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

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN.

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Septiembre, 2018

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Doctora.

Ana Lucia Quiñonez Beltrán

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: “Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools” realizado por Arboleda Carrión Gabriela del Rocío y Cárdenas Pineda Jorge Eduardo, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, mayo de 2014

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“Nosotros, Arboleda Carrión Gabriela del Rocío y Cárdenas Pineda Jorge Eduardo declaramos ser autores del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo directora la Dra. Ana Lucia Quiñones Beltrán; y eximimos expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certificamos que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de nuestra exclusiva responsabilidad.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who never stop believing in us and who along with God have been our footprints in the sand.

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Finally, we want to thank to all our teachers since we are going to show others what they have taught us and we promise they will feel proud of us in a nearest future.

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ABSTRACT

The present study researched the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. This research was conducted in Quito and Rumiñahui, province of Pichincha, in five public high schools which were selected randomly. In these institutions, fifteen English teachers and fifteen students were surveyed through a questionnaire. Furthermore, it was required to interview the fifteen teachers and to observe the same number of classes.

The analysis of the collected data was done in a quantitative way. In this analysis, it was necessary to consider factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions.

The most important conclusion reveals that one of the factors that affects the English teaching and learning process is the language proficiency of most of the teachers since they lack knowledge, pedagogy, and competencies to teach their classes.

KEYWORDS: EFL teaching / factors / public high school.

Resumen

El presente estudio investigó los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés como lengua extranjera en los colegios públicos del Ecuador. Esta investigación se llevó a cabo en Quito, cantón Rumiñahui, provincia de Pichincha, en cinco colegios de nivel secundario que fueron seleccionados al azar. En estas instituciones, quince profesores de inglés y quince estudiantes fueron encuestados mediante un cuestionario. Además, se entrevistó a los quince maestros y se observó el mismo número de clases.

El análisis de los datos recogidos se lo realizó de una manera cuantitativa. En este análisis, fue necesario tener en cuenta factores que conciernen a los docentes, los estudiantes, las aulas y a las instituciones educativas.

La conclusión más importante revela que uno de los factores que afecta el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés es el dominio de la lengua de la mayoría de los maestros, ya que carecen de los conocimientos, pedagogía y competencias necesarias para enseñar a los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Enseñanza de EFL/factores/ colegios públicos.

INTRODUCTION

It has been founded by the SENESCYT (2012) that in Ecuador students of public high schools go to the university with very little knowledge of English. Because of this, the academic performance of the students is limited. Besides, they are not capable of applying for an international scholarship that enables them to study in a country which requires the use of this foreign language.

Based on what it is mentioned above, the current research was carried out to analyze factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in public high schools of Ecuador. Moreover, conducting this investigation is important because the findings will help EFL teachers and educational institutions to identify the causes of the problem; therefore, an appropriate solution to this situation may be found.

It is necessary to remark that three specific objectives were established to accomplish the purpose of the investigation. The objectives were to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place, to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and to determine teachers' instructional competence.

One important point to comment is that previous studies on factors that affect the English teaching-learning process have been conducted. Three of these studies are briefly described below.

The first study was carried out by Narayanan, Rajasekaran, and Iyyappan (2008) to analyze if factors such as motivation, attitude, and language anxiety affect the English learning. One of the limitations identified in this study is that statistical calculations were not used in an effective way.

The second study was conducted by Khamkhien (2010) both to determine how gender, motivation, and experience of studying English affect the choices of language learning strategies and to compare the roles of these factors and the pattern of language learning strategy used by Thai and Vietnamese students. One limitation is that the findings are inconclusive because of the number of students who participated in the study was small; therefore, subsequent studies analyzing a larger group of participants is required to clarify conclusions. Another limitation is that it is possible that learning strategies identified might be influenced by other variables such as nationality, age, field of study, etc. that were not taken into account in the research; hence, future studies may investigate whether students from different background make full use of learning strategies in their language learning.

The third study was carried out by Saricoban and Sakizli (2006) to analyze factors that affect classroom management. The factors analyzed in this study concerned teachers, students, and school environment. There are not limitations in the study because it was a bibliographical research based on prior investigation.

Coming back to the current investigation, it is important to mention that this study will benefit to the Ecuadorian educational institutions where the research was conducted and their EFL teachers since they will identify the factors that influence on the teaching-learning process to solve this situation. By solving this problem, the educational institutions and the teachers will have the opportunity to improve the English teaching quality; and it will help the students enhance their knowledge of this useful foreign language.

The current research will also contribute as a great source of information for those EFL teachers and researchers of public and private educational institutions of Ecuador.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The research was carried out in five public high schools in Quito and Ruminahui, province of Pichincha. The sample consisted of fifteen teachers and their students. The participants were from 8th basic education to 3rd year of senior high school. Most of them were female. The teachers were about 30 years old, whereas the age of the students was 11 to 17 years old.

Procedures

The research started by selecting theoretical information to conduct a literature review which included topics such as teaching methods and approaches, teaching techniques, managing learning, lesson design, class size, classroom space, seating arrangements, teaching resources, classroom observation, students' motivation, learning styles, and student's intelligence or aptitude to learn English. Additionally, information of five prior studies related to the factors that affect the English teaching-learning process was included in the literature review to theoretically support the present study.

After finishing the literature review, to conduct the field research, it was necessary to collect information by observing fifteen EFL classes, by interviewing and surveying fifteen teachers, and by surveying fifteen students randomly. The instruments used for collecting data were questionnaires, observation sheets, and note-taking. The questionnaires included questions which were answered by the teachers and students in a written way. The teachers' questionnaires contained twenty questions such as the level of education they have, the methods used by them in the EFL classes, the type of activities they teach, etc. And the students' questionnaires contained fourteen questions related to whether they like to learn

English, if the activities done in the classes motivate them to study this foreign language, etc. In addition, it is important to point out that a questionnaire with fourteen questions was used for interviewing all the teachers who participated in the study.

When all the information was collected in the field research, a quantitative analysis was done to interpret the obtained results. To do this analysis, twenty graphs were drawn and at the top of each one, a question was written to examine information related to factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions. Once the quantitative analysis was done, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Villalba and Rosero (2012) say that English is currently the lingua franca of the world since most of technological, scientific, academic, and social information is written in English. These authors state that English in Ecuador is important because this foreign language is a tool that helps a person to understand another person and cultures beyond a linguistic and a geographic boundary. They also emphasize the need to design an English curriculum according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) internationally accepted, which offers a standard guideline on elaborating language curriculum and syllabi. Moreover, Villalba and Rosero say that the design of the English curriculum intends to help Ecuadorian students of public education to develop their language skills.

Teaching Methods and Approaches

There are different methods and approaches used to teach English as foreign language since each one helps learners develop different skills in the target language. This section includes five teaching methods and approaches which are described below.

The first one is Grammar-Translation method. For Richards and Rodgers (2001), this method develops skills related to writing and reading because it is based on texts and lists of vocabulary to translate from the mother tongue to the target one. The translation is done word by word to memorize the meaning of new vocabulary. Moreover, the same authors state that in Grammar Translation Method the main unit of teaching is the sentence since it is the unique requirement to complete the language practice successfully. Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000) says that in this method the foreign language is learned by reading literature in the target language.

The second method is Communicative Language Teaching. According to Brown (2001), this method requires learners to use the language productively and receptively so that they can deal successfully with context outside the classroom. In addition, Richards and Rogers (2001) mention that Communicative Language Teaching promotes effective communication since learners are encouraged to communicate in the target language.

The third method is Task-Based Language Teaching. Regarding this approach, Richards and Rogers (2001, p. 241) say that it “offers a different rationale for the use of tasks as well as different criteria for the design and use of tasks”. They also state that Task-Based Language Teaching mainly encourages the use of tasks to plan and teach a language.

The next method is the Natural Approach. Brown (2001) says that sometimes in this approach a second language is learned: to communicate in an oral and written way, to listen to lectures, to speak in a classroom context, and to write a report of a research study. Furthermore, Richards and Rogers (2001) point out that the Natural Approach encourages the successful second and foreign language learning through meaningful communication and correct input.

