on the teaching process. No limitation is reported in the research.

Another study was conducted by Hong et al. (2005) to investigate the factors that affect teachers' creative teaching. During this study, no limitations were found.

By this part, Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, and Martin (2006) conducted a study to determine whether teachers in large and small classes differ in time spent on teaching or instructional activities. The researchers do not report any limitation.

At this point, it is necessary to state that by conducting the current research, the educational institutions, authorities, and teachers investigated will benefit because they will take action to solve the problem effectively; that is to say, they will get involved in considering students' needs, teacher instruction, institutional equipment purchases, and policies that will help the students to improve their English knowledge.

Moreover, the results of the present study are intended to contribute as a bibliographical source that can be used for educational institutions of Ecuador related to the teaching of EFL as the basis of replicating futures investigations and also for educators related to EFL teaching.

To finish the introduction, it is relevant to mention that no limitations were found during the current research process.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The study took place in six private high schools, five in Ibarra in the Province of Imbabura and one in San Gabriel in the Canton Montufar, Province of Carchi. The research was conducted in 2012-2013. The participants were fifteen teachers and their students chosen from 8th basic education to 3rd year of senior high school. The average age of the teachers was 30-50, and most of them were women.

Procedures

The research process started by conducting a bibliographic investigation which involved collecting information of important topics such as teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, teaching approaches and methods, classroom management, lesson design, class size, seating arrangement, teaching resources, classroom observation, learning styles, and language aptitude. In addition, data of previous studies done on factors influencing the teaching-learning process of English Foreign Language (EFL) was included in the bibliographic research.

Once concluded the bibliographic investigation, the process of the field research started by observing fifteen classes, interviewing fifteen teachers, applying a survey to them, and surveying fifteen students who were randomly chosen at the end of each observed lesson. To collect data, an observation sheet, a teachers' questionnaire, an interview, and a students' questionnaire were used in each observed class.

That gathered information was tabulated according to the questions of the survey and interviews applied to teachers, then it was displayed on twenty graphs and analyzed quantitatively according to the factors concerning teachers, students,

classrooms, and educational institutions. After analyzing the information gathered during the field research, the results and conclusions of the study were drawn.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

This section includes important topics which support the current research in a theoretical and bibliographical way. The topics included in the literature review are Importance of teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, Teaching approaches and methods, Managing learning, Lesson design, Class size, Classroom space and Seating arrangement, Classroom and /or Teaching resources, Classroom observation, Learning styles, and Language aptitude. This section also includes information of five previous studies done on factors that affect the English teaching-learning process.

Importance of teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador

The Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) and the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador carried out an investigation in 2012, which revealed that some Ecuadorian teachers did not have the minimum level (B2) to teach English according to international standards. Since then, based on these results, both institutions have promoted a continuous program of scholarships to give Ecuadorian English teachers the opportunity to study abroad so that they can improve their knowledge and their teaching methodology in order to teach the foreign language effectively.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

In order to improve the quality of teaching the English language, a great sort of approaches and methods has been developed. One of these methods is Grammar translation, and regarding this matter Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that Grammar Translation Method shows as its main feature the focus on translating texts or

sentences from the native language to the target language or vice versa. Additionally, Spolsky and Asher (1999) state that in Grammar Translation Method, students are required to understand and memorize grammar rules of the target language to carry out written tasks.

Another teaching method is Total Physical Response (TPR). This method focuses on teaching speaking skills through drills, mainly by having the students to listen carefully and to respond physically to a series of given commands (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, in TPR the target language is used communicatively to make the learners listen to it from the beginning of instruction, and the teacher facilitates comprehension of the language being taught through the use of pictures and occasional words provided in the mother tongue of the learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Other method used for language teaching is Communicative Language Teaching. This method is addressed as an approach which is oriented to a specific goal that is to teach through real and meaningful communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, Brown (2001) states that in CLT language techniques are applied to have students use the language in a pragmatic, authentic, functional, meaningful, productive, and receptive way.

Moreover, a method used in the language classroom is the Natural Approach. Richards and Rodgers (2001) mention that this approach does not focus on practice but rather on exposure; that is, the setting is as close as a natural environment. Additionally, Brown (2001) states that in the Natural Approach second languages are sometimes learned for communicating in a written way and sometimes for listening to lectures, speaking in a classroom context, or writing for reporting a research study.

In addition to mentioning the teaching methods and approaches briefly described above, it is important to provide some information of Content Based Instruction which is other method used for language teaching. Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that in this method the teaching does not focus on any sort of syllabus, but instead it focuses on the content itself and on what the learners will learn. For Larsen-Freeman (2000), in Content Based Instruction the learning of language is integrated with the learning of academic subject matter, which offers a natural content for language teaching.

It is important to state that the methods and approaches mentioned above are used for teachers to teach EFL in a different and effective way. Through such methods, students are provided with a great source of teaching methodology in order to encourage the development of their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Managing Learning

To manage a class and the teaching-learning process correctly, several suggestions have been made. One of this recommendations is that Hill and Flynn (2006) suggest that the teacher needs to become the instructional head in the classroom; that is, to manage the classroom in a better way he or she has to consider the social, intellectual, and physical structure of the classroom as well as the creation of an enjoyable environment by working on a daily planning of the curriculum, systematizing routines of the procedures, collecting the teaching tools and checking the learners' progress.

Furthermore, Gower, Philips and Walters (2005) recommend that in order to manage a class correctly and successfully, it is relevant to draw the students' attention to the lesson to employ visual or written hints and to give easy instructions.

One important point to mention is that feedback is a significant component of managing learning since teachers help students to identify their weaknesses and strengths. According to Mcleod, Fisher, and Hoover (2003), giving feedback to students about the topic being taught and information on how accurately they learn, enables teachers to manage a language classroom effectively. Moreover, Gower, Philips and Walters (2005) say that providing feedback is a relevant job of teachers because students can be evaluated according to their progress and this can encourage self- awareness and enhancement during a lesson.

Lesson Design

Developing a lesson plan is crucial to succeed in teaching English since it helps teachers to have clear aims to teach their classes. According to The Ministerio de Educación Del Ecuador (2012), planning lessons is important because it facilitates the teaching-learning process. This institution also affirms that lesson planning enables teachers to organize their instruction through methodological strategies targeted at the students' needs. Moreover, The Ministerio de Educación Del Ecuador suggests that before the teacher designs a lesson, he or she has to consider the students' abilities, their limitations, experiences and interests. Additionally, this institution recommends that a lesson plan contain aspects such as educational objectives, methodological strategies, and key points of evaluation.

Moreover, Riddell (2010) considers that the main parts of a lesson plan which 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 a the lesson, and the level of a class.

On the same matter, Richards and Bohlke (2011) suggest that a lesson plan reflects decisions made on five aspects as follows: 1) the type of activities (dialogue work, free writing, or brainstorming) that the students develop during the lesson; 2) the order in which activities are done, including opening and closing activities; 3) the time that teachers spend on different activities; 4) when the students will work as a whole class, and when they will work in pairs, or groups; and 5) the materials such as the textbook, worksheets, or DVDs that the teachers use in their lessons.

Class Size

Blatchford et al. (2003) claim that research does not reveal whether class size influences on educational accomplishments and the behavior of teachers and learners because not only the number of students have an influence on the organization of classrooms into different sizes, but also the number of qualified teachers as well as the aptitude and age of educators and learners.

Furthermore, Routledge (2000) affirms that the size of the class in itself does not necessarily influence negatively on the teaching and learning quality since according to this author, the most important aspects to be considered in a class are the teaching methods used, the way interaction is managed, the individual attention given to students, and the assessment of the learners' work.

Moreover, an important point to note about class size is that teachers cope with both small and large classes. Regarding the first one, Blatchford et al. (2003) state that if small classes are organized, there will be more opportunities for students to work individually. In relation to the second one, Routledge (2000, p. 714) mentions, "Large classes are widely considered to be problematic for language learning and yet some teachers effectively manage large classes in which students learn successfully".

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangement

Mcleod, Fisher, and Hoover (2003) say that the physical space of a classroom is a crucial factor in the success of students' learning. Thus, the materials and all the objects of a classroom must be located in specific places so that students feel comfortable working on their tasks. Mcleod et al. also affirm that both the classroom dimensions and the number of students have to be appropriate for the success of the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the University of North Carolina (2010) reports that even though the physical space of a classroom might not have a direct effect on learners' achievement, it may influence their behavior.

Having provided information related to classroom space, it is necessary to mention about seating arrangements that enable teachers to organize the students' seats according to the activities planned to teach their lessons. Three seating arrangements used by teachers in the language classroom are rows, semicircles, and two-square module. Regarding rows, Mcleod et al. (2003) say that desks placed in this way influence on the teaching-learning process because students who sit in the front and the center of the classroom participate in the class actively. In relation to arranging the desks of the learners in semicircles, The University of North Carolina (2010) states that seats in a semicircle create a teaching environment adequate to help learners work on debates or discussions. With regard to two-square module, The University of North Carolina mentions that this seating arrangement is suitable for activities where cooperative group work is required.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

The use of teaching resources helps teachers to add variety to the process of teaching and learning. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the materials used

in a class must encourage communication between students so that they can practice some of the learning content without the teacher's assistance. These authors also affirm that teaching materials offer students an opportunity for independent study and for self-evaluation of what they learn. Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers point out that in an instructional system teaching aids have been designed particularly to support the syllabus, the teachers, and the learners.

Moreover, regarding this topic Woodward (2001) mentions that there are simple materials such as pencils or notebooks that students can use for learning, but for activities done in class, if a student forgets these implements, teachers have to find the way to replace these items. For the same author, some materials such as the board, rods, and dictionary are useful teaching tools that can be used in the language classroom. Additionally, Woodward states that the tape recorder, the image package, the course book accompanied by recordings, and workbooks are other helpful materials used by teachers to teach their lessons successfully.