The last method is Total Physical Response. Diaz-Rico and Week (1995) mention that this method is a way of learning in which students use body movements in order to show a respond to given commands. These authors also say that learners cannot be forced to produce language utterances before they are ready to. In this way, they are part of a positive environment to ease the learning process. In addition, Asher (1997) states that Total Physical Response is a useful teaching method because the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any language in a natural way.

Teaching Techniques

Gover and Walter (1983) mention that the use of different techniques will influence in great manner how students react, not only to draw their attention, but also to seek their active participation in class. They say that some of the techniques used by teachers are eliciting and correction. These teaching techniques are described below.

In eliciting, the main point of the class has to be inferred; many activities can be used to achieve the class' purpose being the most useful role-plays, guessing games, among others. In correction, accuracy in students is promoted since the main goal is to promote communication skills. This technique emphasizes the correction of mispronounced words known as mistakes which normally happen because students do not have clear idea of the meaning of new words or when they are not sure about the proper situation to use this vocabulary. Furthermore, Gower et al. (1983) state that correction is an essential technique that teachers must use if they want to avoid learners to get accustomed to making mistakes as if it were normal. These authors suggest that teacher be careful when correcting mistakes to prevent students resulted demotivated.

Managing Learning

Within managing learning, one important issue to consider is the way used by teachers to give instructions to students. Harmer (1991) suggests that teachers do not assume that learners have understood what they have to do. He emphasizes that it is always wise to check that students have grasped how to perform an activity, and when possible, educators can use the native language of the class to help learners to complete their task successfully. In addition, Woolfolk (2010) recommends teachers

make sure that students understand the instruction given to them so that they can participate in class.

Another topic related to managing learning is timing. Gower and Walter (1983) say that timing is essential at every stage of class since it is necessary for teachers to manage time correctly to make announcements or to set homework. They also mention that events such as finishing class at lunch time or not having enough time to give extra information promotes that students feel that the lesson finishes in a bad way.

Feedback is other aspect that cannot be skipped in managing learning. According to Wajnryb (1992), teachers are aware of the motivational values of positive feedback and the discouragement that negative reinforcement can produce. For Harmer (1991), feedback is an important part in the learning process because it helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses so that they can avoid problems related to language use. Furthermore, Watson (1999) says that feedback encourages teachers to help students check their work in order to evaluate their learning.

Lesson Design

Gower, Philips, and Walters (2005) mention that preparing a class is important for a teacher to achieve his/her objectives through lesson plans that can be adapted to the needs of students and other teaching aspects. These authors say that a lesson plan includes aims, procedures, approaches, activities, materials, aids, and equipment; they even state that information about the students, classroom circumstances, and problems can also be considered when planning lessons. Furthermore, Gower et al. recommend teachers take into account timing in their lesson plans so that they can develop their lessons properly.

Moreover, it is important to comment that Briggs, Gustafson, and Tillman (1991) point out that a plan shows the order or sequence of events during a lesson and indicates the amount and types of activities that are going to be developed in each event.

Class Size

Class size is a relevant aspect that must be considered in the language classroom. It is necessary to comment that teachers teach large and small classes. Referring to the first one, Harmer (2007) says that large classes can be considered as a problem because teachers have difficulty controlling a great number of students. He, however, mentions that large classes have advantages since the variety of criteria in the class may lead to active participation of every learner during a lesson

For Mayer, Mullens, and Moore (2000), the difficulty controlling students are a few or not presented in small classes. These authors emphasize that learners in small classes increase their opportunities to participate in a lesson because teachers have enough time to help them do activities that enrich their learning. In addition, Mayer et al. state that the way a course content and pedagogy is implemented by teachers in the classroom can be influenced by the class size.

Classroom Space

Haddad (2006) says that enough classroom space promotes interaction among students during a lesson; he also mentions that the type of organization in the class depends directly to the number of students. Moreover, Haddad suggests teachers consider the type of physical environment offered to learners since having enough space in the class is crucial to teach efficient lessons and obtain good results.

Moreover, Watson (1999) states that during a lesson, the space of a classroom can be affected by the size of the physical environment, the amount of students, the

seating arrangements, and fixed objects such as the board. That is why this author recommends teachers observe how students and fixtures are separated from one another by the classroom space so that they can arrange the physical environment differently.

Seating Arrangement

Scrivener (2007) says that the way of organizing seats depends on classroom space and teachers' willingness to do it. He affirms that ordering the class in a different way helps students to interact with different peers from the accustomed ones; it also makes them change the focus they have from the teacher. Scrivener suggests teachers be aware of students' culture since some changes may result offensive for them. In this case, some seating arrangements are not possible, but others can be done to promote interaction.

In addition, Gower et al (2005) say that the students' seats can be arranged in different ways such as circles, horseshoes, T- ways, or in rows. But, every choice has to be analyzed according to students' needs and culture. They state that seating arrangements in the class may be practical and useful to determine student's attitude toward the teacher and their classmates. Furthermore, Gower et al mention that when arranging the desks of the students, teachers consider the activities to be performed and the free movement learners can have during the lesson.

Classroom and Teaching Resources

Resources in class can be considered as extra material used by teachers to capture student's attention and to emphasize relevant content during a lesson. According to Clarke (2012), one of the most important supplies to be used as essential part of the class is the board. This author also says that resources such as tape recorders and CD players are used by teachers to provide students with audio

language input so that they can improve their communicative skills. Furthermore, Clarke states that projectors can be used by teachers to teach a lesson to students.

Moreover, Woodward (2001) says that even though there are materials such as flash cards, pictures, etc. that help students to learn new vocabulary, one important supply in every class is a dictionary since it is useful for students to check the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

In addition, Harmer (2007) states that resources based on paper or printed material are not much useful in our current world since teachers have to base their teaching in technological resources such as computer programs, audiovisual materials, among others. Harmer affirms that by using videos or any other digital material, students are able to improve their communicative skills because they feel their interaction more real. For this reason, this material can be used as the basis for debates or discussions in classes.

Classroom Observation

Richards and Farrell (2011) say that the purpose of classroom observation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educator who is being observed.

These authors mention that although it is an important component of teaching practice, the nature and limitations of observation need to be considered.

Furthermore, Richards and Farrell indicate that classroom observation deals with the professional growth and development of teachers.

Moreover, Gower and Walters (1983) say that when observing classroom, supervisors have to help the observed teacher to understand his/her errors by offering a subsequent corrective feedback so that he or she can improve and correct anything which is not well performed. Gower and Walters emphasize that sometimes teachers fear observations since they consider them as invasive and mean; therefore, an

opportune talk with the observer will help them to be relaxed and to avoid making errors because of their nerves.

In addition, Wajnryb (1992) states that classroom observation has two different sides: the first one refers to the observed teacher who after the comments coming from a supervisor is ready to begin a process and correct mistakes; the second one is related to the advantages that the observer receives by refining his abilities to monitor classrooms. It means that he or she is able to analyze and interpret results from the observation to improve his/her own teaching.

Students' Motivation

Spaulding (1992) states that for achieving a desire, it is necessary to bear in mind the type of motivation since it represents the best way for people to work hard and continue in the same path until reaching their goal. This author mentions two types of motivation which are intrinsic and extrinsic. In the first type of motivation, students work with an inner desire to achieve an objective successfully. In the second type of motivation, learners need stimuli such as regards or punishments to achieve a goal.

In addition, Woolfolk (2007) states that motivation is an internal state whose main purpose is to encourage learners so that they can feel comfortable performing a particular task. This author also emphasizes that motivation is related to self-confidence and moral principles.

Learning Styles

Woolfolk (2007) mentions that a learning style is the way that a learner have to learn something; hence, to get better results in the teaching process, teachers must decide the right manner to approach students learning by taking into account their characteristics.