Classroom Observation

According to Garvo and Rothstein (1998), monitoring is a positive aspect for teachers because it encourages their self-confidence. These authors also say that educators grow professionally when they receive effective support from their institution to find alternative solutions to problems that occur in the teaching-learning process. On the other hand, Garvo and Rothstein state that a weak supervisory system arises misinterpretations or incorrect information which may cause a tense working environment. Therefore, the supervisor has to comprehend the teacher's feelings and presumptions of what occurs in the classroom as well as in the school to allow them improve their teaching quality.

Moreover, Glickman (2002) say that in order to stimulate the continuous improvement of the teaching and learning process, supervisors or principals must understand the use of classroom assistance structures such as clinical supervision, peer coaching and critical friends. Regarding the first structure, Glickman points out that clinic supervision is very well-known as it is oldest and extensively used to work directly with teachers in a classroom. Clinic supervision, according to the same author, includes five stages which are carried out as follows: 1) pre-conference with the educator; 2) observation of classroom instruction; 3) analysis and interpretation of the observation as well as the determination of conference approach; 4) post conference with the educator; and 5) analysis of the prior four stages.

Learning Styles

Lightbown and Spada (2006) mention three types of learning styles such as auditory, (in which language is learned by listening, visual, (in which learning is acquired by seeing), and kinesthetic, (in which physical action is needed to learn something). These learning styles also refer to cognitive styles which fall into two categories: the field independent and the field dependent. In the first one, learners see something in detail from the general background, whereas in the second one, students perceive something as a whole.

Moreover, it is relevant to point out that Woolfolk (2010) says that learning styles include deep processing, which is the approach that individuals use not only to study activities but also to comprehend some fundamental theories or meanings, and surface processing, which is not centered on comprehending the learning material but rather on memorizing it.

By the same topic, Woolfolk (2010) also focuses on differentiating between learning styles and learning preferences. The first one is defined as a characteristic way to acquire and use knowledge, while the second one is considered to be an individual preference for different learning situations and settings. Woolfolk also brings up the point of whether educators should complement teaching to individual learning styles. Regarding this issue, the same author affirms that some research shows that students learn more when they study in their preferred way and learning environment; however, most research does not reveal such a benefit.

Language Aptitude

Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekthman (2005) consider aptitude to be the ability to learn new languages. These authors say that the ability of some students to learn a language more easily than others may be innate or at least developed over a long time. Moreover, Healy and Bourne (1998) refer to aptitude as a relevant factor of second language proficiency, being Working Memory (WM) the major constituent of it. These authors state that a recent study reported that a student's WM capability may affect his or her ability both to acquire second language proficiency and to understand complex structures in a competent and accurate way.

In addition, Routledge (2000) states that aptitude is a concept used to explicate distinctions among individuals while they learn a foreign language; thus, aptitude is defined as a specific potential for language learning instead of a general ability to acquire knowledge. Routledge also mentions that aptitude can be used to predict accomplishment in the target language; nevertheless, the measure of aptitude as an only way to indicate the student's achievement and success in learning is limited although no without significance.

So far, information regarding the topics that are part of the literature review has been mentioned; following, some studies related to the current investigation are presented, which also are a bibliographic contribution for this section.

Chapman and Ludlow (2010) carried out a research to find out whether there is a relationship between class size and perceived student learning. The methodology applied in this research concerned with a set of twenty two likert-scored items. The variables of this research are depicted in different ways; for example, course code is a variable that distinguishes between undergraduate and graduate courses including introductory through advanced quantitative methods; variables concerned with the educator's personal and professional life are considered too.

Chapman and Ludlow conclude that there is a negative relationship between class size as well as perceived student learning. Therefore, the researchers suggest making students work on small classes to facilitate their learning and offer them more action and practice.

Another study was conducted by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) to investigate the factors that affect the poor quality of teaching English as a second language. This research was carried out in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The sample consisted of three thousand students. The method was quantitative. Data was gathered through questionnaires and observations. During the process, all of the participants were given a questionnaire to examine both their experience with the teaching and learning of English language and the conduciveness of their school environment to effective learning. Furthermore, in the research process observations were done to authenticate the veracity of the answers given by the learners.

Aduwa and Iyamu found that students in public secondary school in Nigeria do not learn English in an environment conducive to effective learning because the schools are overcrowded, the furniture is not comfortable for proper sitting, and classrooms are without proper lighting as well as ventilation. Taking into consideration these findings, the researchers recommend that the learning environment in public schools in Nigeria should be given priority attention by state and federal governments to help the students learn English effectively.

Abu-Rabia (1996) conducted other a research to determine how students' attitudes and cultural backgrounds affect their reading comprehension of familiar and unfamiliar information in their first and second language. Eighty three students from two intermediate schools in southern Israel participated in the study. Most of the participants in both schools were from families of low socioeconomic status, and they studied English 5 hours a week. The method used was quantitative. Data was collected through reading tests and questionnaires. During the research process, the participants completed a 15-rain pretest about the stories they were to read in the investigation. A week after the pretest, the participants were administered a 20-rain questionnaire to assess their attitudes toward learning English. The reading tests were administered 2 days later; each group of participants received one story a day for 3 days.

In the study Abu-Rabia found both that the students' attitude toward learning English stimulated their instrumental motivation and that they understood significantly more of the culturally familiar stories than of the culturally unfamiliar ones. The researcher, hence, concludes that the English language curriculum is more meaningful when it relates to students' personal lives and cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, Hong et al. (2005) conducted a study to investigate the factors that affect teachers' creative teaching. Twelve teachers coming from a Taiwanese university participated in the research. The method used was quantitative. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews.

At the end of the investigation, Hong et al. conclude that teachers' creative teaching behaviors are affected by factors which include personal quality, thinking style, family, teaching beliefs, personal effort, motivation, teacher's knowledge, the environment, level of education, and careers experience. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend the encouragement of teaching research groups, creative education awards, and creative instructional workshops to help teachers identify with the ideals and values of creative teaching.

Additionally, Cakmak (2009) conducted a study to identify the perceptions of student teachers about class size and its effects on the teaching process. Forty one participants from three departments of an education faculty of Gazi University in Turkey participated in the research. The method used was quantitative. Data was collected through a questionnaire which included open-ended questions.

After analyzing the gathered information, Cakmak found that there is a close association between class size and motivation, the methods used, classroom managing as well as assessment.

At this point, it is relevant to indicate that all the studies mentioned above have shown how the EFL teaching-learning process is affected positively and negatively by some factors such as class size, attitude to learn the target language, etc. Despite this fact, the researchers of the current study suggest that further investigation should be conducted to find other factors affecting the quality of instruction.

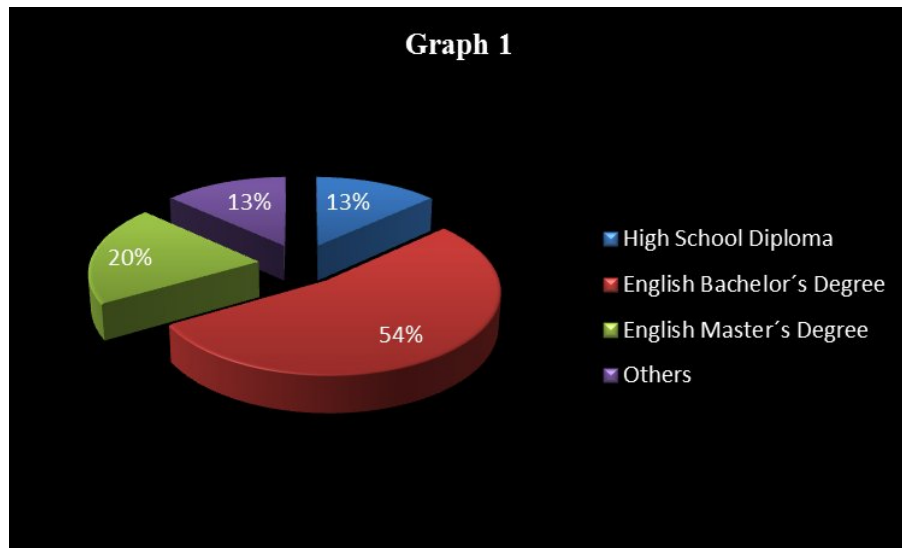
Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section analyzes quantitatively the information collected through surveys applied to the teachers and students, which has been contrasted with the results gotten in the interviews and observations carried out during the field research, and it has been displayed on 20 graphs and it has been analyzed according to factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions which grouped each question of the instruments used for collecting data.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara.

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph illustrates that 54 % of the interviewed teachers (8) have an English Bachelor's Degree; however, it was evidenced during the observation that only six of them honored their language proficiency since their knowledge and skills to teach

English were good, while the teaching methodology and the English level of two educators was not adequate to instruct their classes successfully.

Furthermore, graph 1 indicates that 20 % of the interviewed teachers have an English Master's Degree, who in contrast to the earlier case, all these educators had good language proficiency, which was effective to teach their classes since the students understood the information that they were learning and got engaged in assimilating the target language in an active and motivating way.

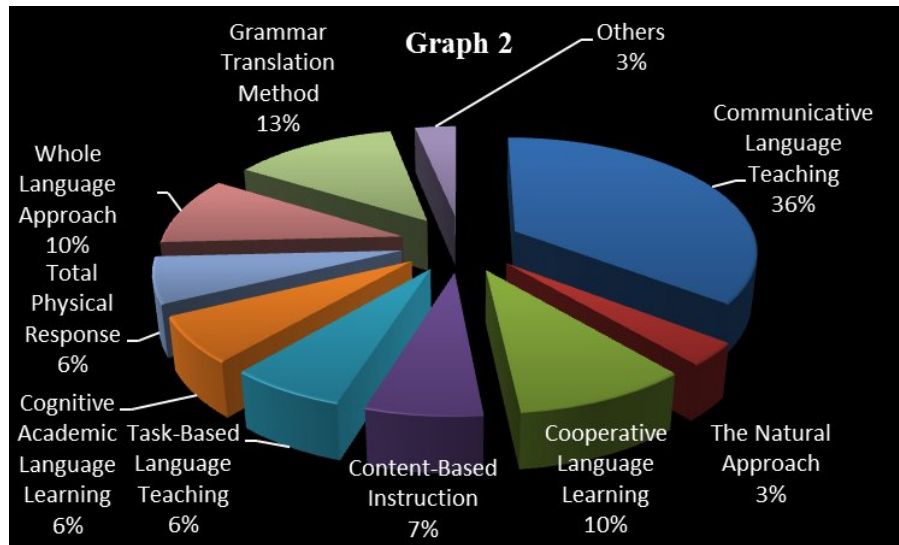
The above graph also shows that 13% of teachers (2) have a High School Diploma. Both educators mentioned in the interview that their language proficiency is not the same as the one who have a higher level of English; however, in the observed classes, one of them showed an acceptable level of knowledge and an appropriate teaching methodology to teach the target language.