Moreover, Constantinidou and Baker (2002, p. 296) affirm that “a learning style is a student’s consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning”. These authors mention three types of learning styles such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Constantinidou and Baker also provide the following information of how these kinds of students learn:

Auditory learners learn by reading lectures aloud, by listening to others, and often by talking to themselves, especially when they acquire new knowledge.

Visual students learn by writing and reading tasks since their main ability is to absorb new knowledge from written language. They can remember what they have written even if they read it once. Furthermore, visual-spatial learners are people who get better opportunity to acquire new content from visual materials such as demonstrations, videos, etc.

Kinaesthetic learners learn better through body movements. They can be distracted easily when working on written tasks; therefore, it is more practical for kinaesthetic learners to interiorize new content by examining the material being learned with their own hands.

Students Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

Regarding intelligence, Woolfolk (2007, p. 11) says that it is the ability to “acquire and use knowledge”. With regard to aptitude, Candlin and Mercer (2001) state that the ability to know and remember new words, the ability to recognize the function of a particular word in sentences, and the ability to work out grammatical rules are part of the aptitude to learn a language.

At this point, it is necessary to complete the information given above with five studies done on factors that affect the English learning process. These studies are described in the following section:

A study was carried out by Narayanan, Rajasekaran, and Iyyappan (2008) to determine if factors such as motivation, attitude, and language anxiety affect the English learning process. Four hundred and eight students (138 female and 270 male) from five colleges in and around Chennai, India participated in the research. The information was collected through a questionnaire of five point scale going from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

To analyze the results obtained in the study, a quantitative analysis was done, using computer programs as Microsoft Excel version 2006. The results show that factors such as motivation, attitude, and language anxiety have a great impact or affect the English learning process. It implies that if learners want to foster linguistics skills effectively, their motivation has to be high, their attitude toward the language class has to be positive, and their language anxiety must be low.

Furthermore, a study was conducted by Khamkhien (2010) both to determine how gender, motivation, and experience in studying English affect the choices of language learning strategies and to compare the roles of these factors and the pattern of language learning strategy. One hundred and thirty six students participated in the research. The information was collected through a questionnaire which included eighty items. To interpret the results, a descriptive and inferential statistics analysis was carried out using a statistical program to sum scores.

The results of the study show that motivation is the most significant factor affecting the choice of the strategies, followed by experience in studying English, and gender respectively. Moreover, the results show that lowly-motivated and inexperienced students tend to get difficulties to learn second language.

Moreover, a study (being a bibliographical research and based on prior studies) was conducted by Saricoban and Sakizli (2006) to determine the factors that

affect the management of the classroom. These factors involve students, school environment, and teachers. For the researchers, it is necessary to consider students' characteristics and needs, language programs, classroom activities, and materials to teach successfully. Similarly, it is required to take into consideration the school environment composed of physical things that students see, hear or feel, seating arrangement, and instructional materials. The researcher also suggest considering large classes, mixed abilities, and educational factors. Additionally, it is important to consider factors related to lesson design, the way teachers motivate the students, and teachers' training.

The conclusion of the researchers is that if the factors affecting the teaching and learning process are considered, the management of the classroom prevents from problems to effectively create a positive learning environment.

In addition, a study was carried out in Nigeria by Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) to determine if students have an appropriate environment to learn English. The participants were 3000 students of public high schools. The instruments used to collect data were a questionnaire and observations. The researchers designed the questionnaire by generating a list of items, which required students' responses to teaching strategies, instructional resources/media used by the teachers, and the teaching/learning environment.

Some of the results found in the research are as follows: most of the schools are overcrowded (70 to 100 students), and the teachers do not have enough space to move around to give individual attention to students; there is no electricity in majority of the schools; most of the schools have no adequate staff rooms and offices; and the majority of the schools do not have libraries, and where they are available, there is scarcity of books in the shelves. Based on these results, the

researchers conclude that the public secondary schools do not offer appropriate conditions to teach and learn English as a second language.

Additionally, a study was carried out in Turkey by Bektas-Centiyaka and Oruc (2011) to determine learners' motivation of public and private universities and to recognize reasons for studying English. Two hundred twenty eight students participated in the research. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The analysis of information gathered during the research was done in a qualitative and quantitative way.

The results of the study show that the motivation to learn English of the students of private universities is significantly higher than the one of those learners of public institutions. It is because private universities offer a learning environment full of technology, whereas public universities do not have such facilities. The results also indicate that almost all the students of public and private universities want to learn English to find a job, to get a better paying job, or to get promotions at work.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

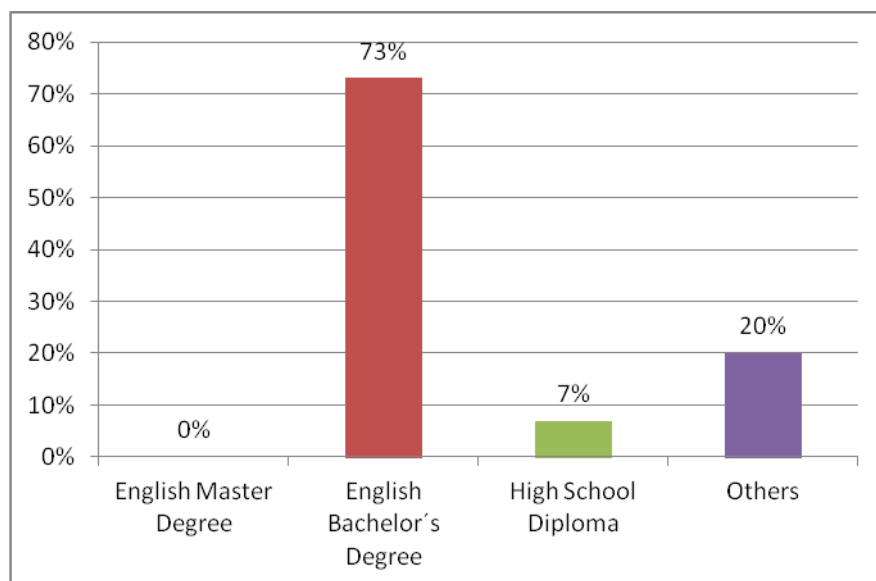
This current section contains the quantitative analysis which was done to analyze and interpret the information obtained from the observed classes, interviews, and surveys applied to the teachers and students. This data was tabulated and analyzed to identify factors that concerns teachers, students, classroom, and educational institutions that affect the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 1 shows that 73% of teachers have a Bachelor Degree in English since they have studied to teach their classes in a good and effective way. However, not all of them (7) taught the foreign language appropriately because their pedagogy was not well handled in some observed classes.

Furthermore, it is necessary to say that most of the teachers, in spite of having a Bachelor Degree in English, do not have an acceptable language proficiency to teach their classes. Furthermore, they were placed on B1 which corresponds to a low-intermediate level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The observed educators were placed on the level indicated because in an interview applied to them, they answered seven of fourteen questions without enough fluently.

To continue with the analysis of graph 1, it is important to say that the percentage corresponding to “Others” (20%) indicates that three teachers teach English although they do not have a Bachelor Degree in teaching this foreign language. For example, one educator has a degree in Mathematics, another in History, and other in Dentistry. Moreover, the three teachers in the interview stated that they had learned English in a private institute and not in a university. Despite this fact, in the observed classes these teachers did not teach the target language in an effective way because lacked knowledge of English and methodology to instruct their lessons.

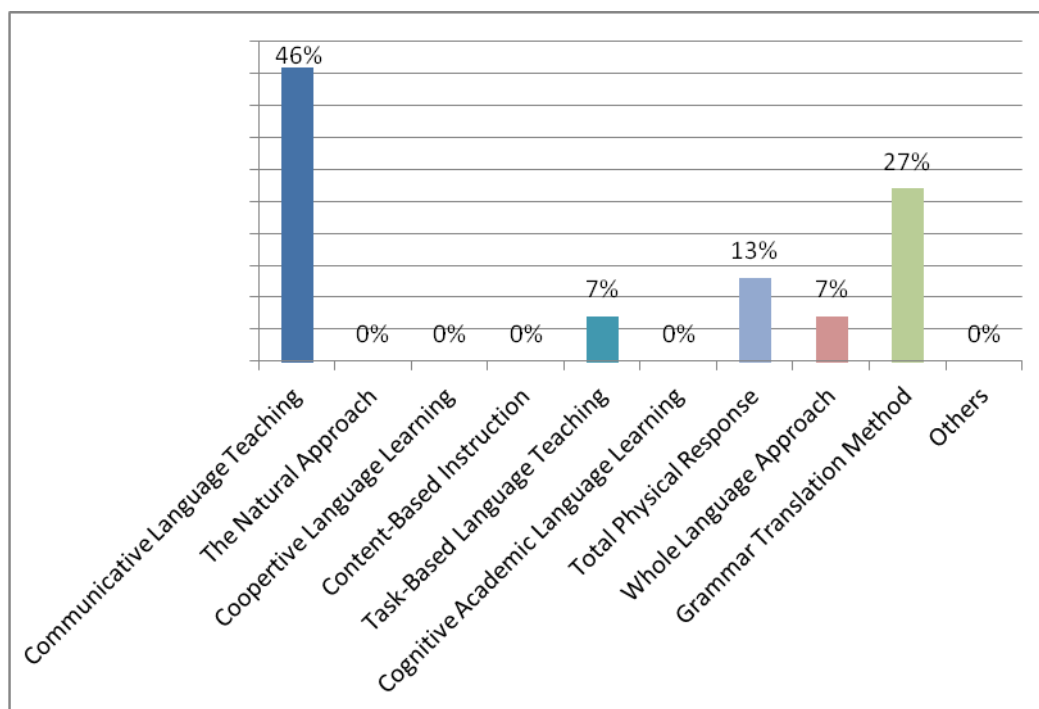
In addition, the percentage in graph 1 represented by 7% corresponds to one teacher who has a High School Diploma. Similarly to the situation mentioned in the paragraph above, this educator showed a lack of proficiency in English and methodology to teach his classes.

An important point to comment is that the percentage represented by 0% is related to Master Degree. This means that none of the observed teachers had continued their studies to get a post-graduate degree. In a post-interview, the teachers were asked to give reasons for not having a master degree. One reason given by the educators is that a degree of this type requires them to invest a lot of money that can

not be afforded. Another reason indicated by the teachers is that they do not have enough time to work and study at the same time since their schedule is long and tiring; hence, they are not able to do these two tasks successfully.

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

Graph 2



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

This graph shows that the teachers in the questionnaire indicated that they used Communicative Language Teaching in 46% of their lessons. This result was totally evidenced in the observed classes in which the same percentage of teachers taught English by using the method already mentioned. In this case, these educators used activities based on speaking skills in order to stimulate the students to communicate among them.

An important point to indicate about Communicative Language Teaching is that Díaz-Rico and Weed (1995) say that this method focuses on the development of

communicative skills since it promotes the learning of a second language in which learners are encouraged to communicate with their classmates.

Continuing with the analysis of the results, the next percentage (27%) corresponds to Grammar Translation Method. This teaching method mainly focuses on reading and writing tasks and encourages the use of the mother tongue to translate a list of words or texts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the observed classes, four teachers used this method both to explain grammar structures of sentences written on the board and to teach the meaning of new vocabulary. Moreover, these educators reinforced what they taught by asking the students to write their own sentences in order to extend their practice of grammatical structures. Those teachers translated from English into Spanish some sentences to help students learn the target language.

Following the interpretation of the results, 13% of the teachers stated in the questionnaire that they used Total Physical Response to teach their classes; nevertheless, only one of them taught English by using this method.

It is important to say that Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995) state that Total Physical Response links learning with body movements that help students, in a non-verbally way, respond to given commands. Furthermore, in this method students are motivated to practice their speaking “when they feel ready to speak” Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 76).

In the observations, the method mentioned was applied in a similar way as the one indicated in the paragraph above; that is, the teacher who used Total Physical Response gave instructions to the students to make them perform physical actions while they learned verbs; for example, the teacher (doing the action) said “stand up”, and the students did what they were asked to. In this case, the students’ learning was

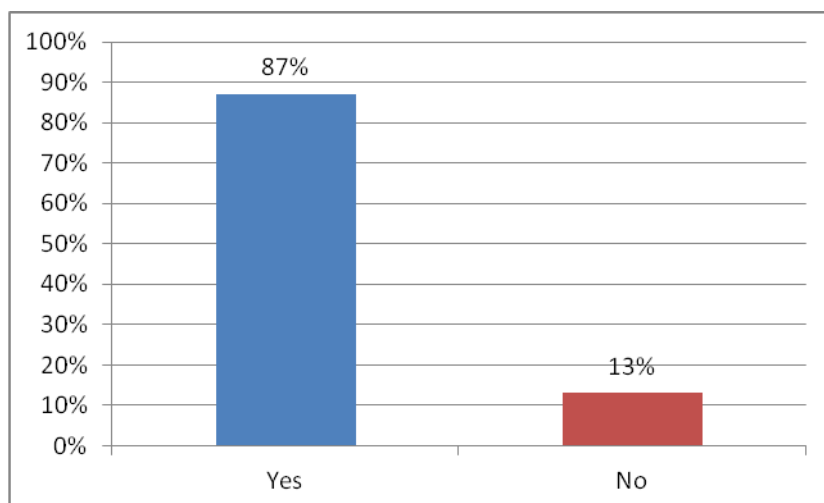
accompanied with physical movements since they listened attentively and responded physically to commands given by her teacher. The educator also encouraged the learners to talk about the actions that they did. This means that when the students finished learning verbs through physical activity, they were ready to practice their speaking skills.

To complete the analysis of the results of graph 2, it is necessary to point out that 7% of the teachers affirmed that they used Task Based Language Teaching and Whole Language Approach; however, none of the observed educators used these methods in their English lessons.

On the other hand, methods such as the Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content Based Instruction, and Cognitive Academic Language Learning (corresponding to 0% in the graph) were not used during the observed lessons. These results coincide on those indicated by the teachers in the survey.

Do you use Whole-group activities to teach your lessons?

Graph 3



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

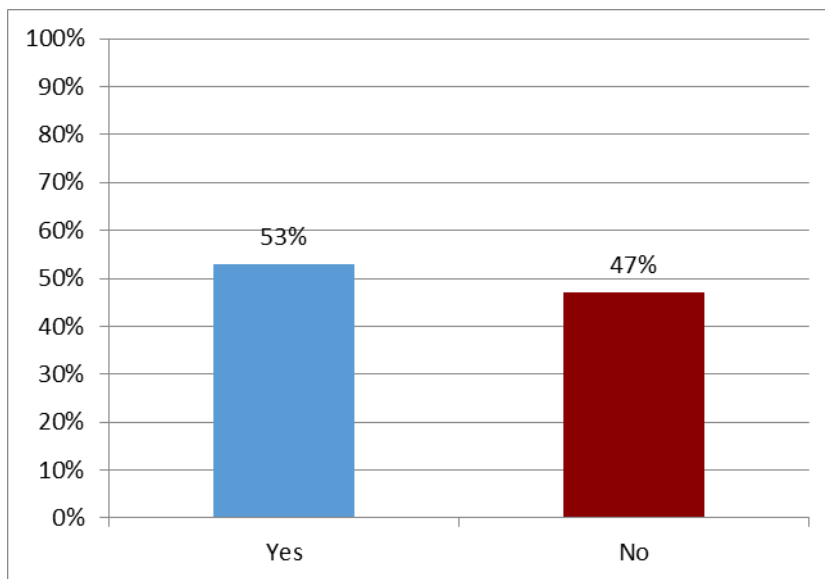
Graph 3 shows that 87% of the observed teachers (13) stated in the questionnaire that they use whole group activities in their classes in order to explain a point of a lesson to all the students at the same time and help them to build their own knowledge. In the observations, however, only eleven teachers used these type activities to teach their EFL lessons in which the learners worked as a whole group.