Moreover, graph 1 reveals that two teachers (13%) have other type of degree such as a License and Diploma (not specified in what field) and a Programming Degree respectively. In spite of this fact, it was observed that the first one had a very good level of English since she taught her classes effectively. Regarding the second one, her level of English was poor because during the observations, this teacher did not spoke the foreign language with fluency most of the time. Additionally, she did not use an adequate methodology to teach her lessons. It is necessary to mention that this educator, according to what she indicated in the interview, is aware that her language proficiency is bad and that teaching English is not her field; however, she teaches this foreign language because the high school, where she works for, requires her to do that. This means that teaching English for this teacher is compulsory even though her language skills are not good.

Additional to the survey, an interview was also applied to all the teachers to determine their English level for which, specific formats were used (see annex 2). The results were: the level of six of them is high advanced (C2), three teachers have low advanced level (C1), the language proficiency of two educators is high intermediate (B2), two teachers have an English knowledge low intermediate (B1), the level of one educator is high basic, (A2) and one teacher has low basic language proficiency (A1). It is important to mention that the teachers' responses were scored according to the number of questions answered correctly with fluency and accuracy. Obviously, the ones who had good English speaking skills were placed in an advanced level, whereas the ones who were not able to answer all the questions in a fluent way were placed in basic level.

These last results have relation to the information provided by Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior Ciencia Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT, 2012) and Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador (2012) where it was reported that there are teachers whose level of English is not good to teach the foreign language in Ecuadorian high schools. What both institutions state was evidenced in four teachers since they neither had acceptable language speaking skills nor they were well-instructed to teach the target language in an effective and successful way. That is, these interviewed and observed educators do not have the minimum level (B2) which is required to teach English according to The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Which of the following methods were used in the observed classes?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

According to the teachers' survey the 36% of them mentioned that they taught English by using Communicative Language Teaching. Comparing these results with the data gathered during the observations (according to the notes taken in question 3 of the observation sheet, (see annex 1) this teaching method was used in a similar percentage (37%) as the one indicated by the educators. During the observed classes, the teachers worked with topics that had a real meaning and encouraged their students to interact and communicate with them and with one another. What the teachers did entirely agrees with what Richards & Rodgers (2001) said that communicative language teaching is a method oriented to a specific goal that is to teach through real and meaningful communication.

Another method considered was Grammar Translation and 13 % of the teachers answered in survey that they apply it during their lessons; however, such a method was used in 22% of the observed classes. This implies that this method was

used more than it was said in the survey. For the duration of the observed classes there were activities like learning grammar rules and transforming English sentences into Spanish just as Richards and Rodgers (2001) said that Grammar Translation Method shows as its main feature the focus on translating texts or sentences from the native language to the target language or vice versa.

Other teaching method taken into account is Cooperative Language Learning, and 10% of the educators said that this method is used in their lessons. Through the observations it was verified that the educators actually taught English by using this method in the percentage outlined by them in the survey. While using CLL, the teachers were able to explain both the academic task and the cooperative structure to students by creating groups and then supervising and intervening when it was required, so the students seemed engaged to the topic and were able to be an important part of the class. Additionally, 6% of the teachers affirmed that they used Task Based Language Teaching in their lessons; nevertheless, this method was used in 16% of the observed classes. This method allowed the educators to teach the target language by carrying out meaningful tasks that involved real communication.

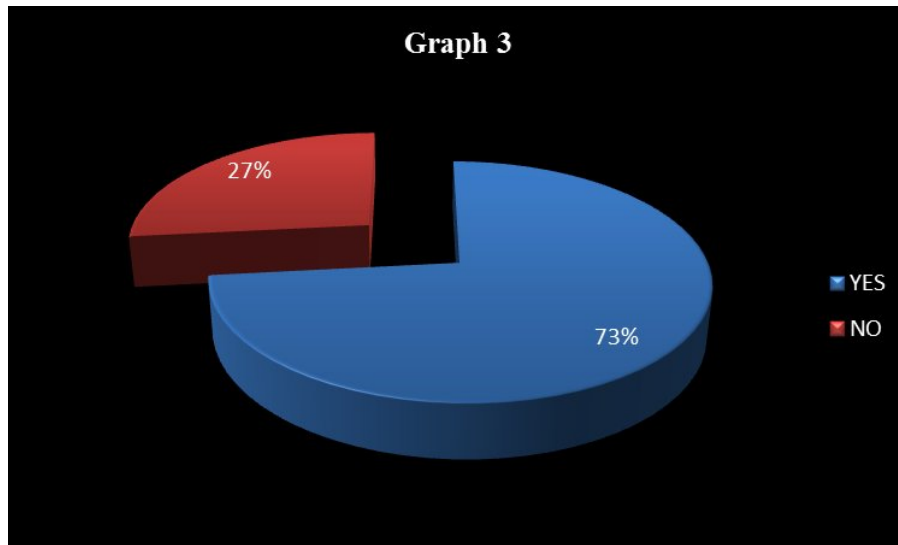
Furthermore, it is important to indicate that 10% of the teachers pointed out in the survey that they used the Whole Language Approach but in the observed lessons it was used only 5%. In addition, it could be observed that the few teachers that attempted to teach with this method did not do it in a very accurate way because the topic was intended to be developed by teaching whole pieces of language, but at times it seemed that the educators just taught randomly and forgot the aim of the class. Likewise, the Natural Approach was used in 5% of the observed classes as in whole language approach, but in the survey just the 3% of the teachers assumed they

used this method. Through the observations the teachers used speech activities in order to encourage the students learn the target language in an environment as close as the natural.

On the other hand, Content-Based Instruction, Total Physical Response, Task Based Language Teaching, and Others (corresponding to Content and Language Integrated Learning according to one surveyed educator) were not used in the EFL classes in spite of the fact that the teachers stated that they taught their lessons by using these teaching methods in the percentages shown in graph 2 above.

Regarding teaching methodology, Salandanan (2008) suggests that teachers need to have knowledge of various teaching methods and approaches to teach their classes in an effective way, which agrees with the observed in the classes because teachers were familiar with the previously mentioned methods, but in spite of that, it was also evidenced that a few teachers did not use them in a motivating way.

Do teachers use whole-group activities to teach their lessons?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

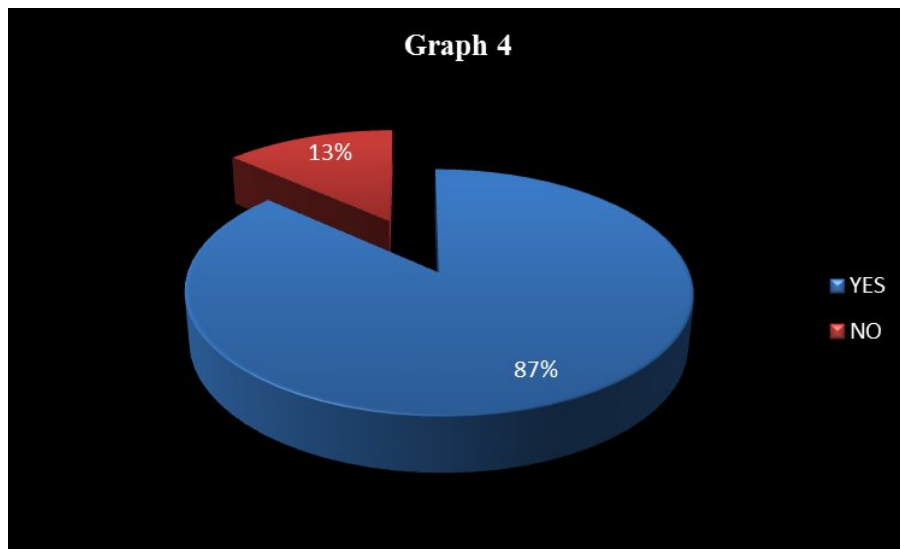
Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph indicates that 73% of the teachers answered in the survey that they use whole-group activities to teach their lessons. Among the reasons that the teachers exposed there are: because these tasks present the theme in an easy and quick way, help the students learn English better, and encourage them to interact as well as cooperate with their peers. However, during the observations only 60% of the educators asked the learners to do their tasks by allowing them to work as a whole group.

On the other hand, 27% of the teachers answered in the survey that they do not use whole-group activities to teach their lessons. The reasons the educators gave for not doing it were because the time is short and according to them, it is also difficult to control all the students. This answer was confirmed in the observed classes because the educators did not enable the students to learn English by doing these kinds of tasks.

Regarding the survey applied to the students, 100% of them mentioned that the teachers used whole-group work activities to motivate them to learn English. Furthermore, some students said that they acquired this foreign language better and have fun when they do these types of tasks. Effectively, during the observations, in the classes where most of the students did whole group activities, all of them enjoyed learning the target language.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara Andrea

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph shows that the majority (87%) of the teachers answered in the survey that they use individual activities during their classes. Some of the reasons given by the educators were: to personalize the work of the class, to challenge the students' learning, to help them learn English better, to evaluate their progress and to check their weaknesses as well. These educators also mentioned that they asked the learners to work on their tasks individually because not all of them have the same knowledge, needs, and skills.

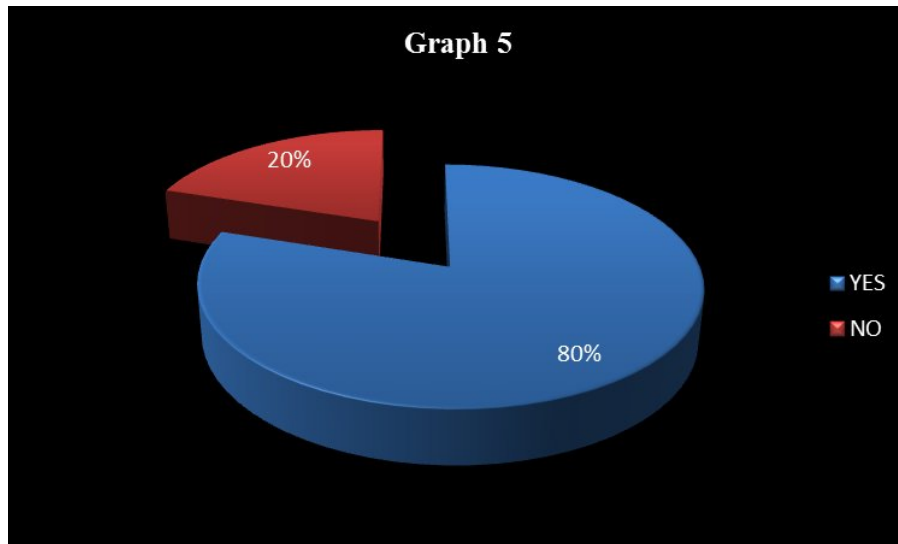
Contrasting this result with the observed, it was evidenced that there is a little difference since the 73% of the teachers observed used individual activities to teach English. This means that only 11 of the 13 teachers, who answered to use these types of tasks, taught their lessons as they stated.

On the other hand, two teachers (13%) answered that they do not use individual activities to teach their lessons because in the survey they argued that these types of tasks do not help so much the students to participate in the EFL class. This answer was confirmed during the observations because these teachers did not perform these kinds of activities at all for the period of their lessons.

In relation to students, 100% of them answered in the survey that individual activities used during the lessons motivate them to learn English. One student even mentioned that working individually is didactic to learn this foreign language. These answers were confirmed during the observed classes since the students were motivated to do their tasks in an individual way; indeed, they responded with responsibility and enthusiasm to what was being learned.

With regard to this kind of activities Ur (1991, p. 233) points out that “making students learn individually implies a serious attempt (...) to place a higher proportion of responsibility for learning on the shoulders of the learners themselves”

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph reveals that 80% of educators answered in the survey that they use group work activities. Their reasons were: to give the students an opportunity to practice their speaking skills and to help them interact with their classmates.

Nevertheless, during the observed classes it was evidenced that only 67% of the educators taught English by asking the learners to work in groups.

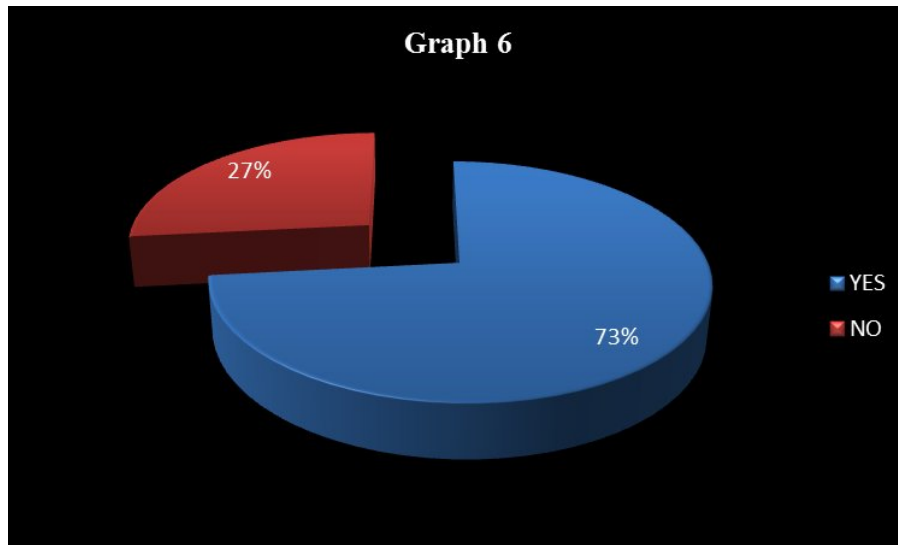
On the other hand, four teachers (20%) answered in the survey that they do not make the class to work in group because the number of students attending their classes is big and the space of the classroom is small. It is necessary to state that although two of these educators answered negatively in the teachers' questionnaire (question 8, see Annex 3), one of them in the "why" section answered that she uses "all kinds of activities such as group, individual, and whole-group", and the other said that she uses group work activities "to reinforce a topic of a lesson". Therefore,

the answer of both teachers sounds kind of contradictory. In spite of this fact, none of them asked the learners to work in groups during the observed EFL classes.

Referring to the students, 100% of them answered in the survey that group work activities motivate them to learn English. The reasons they gave were that these kinds of activities enable them to study this foreign language in an interactive and entertaining way. This was confirmed in the observed classes because most of them responded positively to do their tasks in groups and showed interest in the lessons.

With regard to this kind of activity, Davies and Pearse (2000) said that work done in group adds variety and dynamism to the lesson as well as promotes interaction among students. This agrees with what was observed in the classes because where the students worked in groups, they had the opportunity to both interact with their classmates and learn the target language in a dynamic and varied way.

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



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

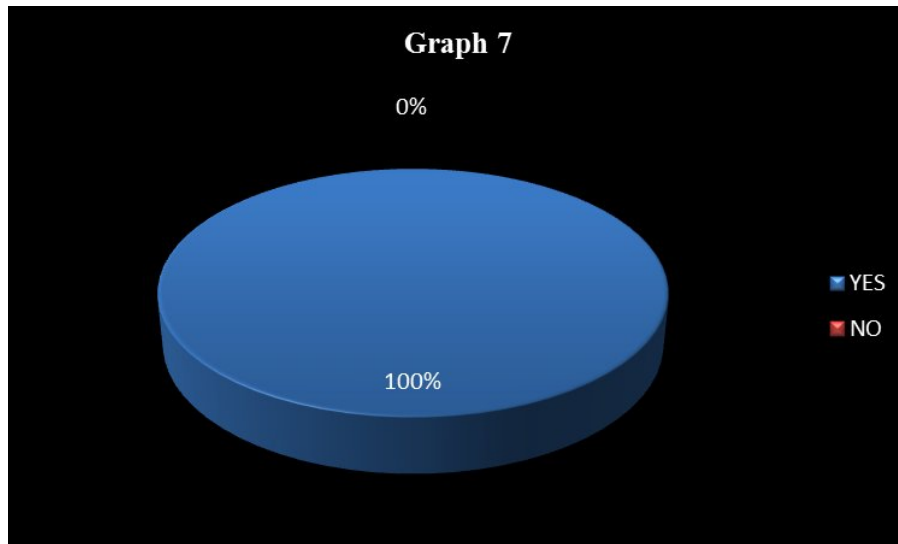
This graph shows that 73% of teachers mentioned in the survey that they use English most of the time in their classes; nevertheless, during the observation, it was found that only 60% of them used this foreign language as they indicated, whereas two educators taught their lessons by speaking a little Spanish because a few students did not understand some of the content that they were learning. Despite this fact, both teachers and all the ones who answered affirmatively showed in their classes a good linguistic competence because they used the language appropriately and fluently to make students learn the target language.

On the other hand, six (27%) educators stated in the survey that they do not use English most of the time in their lessons. The main reason given by the teachers was that there are situations in which they are urged to speak Spanish to help the students understand something that is not clear for them. During the observations, it was evident that two teachers were not able to teach their classes effectively because

they sometimes did not express the ideas fluently and clearly when speaking English; hence, they used Spanish in the foreign language classrooms in order to make themselves understand.

Contrasting the results of the teachers with the students' answers, it was noted that there is a coincidence of criteria since 80% of the learners said that their teachers use English most of the time in the lessons, while the rest of the learners (20%) gave a negative answer. In the observed lessons where English was the main language of the classroom, the majority of the learners participated actively to learn this foreign language effectively.

Do teachers plan their lessons?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

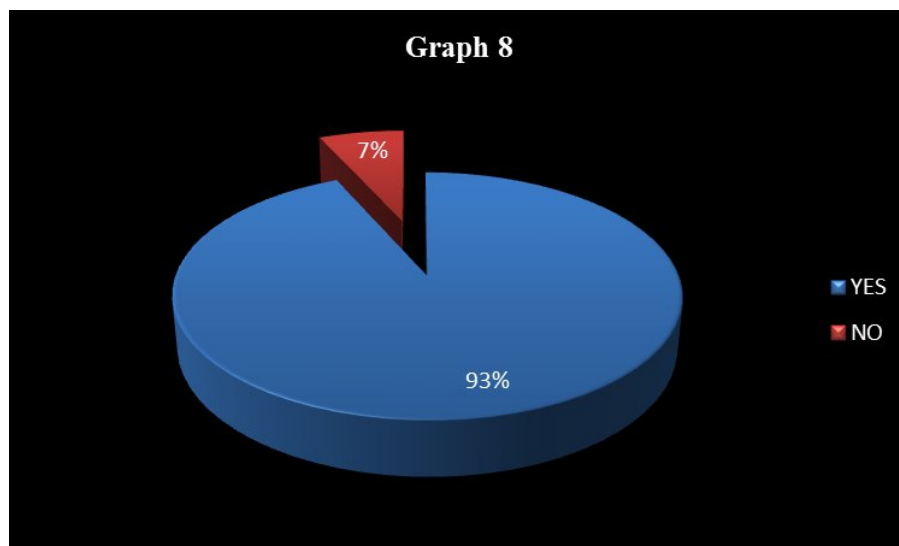
Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph illustrates that 100% of the teachers answered in the survey that they plan their lessons. Some of them mentioned on it, that they prepare their lessons because it is a requirement from the institutions they work for. Other teachers stated that planning is very essential to accomplish the aims of their lessons.