On the other hand, graph 3 shows that 13% of the teachers indicated that they do not use whole-group activities since both of them argued that this type of work is not useful to teach English. Moreover, one of these teachers mentioned that he does not use whole-group activities because not all the students learn at the same time.

In the students' questionnaire, 60% of them affirmed that these type of activities motivate them to learn the target language. In spite of this fact, not all the learners worked in a motivating way because some of them were bored, distracted, and focused their minds on watching through the window of the classroom rather than paying attention to what they were learning. Indeed, these students showed a lack of motivation and lost interest in doing whole group activities since their participation in class was not encouraged by five teachers who only stimulated a few learner, especially those sat in the front of the classroom.

Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

Graph 4



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 4 shows that 53% of the teachers indicated that they use individual activities to teach English because these types of tasks help them to be aware of the students' individual needs and to know about the mistakes of every learner. The teachers also said that by assigning individual tasks, they can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the students.

In spite of these results, during the observations, only 3 teachers (20%) used individual activities even though this type of work was not carried out in an appropriate way since the educators asked the whole class to individually complete a task on the book, but they did not check whether all the students worked on their task effectively. That is, the teachers only checked the work of six or seven learners.

On the other hand, 47% of the teachers mentioned that they do not use individual activities. The reasons given by these teachers is that it is not easy to teach the learners one by one, it is better for the students to interact among them, and there

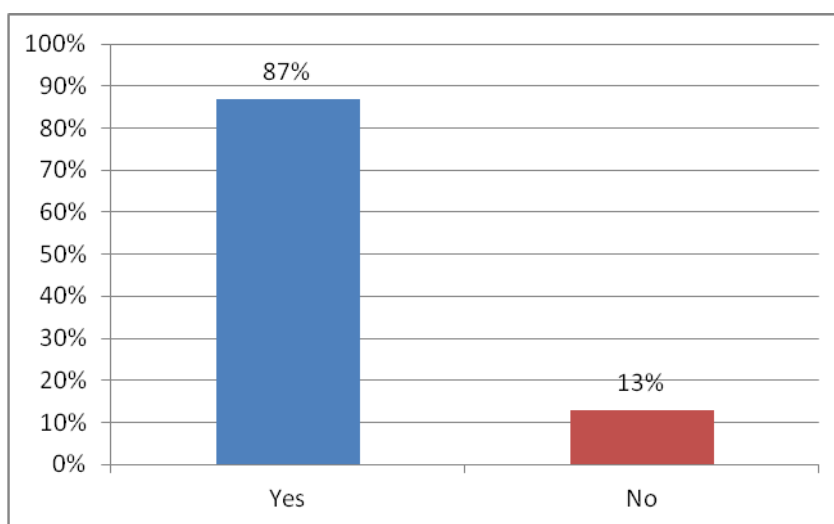
is no time to teach individually. These educators actually did not make the learners work individually; therefore, their answer was confirmed during the observations.

In the students' questionnaire, they were asked whether they consider the tasks used in the English classes to be motivating. Nine students affirmed that the individual activities used in their classes are not motivating to learn English, whereas six learners answer that they are motivated to learn the target language through the tasks done in class in an individual way.

In the observations, most of the students were bored while working individually since the activities assigned seemed not be suited to their interest and level of motivation and because the teachers did not encourage the whole class enough to work on the tasks enthusiastically and dynamically.

Do you use Group-Work activities to teach your lessons?

Graph 5



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

It is shown in graph 5 that 87% of the teachers mentioned that they use group work activities in their classes. They stated that using this type of work is the best

way to learn English because it is easier for them to check the learning of the whole class and the learners are able to get better results.

During the observations, all these teachers used group work activities in their classes. It was observed that in the lessons some of the students worked while others were distracted although nine of the teachers monitored the work of the students constantly.

Furthermore, it is necessary to say that one educator did not check the students' learning when they worked in groups because he sat in his desk all the time. Considering what this teacher did, it is relevant for the researchers to mention that when a teacher is not aware of the students' learning and he or she does not walk around the classroom to make sure learners are working effectively, the class does not work in an appropriate way and does not finish the tasks just as it happened in one observed lesson.

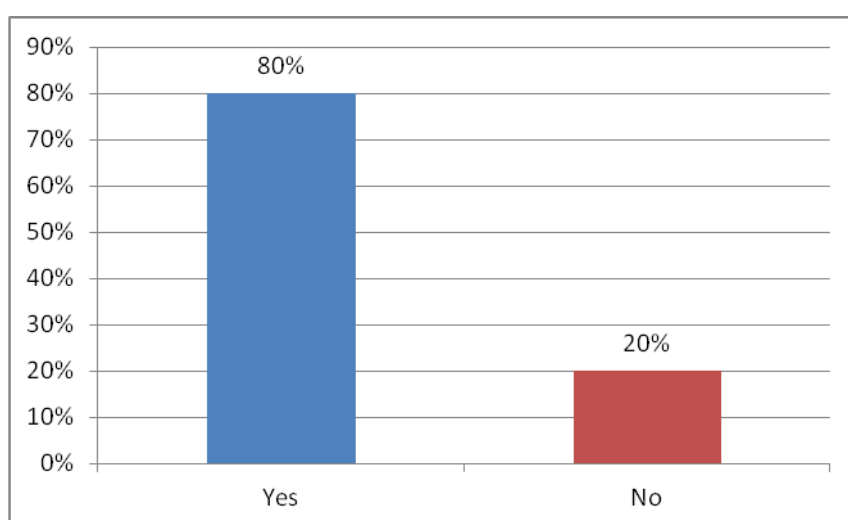
On the other hand, 13% of the teachers indicated that they do not use group work activities; they argued that these types of tasks trigger distractions and promote conversations in Spanish. Besides, the educators said that not all the learners do what they have to since most of the time just some of them work and others do not contribute toward the lesson.

Referring to students, they were asked whether the activities done in groups motivate them to learn English. Nine learners affirmed that these tasks are motivating to learn English, while six of them answered negatively. In one observed class most of the students were not motivated to learn English by working in groups since the teacher focused his mind on doing another activity and let the class do whatever they want. That is, the teachers did not monitor the learning and work of the students who got bored and wanted to finish the class as soon as possible.

It is important to mention that Woolfolk (2007) says that working in groups gives students the opportunity to learn from each other. It can be said that only nine of the observed teachers who used group work activities helped the class all the time, promoted the interaction among the learners, and checked their learning process very often in order to provide everyone with the chance to learn from their peers while doing tasks in groups.

Do you use English most of the time in your class?

Graph 6



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

This Graph reveals that 80% of the teachers mentioned in the questionnaire that they use English most of the time in their classes; in contrast, 20% of them provided a negative answer. It was found in the observations that ten teachers used English 100%, two 75%, two 50%, and one 25%. Nevertheless, only five teachers (33%) taught English in an effective way since the rest made mistakes in pronunciation and grammar structures not only when they spoke the target language, but also when they wrote information on the board. In fact, in some classes, five

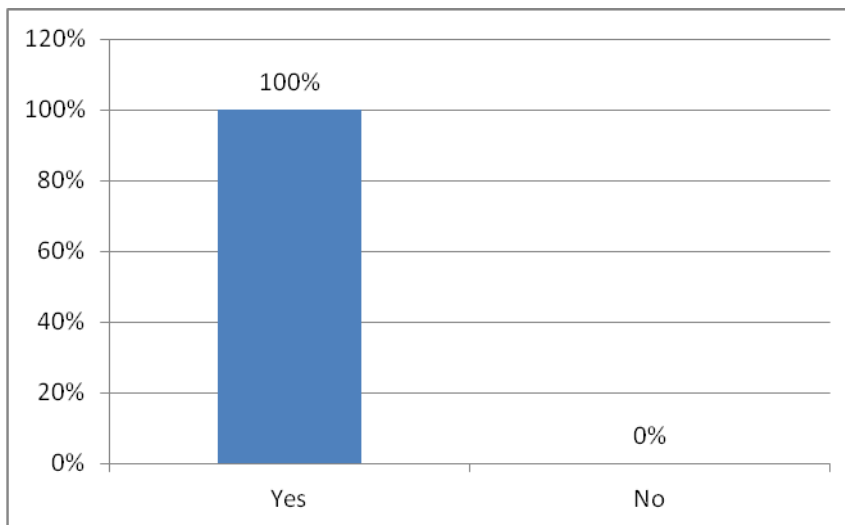
teachers taught basic vocabulary and simple grammar structures that were not explained to the students by using the target language effectively; therefore, these educators used Spanish in their classes in order to make the students understand both what they were learning and what they had to do.