During the observations, most of the teachers had a lesson plan as they said in the survey, although, according to the notes taken during the observed classes in question 5 of the observation sheet (see Annex 1) aspects such as topic was only considered in 93% of the classes observed because one teacher forgot the English book and lesson plan; for this reason, she had to improvise the lesson, objectives were taken into account in 40% of the EFL, warm up activities in 27% of the classes, introduction of the new topic in 20% of the lessons, guided or individual practice in 66% of the classes, review/assessment in 66% of the lessons, and teaching materials in 27% of the classes.

Regarding to this aspect, it is important to mention that Riddell (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 during the lessons that only 20% of the teachers (3) applied all the aspects of lesson plan; 11 teachers representing 74% developed some parts of it; and one teacher (6%) did not follow almost anything of the content of the lesson plan since she put into practice only their teaching experience, in other words, she improvised the class.

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



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph shows that 93% of the teachers mentioned in the survey that they consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instructions to teach their

lessons, whereas just one educator answered negatively. According to the educators whose answers were positive, it was mentioned in the investigation that they consider these aspects because they are part of the teaching process and are necessary to help the students learn English better and stimulate them to pay attention to their tasks.

Contrasting the teacher's answers and the class observation, it was possible to determine that all the teachers considered discipline, but only the 80% of them took into consideration feedback, and just the 67% of educators considered instructions as well as timing, which does not coincides completely. The way how the teachers considered these four aspects are mentioned in the information related to the learners' survey in the next paragraphs below.

Regarding the students' answers in the survey, 93% of them answered that the teachers control discipline in the classes, while one student (7%) answered that the educators do not control this aspect. The students' answers coincided with the observed in the classes because most of the students paid attention to the lessons and did what they were asked. In this way the learners collaborated with the teachers and helped them to control discipline.

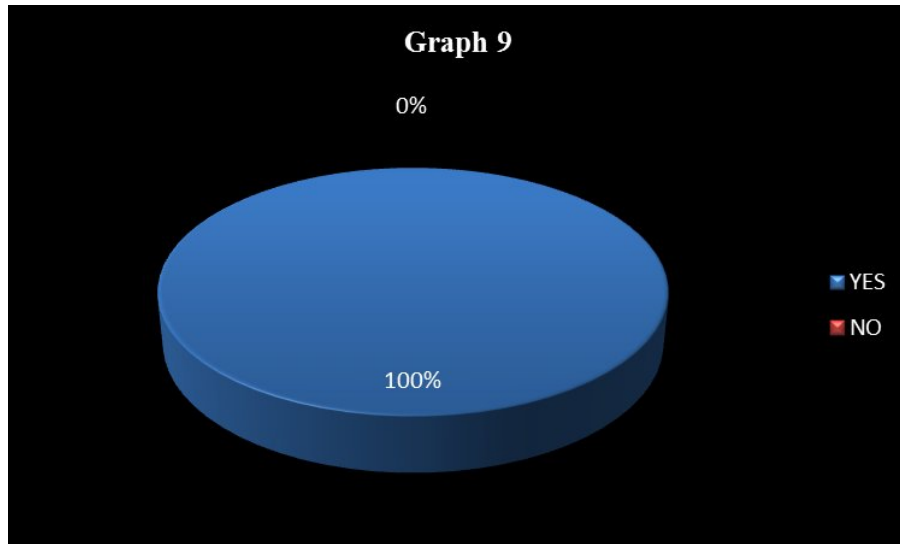
Additionally, 60% of the students stated that the teachers assign an allotted time for the development of each activity. However, 40% of the students answered negatively. Contrasting this information with the observed in the classes a higher percentage was noticed with this regard since 67% of the teachers assigned time for each activity that the students did in the lessons. In fact, the time allotted for the activities was well distributed and organized by the educators throughout their lessons. On the other hand, the ones who did not set time for each task got a little short in time.

Regarding feedback, 100% of the learners mentioned that the teachers consider this aspect in their classes. However, this data does not agree with what it was observed because only the 80% of the educators gave feedback to the learners during the classes. These teachers gave feedback in a whole and individual way because they both wrote information on the board to help the whole class identify errors made during an activity and assisted some students individually to help them with their tasks.

In addition, 93% of learners affirmed that the teachers give clear instruction to help them do activities in class, but in the observations just the 67% of the educators gave clear instruction to make the students work on their activities successfully. This was noticed because all the students were engaged and aware of the class development. However, 33% of the teachers did not give clear instructions during the observed lessons; for this reason, some students got confused and did not grasp the topic and the instruction had to be repeated again and again in order to help the learners understand what they had to do.

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph shows that 100% of the teachers answered in the survey that they consider the student's needs to teach English successfully; according to their reasons, they cannot teach a child in the same way they teach teenagers or adults. The teachers also mentioned that by taking into consideration the needs of the class, they can personalize their teaching to get better results.

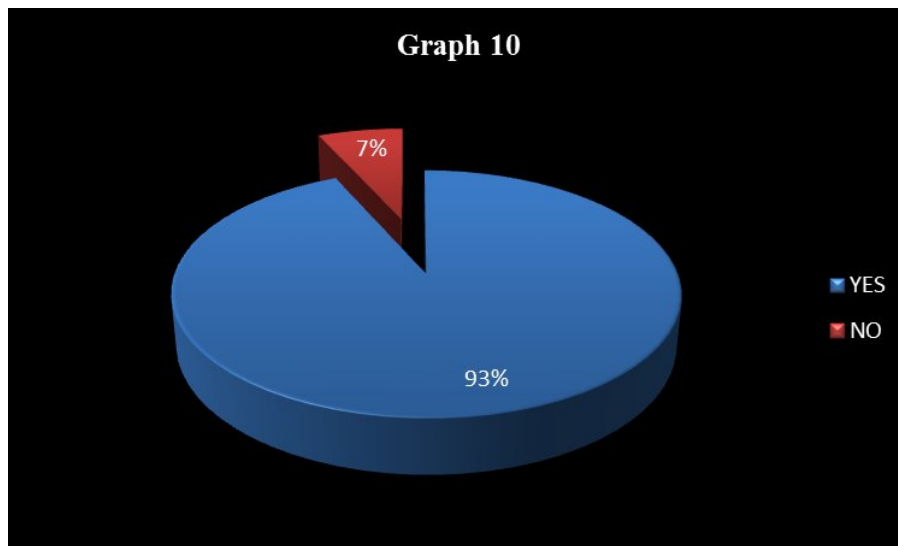
However, it was observed through the classes that only 93% of educators considered the needs of the learners. In the observations, these teachers suited the topics of the lessons to their age and interest. Furthermore, since the students' needs were taken into account, most of the activities done in these classes were motivating and stimulating for them. This helped the teachers attract the attention of everyone to encourage his or her positive attitude toward the English learning.

Additionally, in the course of the classes, the teachers also considered learning styles such as visual, auditory, and analytic because they asked the students to do activities targeted at these types of learners. The way how these types of learners were considered is described in graph 17 which corresponds to the teaching resources used in the observed classes.

In this part, it is important to mention that Richards and Bohlke (2011) state that students with different needs and goals attend to a language classroom. Since during the observations, it was evident that the desire for learning English of everyone was not alike because there were students who responded to a few lessons more actively and dynamically than others; however, it was also observed that in some classes most of the learners' aptitude and purpose to learn the target language was similar, since their participation was highly arisen for the tasks they worked on. Therefore, their needs were one way or another taken into consideration by the majority of the educators.

On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that one teacher (7 %) did not consider the students' needs effectively during the observed class, since the topic of the lesson was not introduced in a correct way and was not suited to the knowledge of the learners. In addition, this theme seemed to be very difficult for the level of this teacher since it was evidenced that this educator did not design a lesson plan in an appropriate way; as a result, she got confused very often during the class and made the students feel in the same way as her.

Do teachers consider students' levels to teach English successfully?



Authors: Madruñero Martha Mallama Sara

Source: Private high schools of Ibarra and San Gabriel.

This graph shows that 93% of the teachers answered in the survey that they consider the students' level to teach English successfully because according to them, their teaching is targeted at the knowledge of the class. Some teachers even mentioned that at the institutions where they work, there are learners with different language proficiency; therefore, it must be considered in order to take advantage of the strengths of everyone so that he or she can develop his or her language skills.

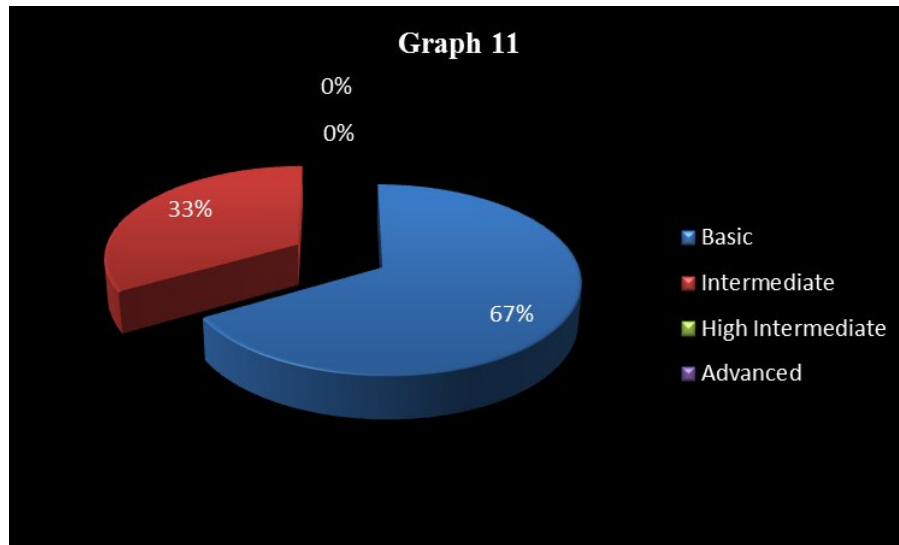
Conversely, one teacher (7%) answered in the survey that she does not consider the level of her students. In fact, the answer and reason given for this teacher to the respective question was, "The institution sets the level for the teacher so the level is not considered by the teacher, but by the institution and the level is too advanced". Analyzing this answer and reason, it seems that the teacher got confused when answering whether she consider the students' level to teach English. A point to

mention about this teacher is that she is the one, for whom teaching English is compulsory as it was mentioned earlier in graph 2 above.

During the observed classes, it was verified that the language proficiency of the students was considered by the teachers as they said in the survey since most of them asked their pupils to do activities that matched their knowledge. That is, the content of the lessons included vocabulary, grammar structures, and tasks targeted at the learners' English level.

Regarding the students' survey, 13 of them (86%) mentioned that the activities done in class are easy for them to work on, whereas one of their peers (7%) answered that the activities done in class are not just easy but very easy and another one (7%) did not answer anything . Comparing these two sources, the students answers and the observed classes coincide because in most of the lessons the learners did their tasks without any difficulty. This means that their level of knowledge was taken into consideration by their educators.

Which is the level of the students?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

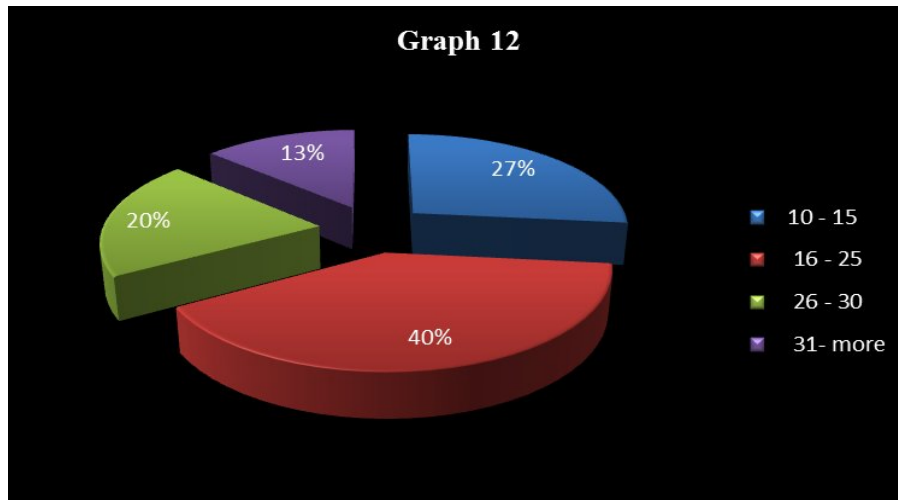
Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 67% of the teachers answered in the survey that the level of their students is basic. These results were confirmed in the observed classes because most of the students from 8th basic education to 1st year of senior high school had a limited knowledge of English. Therefore, they used a coursebook targeted at basic level and learned this foreign language through easy vocabulary, simple grammar structures, and achievable tasks.

On the other hand, 33% of the teachers mentioned that the language proficiency of the learners is intermediate. These results were somehow confirmed in the observed classes since the students from 2nd to 3rd year of senior high school used a course book suited to intermediate level; hence, they worked on tasks such as reading texts, learning vocabulary in context, and filling in grammar sentences. The tasks that learners did were challenging enough for their knowledge and understanding.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students do teachers have in their classes?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 40% of the teachers answered in the survey that they have 16 to 25 students in their classes, while only 13% of them affirmed that they have more than 31 learners in their classes.

During the observation it was possible to validate that actually there were 16-25 students in most of the EFL classes as the teachers said in the survey. In this environment the teachers worked in an appropriate way because they could control this number of learners easily. Besides, in these classrooms the teachers promoted the interaction among the students and their active participation; however, in the classes with more than 31 students, this number did not contribute so much to the teaching-learning process because the teachers were not able to check the work of the whole class to make sure that all the students learn English effectively. Also, there were learners who did not practice their language skills since they showed a lack of collaboration to interact with the large number of their peers and the teacher as well.

In contrast to the teachers who worked with 10-15 students they did not have much trouble with the class because they could help all of them, check their work, and evaluate their learning progress more easily.

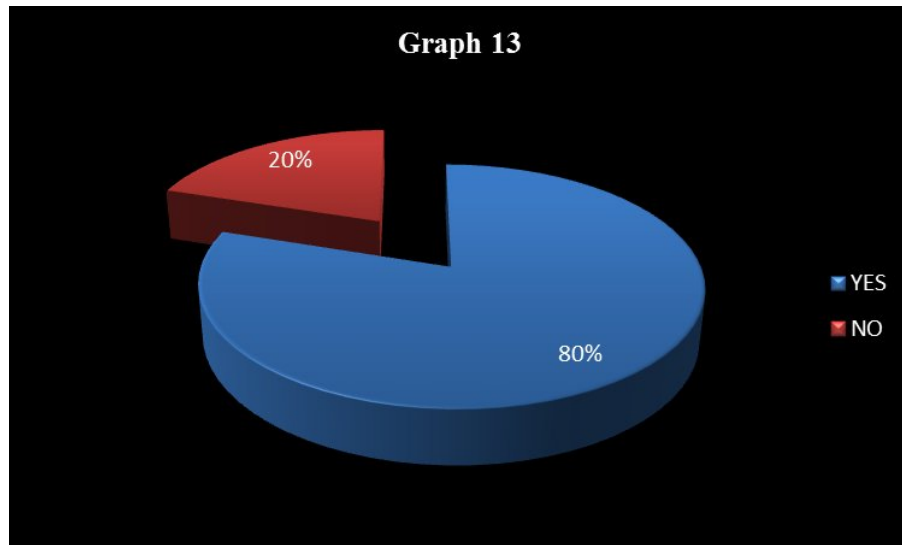
The results obtained by observing classes also indicate that the percentage of the teachers who worked with more than 31 students is a little higher than the one mentioned by them in the survey. Besides, the number of the educators who had 26-30 students is a little lower than the one showed in graph 12 above.

Regarding the students, most of them mentioned in the survey that the number of classmates, in their corresponding class, favor them to learn English because there are more opportunities to interact with everyone. Effectively, it was observed that in those lessons where 10-15 learners attended, there was an active interaction among the whole class and the teacher.

On the other hand, four learners answered that the amount of their peers does not help them to learn English because some of them disturb and interrupt the class, making the rest of the students lose concentration. In spite of this answer,

during the observation, almost all the students tried to pay attention to the lessons and showed interest in learning the target language regardless of the number of their classmates. That is, there was no learner interrupting and disturbing the teachers without any necessity.

Do teachers feel comfortable with this number of students?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

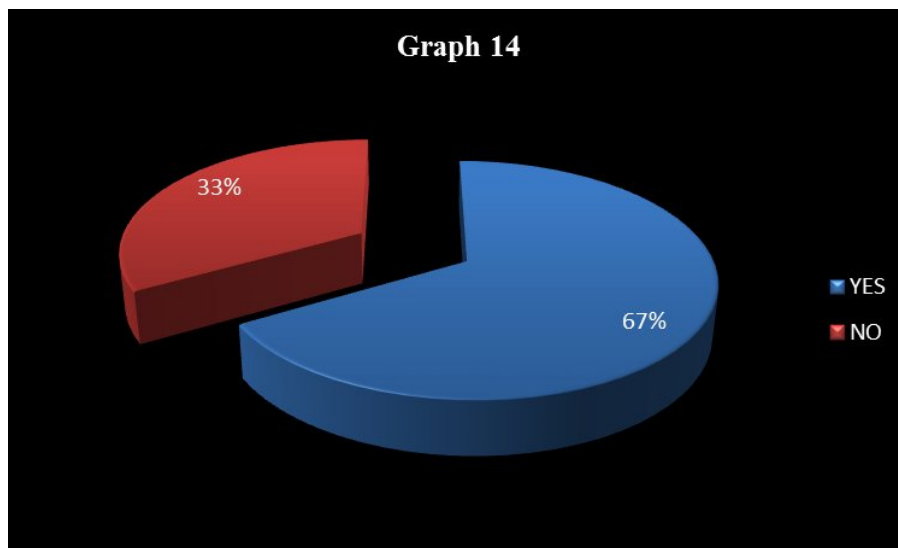
This graph shows that 80% of teachers answered in the survey that they are comfortable with the small number of students that they have in their classes because they said that it enables them to know the learners better, assign them different activities without any problem, and offer the whole class a personal teaching.

During the observations, the reasons they gave were verified because it was evident that the teachers working with small classes taught English comfortably since they were able to make everyone concentrate on the lessons, offered the students personal assistance when necessary, and encouraged their participation. All of this facilitated the teaching-learning process.

On the other hand, 20% of the teachers mentioned that they do not feel comfortable teaching to the large number of the students they work with since it is difficult for them to control the whole class all the time. What the teachers mentioned in the survey was corroborated in the observed classes since making all the students

focus on their tasks during the entire lessons was a little difficult and uncomfortable for three educators who worked with more than 31 students. Despite this, most of the learners collaborated with the teachers by paying attention to them, concentrating on their tasks, and helping their classmates when they needed some assistance.

Do teachers have enough space to work with this group of students?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 67% of teachers affirmed in the survey that they have enough space to work with their students. This information was compared with the one gathered in the observations and all these teachers truly taught English in a pleasurable way because the space of the classroom was big enough as they stated. Moreover, the amount of learners was adequate so that everyone could do activities in a successful and comfortable way

On the other hand, 33% of the educators stated that the space in their classrooms is very small. These teachers in the observations taught their classes in a

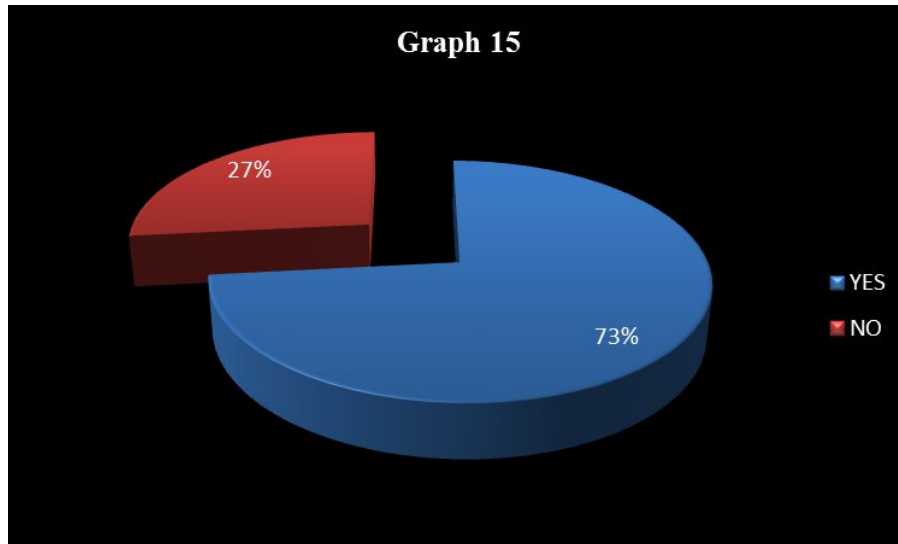
space where there was a little trouble making the students do activities (i.e., work in group) which requires moving their seats from one place to another.