Regarding the students, only 50% of them indicated that the teachers used English most of the time to teach their lessons. These results differ a little of the ones gotten from the observations since as it was mentioned, most of the educators used English very often in their classes although a half of them failed in teaching the target language.

In relation to using English in the language classroom, Gower et al. (2005) state that teaching classes in the target language helps students involve in the content of a lesson and promotes their learning. The researchers agree with these authors since the use of English most of the time in classes encourages students to increase their knowledge and to succeed in learning this foreign language.

Do you plan your lessons?

Graph 7



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 7 indicates that 100% of the survey teachers mentioned that they plan their lessons. During the observed classes, only two teachers demonstrated that they had planned their classes since they considered important aspects such as the topic of the lesson, objectives, warm-up activities, guided or individual practice, review, and feedback. However, both teachers did not consider aspects such as timing and materials which are very necessary to develop a planned activity. Information of why they did not consider the aspects mentioned is provided in the section corresponding to graphs 8 and 17 respectively.

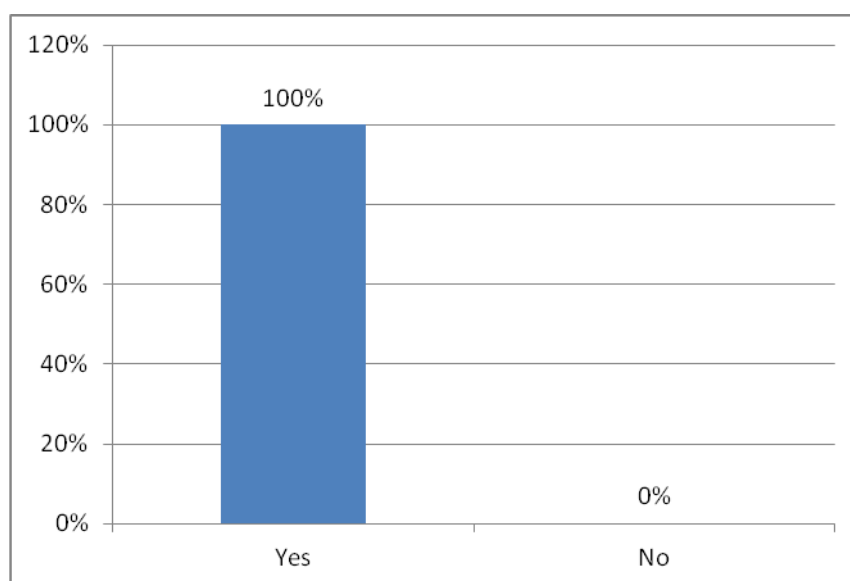
On the other hand, thirteen teachers did not demonstrate a planning of their lessons because they only focused on continuing the students' book; that is, the teachers usually started the classes by asking the students to open the last page of the book that had been already studied and taught English without introducing any warm up activity that encourages everyone to learn a new topic. Besides, some teachers did

not handle in an effective way all the aspects of a lesson plan although they used a well-structured book providing the information needed to carry out a lesson successfully.

It is worth remarking that Gower et al. (2005) say that to develop a lesson in an appropriate way, teachers must plan their classes so that they can be aware of the objectives they intend to achieve. This information given by these authors is useful to be considered since lesson planning enables teachers to set up the aims of a lesson and to know what they want students to learn.

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

Graph 8



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 8 shows that 100% of the teachers stated that they consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instructions when teaching their classes.

Referring to instructions, Harmer (1991) suggests that when giving instructions, teachers make sure that students understand how to perform a task. However, during

the observations, only five educators (33%) asked the students if they had understood the way a task was going to be done and provided additional clarification of the commands that they gave to the learners so that they can do their tasks. In contrast, the rest of the teachers assumed that the whole class had understood the instructions given to do a task because they neither made sure that there were students who did not understand what they had to do nor they offered further clarification of the activities intended to be done in the class; therefore, these learners failed to do their tasks.

According to the students' questionnaire, 93% of learners indicated that their teachers give clear instructions to help them do their tasks, while one student (7%) said that the instructions given to him are not clear to develop his tasks.

With regard to discipline, 100% of the surveyed teachers affirmed that they consider discipline when teaching their lessons. Nevertheless, eleven educators (73%) were able to manage discipline in their lessons, while four teachers (27%) had difficulty controlling discipline because not all the students paid attention to the lessons and collaborated with the teachers.

Concerning the students' survey, thirteen learners (87%) mentioned that their teachers maintain discipline in their classes, whereas the rest answered in a negative way.

To complement the aspect of discipline, it is important to say that Woolfolk (2007) indicates that maintaining classroom discipline not only involves getting students in silence but also making sure that they participate in class. It is necessary to say that although eleven teachers were able to get students in silence as they explained something, not all the students participated in the observed classes. It

happened since there were a few learners who did not want to take part in the lessons and because the number of students was large.

In relation to feedback, ten observed teachers took into consideration this aspect since they helped the students when they had difficulty doing their tasks. In this case, the educators let the students identify their errors or mistakes and assisted them in the correction of such mistakes in an individual and a whole way. However, five teachers did not give feedback to the students because neither did they praise the good work of the students nor did they correct the errors and mistakes of the whole class.

Referring to the students, eleven learners mentioned in the survey that their teachers let them know what they do very well and what they need to correct. In other words, these students mean that the educators offer them positive feedback when necessary.

It is relevant to say that Harmer (1991) states that through feedback students can identify their strengths and weaknesses. In ten observed classes, with feedback given by some teachers, the learners were aware of what they did effectively and of what they had to improve.

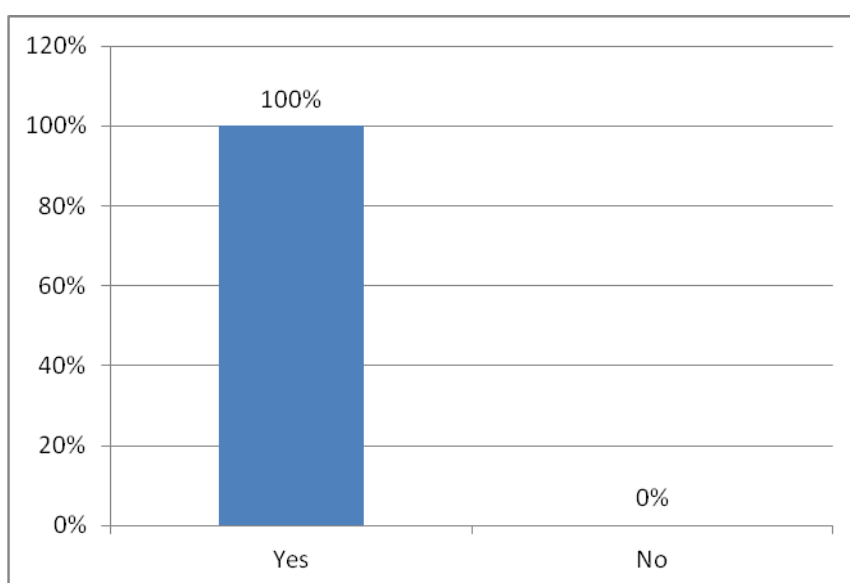
Regarding timing, Gower et al. (2005) recommend that teachers manage timing correctly in a class. Nevertheless, four teachers managed this aspect in an effective since they assigned an allotted time for each activity that the students did. The rest of the educators (eleven) were not able to manage timing effectively since they assigned activities but without letting the students know the time they had to complete a task. As a result, some of these teachers lacked time to complete their lessons.