Regarding the students' survey, the information obtained coincides with the teachers' since 67% of the students indicated that the space of the classroom is big enough to learn English in a comfortable way just as the teachers mentioned.

Contrary to this point of view, 33% of the learners also stated that the classroom space is not big enough since their desks are too close and cannot do group activities agreeing with what the teachers said. The answers given by the students who responded positively and those who did in a negative way was confirmed in the observations as it is indicated above.

Regarding classroom space, Mcleod et al. (2003) point out that the dimension of the classroom and the number of students has to be appropriate since the physical space is a crucial factor in the processes of learning. Effectively, during the observations was confirmed that, the amount of learners and space available to work played a vital role in the EFL classes since both the educators and students adapted their teaching and learning to the classroom conditions.

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



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 73% of the teachers affirmed in the survey that they arrange the students' seats. They said that this helps them do activities such as working in groups and acting out different situations. In contrast, 27% of the educators answered that they do not arrange the seats of the learners in relation to the activities planned for their lessons because they stated that usually teach English while everyone sits in rows. It is necessary to say that both results the positive and negative ones were confirmed in the observed classes as it is indicated in the third paragraph below.

Regarding the students' survey, 93% of them stated that they like the way their seats are arranged to do their tasks. According to these learners, by arranging their seats in accordance with the activities planned for the classes, they have the opportunity to work in pairs, help their peers, see the educator well, pay more

attention to the lessons, and learn English better. On the other hand, one student (7%) answered that the seats in the classroom are not changed because the teacher always teaches in rows. The positive and negative results given by all the surveyed students do not coincide on those obtained in the observed classes since the percentage of educators who asked the class to change their seats is different as shown below.

Information gathered during the observation shows that 27% of the teachers did not arrange the students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their lessons since they taught English in rows. However, 73% of the educators asked the students to change their seats to work on different activities such as group work, role plays, etc.

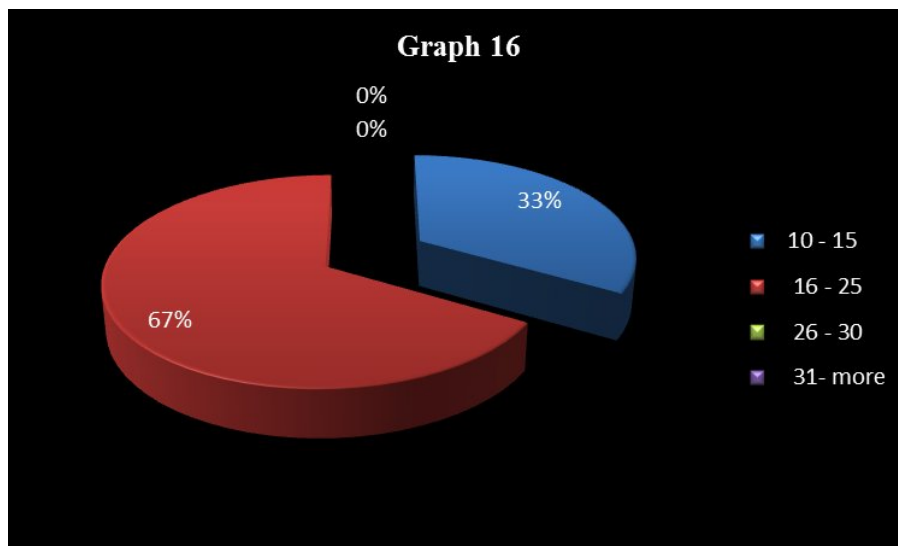
Regarding to working in rows, in most of classes where the students worked in this way, it was easier for the students to see the teacher well and vice versa, they paid attention to the lesson, participated in the class, and interacted with each other and with the teacher. Furthermore, when the students learned English in rows, the teachers taught this foreign language easily and controlled the whole class without any difficulty.

Another relevant point to state about this regard is that Mcleod et al. (2003) say that desks placed in rows influence on teaching because students who sit in front and the center of the class get more involved in a lesson. It can be said that in most of the classrooms observed, where the students worked in rows, not only the students who were sat in front and the center of the class were involved in learning, but also those who were sat at the back of the classroom since the space available to work and the number of learners was appropriate. However, in two classes where everyone worked in rows, the space of the classroom and the amount of learners limited them

to do activities (i.e., group work) which involve changing their desks from one place to another. In spite of this, most of the students paid attention to the teacher and participated in the English lessons.

In addition, aside from working in rows, there were classes where the learners arranged their seats in semicircle in order to do group work; in this situation their reaction toward the lessons was positive since they enjoyed changing the way they usually sit and interacting with their peers and sharing ideas of what was being learned.

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



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 33% of teachers mentioned in the survey that 10 to 15 students is an adequate number to teach English because they said it enables them to better monitor the process of learning. According to these educators, this small amount of learners implies a personalized education because the whole class has the

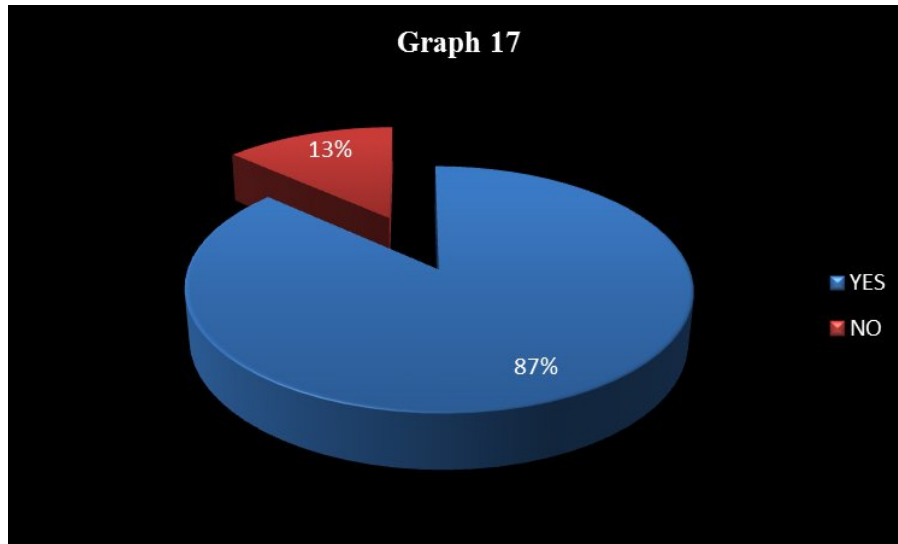
opportunity to both participate frequently in the lessons and interact with each other as well as with the teacher.

Moreover, apart from affirming that 10-15 students is an appropriate amount of students to teach their lessons, some other teachers considered this number to be a small class. Regarding this issue, Blatchford et al. (2003) affirmed that if small classes are organized, learners will have more opportunities to work individually. What these authors mention was observed in the lessons attending a few students since they worked on their tasks in an individual and organized way.

On the other hand, 67% of the teachers outlined in the survey that 16 to 25 students is a suitable number to teach English because according to their opinions, it helps them to create a dynamic class where students have more chances to participate actively during the entire lesson. The educators also stated that working with 16-25 learners allows them to perform their classes in a more personal manner, to evaluate the progress of everyone, to assist him/her in an individual way, and to assess his or her learning.

A significant point to remark about the surveyed teachers is that one of them stated that although working with 16-25 students would be an appropriate number to teach English, he must adapt his teaching to the reality because in their classes there are 35 learners just as it was confirmed in the observations.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape /CD recorder, Computer (s), Projector(s), Smart board, and Supplementary Materials)?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 87% of the teachers (13) in the survey outlined that they use teaching resources and supplementary materials. From these educators, two of them mentioned using the tape/Cd recorder, three teachers stated that they use the projector, three educators mentioned using supplementary materials, and twelve teachers affirmed that they use the coursebook. On the other hand, two educators (13%) pointed out that they do not use in their lessons TV, tape /CD recorder, computer (s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials. Both the positive and negative results were confirmed in the observations as it is indicated in the third paragraph below.

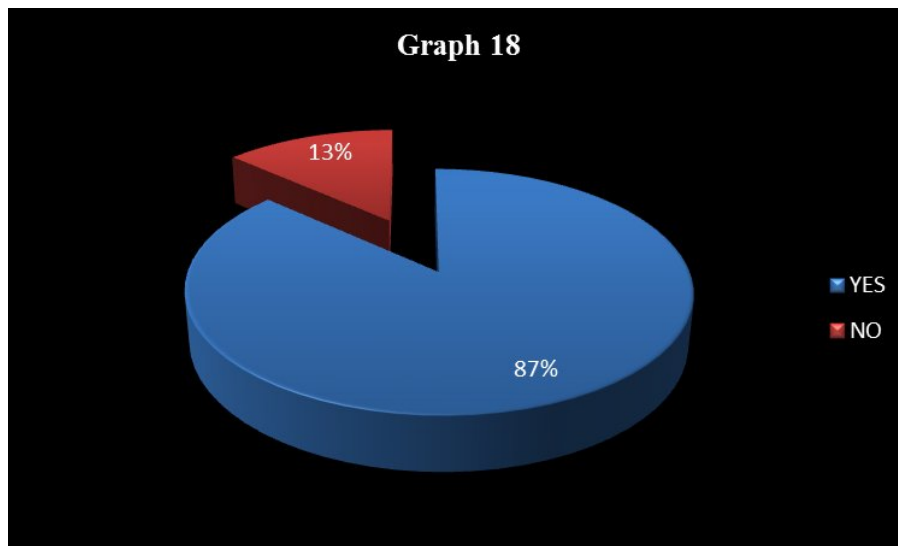
Regarding the students, 73% of them stated in the survey that the teachers use TV, tape /CD recorder, computer (s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary

materials. However, 27% of the learners affirmed that the educators do not use the teaching resources mentioned.