In the students' questionnaire, twelve learners stated that their teachers do not assign a specific time to make them work on each activity done in their lessons. The answer of these students was confirmed during the observed classes since some learners could not complete their tasks in time.

Factors Concerning Students

Do you consider students' needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 9



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 9 reveals that 100 % of the teachers affirmed in the questionnaire that they consider the students' needs such as age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles when teaching EFL; however, only five teachers (33%) took into account the students' needs. For example, four teachers encouraged students to learn English in a motivating way, five educators considered the student's age because the activities were suited to them, and five teachers took into account the student's aptitude since they assigned listening, speaking, and reading activities at those who were good at these language skills.

On the other hand, ten teachers (67%) did not take into account the students' needs because the material used was not appropriate for the age of the learners; therefore, this made them lost their interest and motivation to learn English.

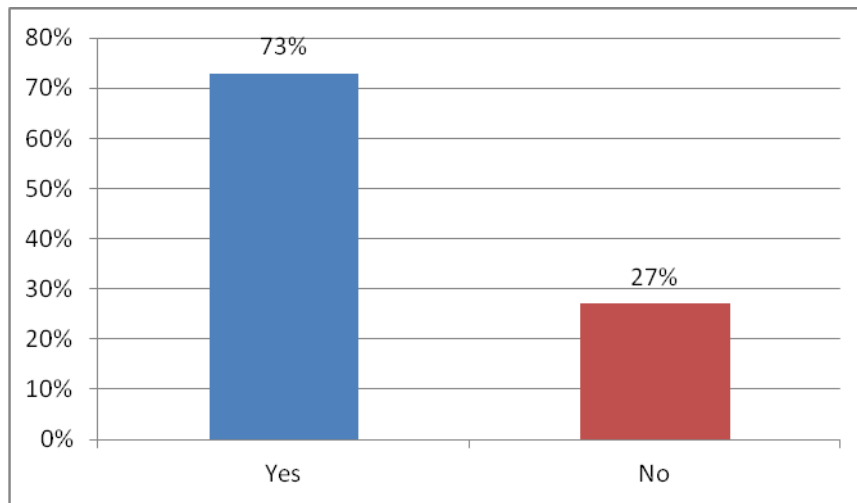
Moreover, it is necessary to point out that seven teachers (47%) did not consider learning styles such as auditory and kinaesthetic learners because they did not encourage the students to learn English through listening and hands-on activities.

To complement the issue of learning styles, it is necessary to say that Constantinidou and Baker (2002) suggest using a great variety of activities to stimulate the learners with different preference for learning so that they can get good results. Based on this information, it can be emphasized that some of the observed teachers did not offered the students different tasks to suit to their auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic learning styles.

At this point, it is important to mention that in the questionnaire the students were asked whether they like to learn English; 87% of them answered in an affirmative way. Nevertheless, during the observation, most of the students got bored in those classes where their needs were not considered. As a result, their participation in class was decreased.

Do you consider students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 10 shows that 73% of the teachers affirmed that they take into consideration the level of students to teach their lessons; nevertheless, during the observed classes, eight teachers (53%) considered the language proficiency of the learners because the activities and tasks were appropriate and easy for the class. Moreover, some teachers even used simple vocabulary and adapted their speech to the knowledge of the students in order to explain grammar points that were understood by most of the students.

An important point to comment is that some teachers told one of the researchers that at the beginning of the school year, the institution does a placement test in the English language in order to identify the level of students and adapt the curriculum to their understanding. The teachers also said that during two weeks, they help students to improve their knowledge by fulfilling contents that have not been previously understood. It indicates that these educators are well aware that taking into account the level of the learners is useful to succeed in teaching English.

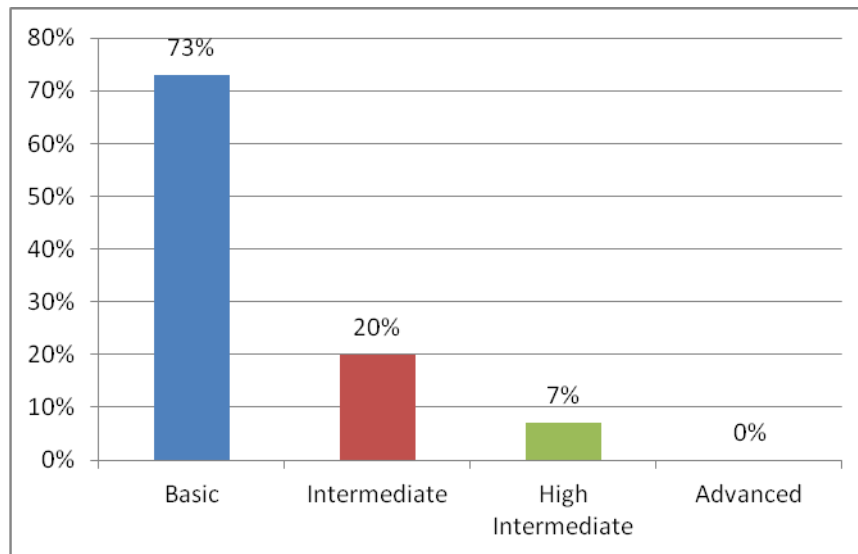
On the other hand, 27% of the teachers seem not to be well aware of the students' level to teach their lessons since they mentioned in the questionnaire that they do not take into account the language proficiency of the class. Although four teachers answered negatively in the questionnaire, a total of seven teachers (47%) were the ones who did not consider the learners' level to teach their lessons. These teachers did not take into account that in their classes there were students with different level of English; that is, they did not adapt activities to suit to the knowledge of the learners since they taught the foreign language as if the whole class had the same level.

Regarding the students' survey and considering the question referred to the type of activities that their teachers use in their classes, eight learners (53%) indicated that their teachers include different types of tasks in the lessons to help them interact with their classmates. During the observations, the teachers who considered the level of the class encouraged the interaction among the students through the different activities they taught.

At this part, it is relevant to remark that Clarke (2012) says that it can be difficult for teachers to help students with a limited understanding of English. Hence, this author suggests teachers consider the student's language proficiency to help them improve their knowledge of the foreign language. What Clarke recommends is very necessary and essential to be considered in the EFL classes in order to facilitate the process of learning and stimulate the students to learn the target language.

Which is the level of your students?

Graph 11



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

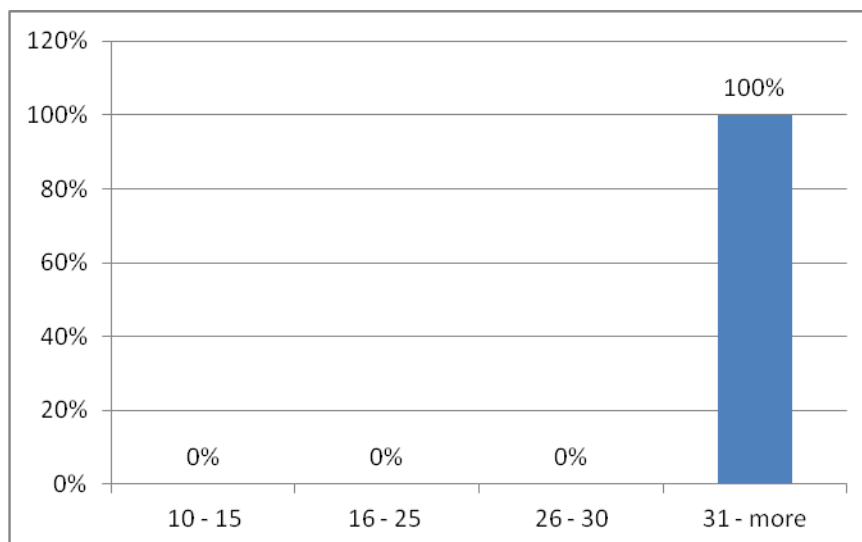
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 11 shows that the teachers in the questionnaire stated that the level of students is as follows: basic 73%; intermediate 20%; and high intermediate 7%. Although these results were difficult to be determined in the exact percentages mentioned, in the observed classes there were students whose language proficiency was the one indicated by the educators. For example, the learners who had high-intermediate level did their tasks effectively and asked questions using the target language without any difficulty, whereas some of the learners with intermediate and those with basic language proficiency used Spanish to ask questions and to participate in the lessons. In addition to determining the level of the students through the activities they did in the classes, the book they used played an important role to know their English language proficiency.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students are there in the observed classes?