During the observations it was possible to find out that the teachers used the coursebook and the board in twelve lessons, the projector and supplementary materials such as pictures, magazines, realia, as well as flashcards were used in three classes, whereas the tape/Cd recorder was used in two lessons. When one or two of the resources already mentioned were used in combination to add variety to the teaching-learning environment and to offer the students a rich source of language input, the educators were able to encourage the active participation of everyone.

As the use of supplementary materials, the board, the projector, and the tape/Cd recorder added variety and liveliness to the classes, all the students were enthusiastic and motivated to learn English throughout the observed classes. However, in two classes where the learners worked on their tasks by using only the coursebook, it was observed that a few of them were bored and lost interest in the lessons. The researchers considered that it happened due to the lack of stimulus to learn the target language with other resources different than the one they are accustomed to. In fact, two students suggested the teacher teaching English with posters and pictures to create a colorful class because according to one of them, working always with the book is monotonous.

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



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph reveals that 87% of teachers consider the teaching resources they have in their classes to be appropriate to teach English. They exposed in the survey that these resources are used because it helps to stimulate different learning styles, to explain better their lessons, to develop the four language skills, to teach dynamic classes, and to facilitate the development of many activities so that the students increase their knowledge. These results were confirmed in most of the observations since the resources used by the educators were suitable for their classes; that is, the materials were colorful, attractive, and of good quality. This enabled the learners to focus their minds on doing several tasks to dynamically practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as much as they could.

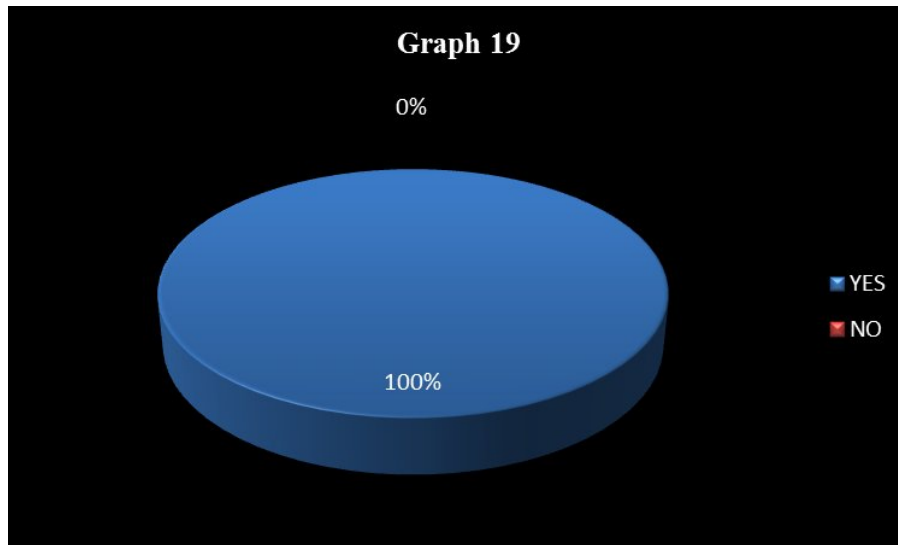
On the other hand, it is necessary to say that 13% of the teachers do not consider suitable the materials they have in their classes. In fact, one of them stated that the resources available are very few and another one pointed out that he needs to

improvise his teaching aids. These two educators taught English only by using the coursebook. Despite that, this resource was adequate to teach their lessons although the teachers would have created a more attractive teaching-learning environment if they had used simple sources of language input such as work cards, handouts, etc.

In addition, referring to this matter Cunningsworth (1984) suggest using newspaper articles, brochures, tickets, letters, advertisements, and announcements to help learners practice their English. The researchers would like to emphasize that these materials offer a rich source of the target language and are easy to be obtained; therefore, they can be used by any EFL teacher, especially for those (as the ones mentioned above) who think that they do not have appropriate teaching resources to teach their lessons.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

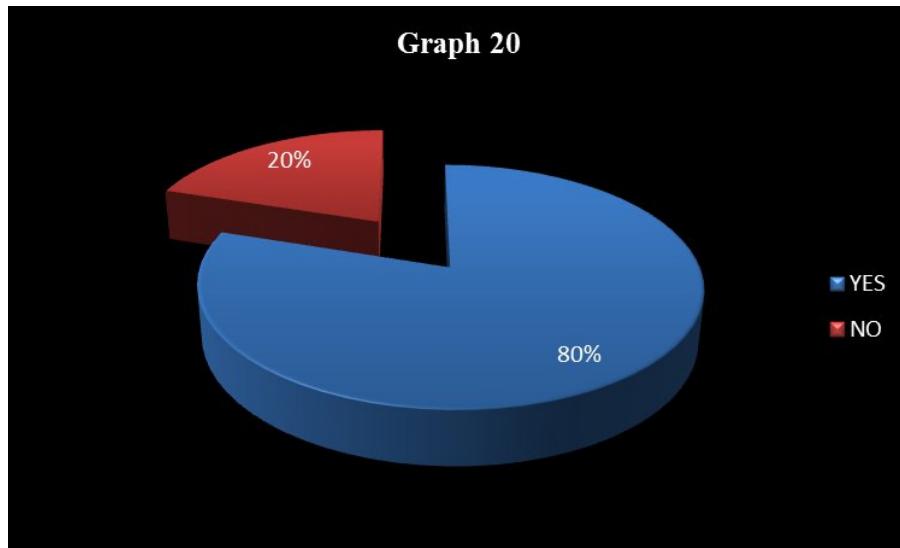
Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph indicates that 100% of the teachers affirmed in the survey that the institutions review their lesson plans with the frequency as follows: two of them said once a week; eight teachers stated once a month; and the rest of the educators indicated that the institution reviews the lesson plans according its schedule, in each unit of the coursebook, for sections, and twice a month.

It is important to mention that there was a contradiction in the answers of the survey between three teachers who work at the same institution because they did not agree with how frequently their lesson plans are reviewed. For instance, a teacher said that the lesson plans are reviewed once a month, while one of his partners stated twice a month, and another educator expressed that his plan was checked according to the schedule (not mentioned) set by the authorities.

During the observed classes, there was not anybody reviewing the lesson plans of the teachers although all of them affirmed that the institution does such an activity every certain period of time as specified above.

Do the institutions monitor teachers' teaching?



Authors: Madruñero Martha and Mallama Sara

Source: Ibarra and San Gabriel Private high Schools

This graph shows that 20% of the teachers mentioned in the survey that the institutions where they work at do not monitor their teaching, while 80% of them (12) stated that the authorities supervise their classes. From the educators who answered affirmatively, three said that their teaching is monitored once a month, whereas 6 of them affirmed that their lessons are monitored as follows: once a trimester, according to the institution planning, sometimes, twice or three times a year, and every five months. However, during the observation, no supervisor or authority monitored the teachers' lesson, probably because it did not coincide on the date established to observe or evaluate the teaching-learning process.

In relation to this aspect, Garvo and Rothstein (1998) point out that monitoring is essential in a class and represents a positive aspect of teaching because it raises the teachers' self-confidence since if institutions monitor teachers, they will personally grow to teach in an efficient and effective way.

Conclusions

- During the observations, it was evident that 73% of the teachers have a good level of linguistic competence and domain of the class, which is in accordance with their diploma.
- It was found that 67% of the students have an English basic level whereas the 33% is intermediate.
- In 67% of the classrooms, the appropriate physical space allowed the educators to assign activities such as group work and role play that stimulated the interaction and the participation of all the students.
- The 40% of teachers worked with an average of 16-25 students, which helped the educators to manage their classes in an effective way.
- 93%, which is most of the observed teachers considered the students' needs by teaching them activities suited to their age, interest, level, understanding, and aptitude to learn English.
- During the observation none of the institutions, where the research was carried out, did not monitor the teaching process, which contrasts the answers that the teachers expressed in the surveys; therefore, they were not given comments about their strengths and/or weaknesses of their work for the period of the observation.

Recommendations

- Private Institutions should encourage, support, and prepare teachers for both improving their language proficiency and updating their teaching methodology.
- Teachers should offer permanent training to their students in the English linguistic skills in order to improve their knowledge of this foreign language.
- Despite the classroom space, teachers should be creative, skilled, and organized to engage their students to learn English successfully.
- The number of students for each class should be standardized in a small number of students because in some classrooms there are too many learners and the space are not big enough to develop the activities comfortably.
- Few observed teachers should consider all student's needs such as attitude, aptitude, motivation, age, level, personality, and learning styles to make their learning very rewarding and motivating.
- Private institutions should monitor English teachers regularly to let them know the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching, so that they can keep their good job and change what is necessary to improve the quality of their work.

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ANNEX 1



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 básicaa 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 % ()
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ANNEX 2

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:											
C2	()	C1	()	B2	()	B1	()	A2	()	A1	()

ANNEX 3



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 ()
¿Porqué? _____	

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muyfáciles ()	Fáciles ()	Dificiles ()	Muydificiles ()
----------------	-------------	---------------	------------------

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

SI ()	NO ()
¿Porqué? _____	

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

SI ()	NO ()
--------	--------

6. ¿Tu profesor utilizaInglésla 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 ()
¿Porqué?	

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

SI ()	NO ()
¿Porqué?	

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

SI ()	NO ()
¿Porqué?	

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

SI ()	NO ()
--------	--------

GRACIAS!!!!

ANNEX 4



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!!!!