Graph 12



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 12 shows that 100% of the surveyed teachers affirmed that they teach to more than 31 students. In the observations, there were 40-50 students in the classrooms. It is relevant to comment that Harmer (2007) states that class size is an important factor that contributes to the quality of education. Considering this statement, it can be said that in some observed classes the number of students was not a contribution to the quality of the education because the teachers were not able to check the work of the whole class to make sure that all the students learn English. Besides, there were students 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.

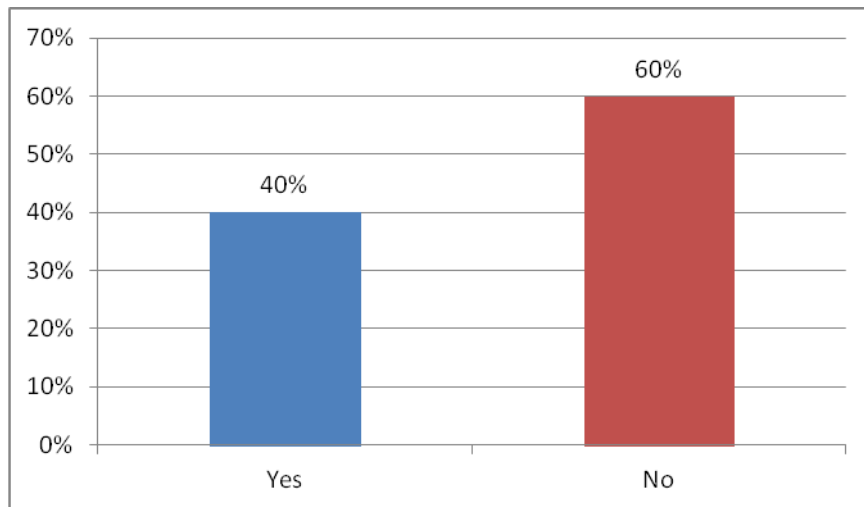
As it is mentioned above, there were classrooms with 50 students; based on the observations, the researchers consider those classes to be large ones since they were

overcrowded. According to Harmer (2007), large classes can be considered as a problem because teachers have difficulty controlling a great number of students; however, large classes have advantages since the variety of criteria in the class may lead to active participation of every learner during a lesson. In favour with Harmer, it was clearly observed that working with 50 students was difficult for the teachers since they could not help all the learners, check their work, and evaluate their learning progress. In disagreement with Harmer, some observed teachers neither promoted the interaction among the students nor they got an active participation of the whole class. In fact, in the majority of the cases, the students did not participate because they did their tasks as if they were working by their own.

With regard to the students, 34% of them stated in the questionnaire that they feel comfortable studying in the same classroom with a great number of students. This may be because they are accustomed to working in that condition. However, 66% of the students indicated that they do not consider the number of students to be appropriate to learn English. What these students mentioned was observed in most of the classrooms since their opportunities to use the foreign language to communicate with all their classmates were limited, and they could not receive individual attention of the teachers when it was necessary.

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

Graph 13



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 13 shows that 40% of the teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they work with. In the observations two of these teachers (13%) felt comfortably teaching English to the amount of the learners attending their lessons. These educators were willing to use a variety of activities that encouraged the whole class to learn this foreign language. Moreover, both teachers helped the majority of learners as much as they could and paid attention to the whole class.

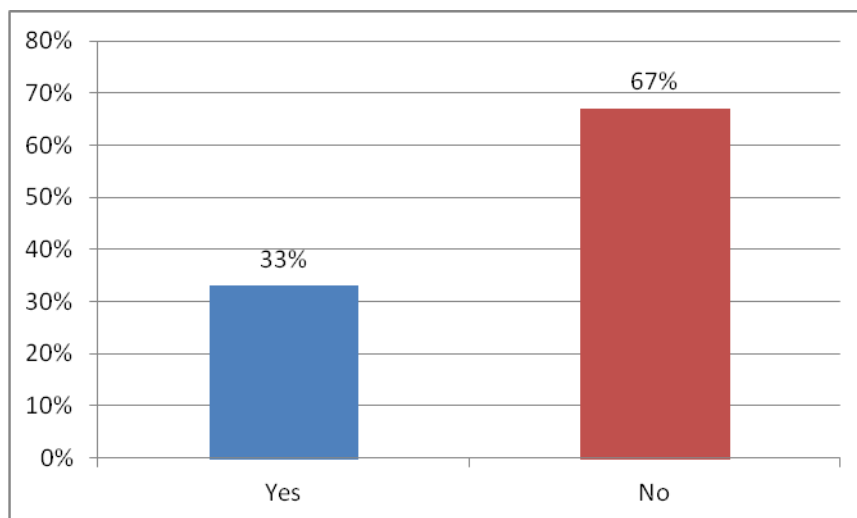
On the other hand, it is important to mention that 60% of teachers stated that they are uncomfortable with the number of students they work with because they argued that it is tiring and in some cases, it is very difficult to make everyone pay attention to the lessons. What these teachers said was confirmed during the observations because most of them did not feel comfortable with the number of students they worked with; they were not willing to work with 50 learner because the development of the activities and tasks was not effective and productive for the whole class. The student's individual participation was even difficult to be

encouraged. Besides, the teachers could not check the written work of the whole class because of the amount of the students. In fact, it was found that some teachers neither made a great effort to help students learn something that seemed to be difficult for their understanding nor they did repeat or reinforce a given content.

According to the students' questionnaire, five of them mentioned that the number of peers favors them to learn English. This may be because they are familiar with all their classmates. However, ten learners indicated that the amount of peers does not help them to learn the target language. This may be because they cannot get personal assistance of their teachers when they need it. Moreover, they also mentioned that the English classes with many students are not comfortable because they sometimes do not see or hear the teacher well.

Do teachers have enough space to work with the group of students they have been assigned?

Graph 14



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

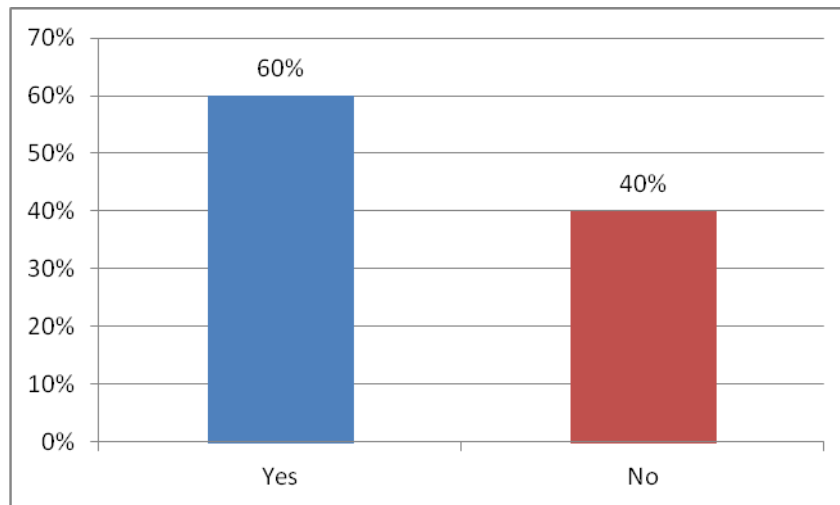
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 14 indicates that, 33% of the observed teachers consider that they have enough space to work with their group of students, while 67% of the educators mentioned that the classroom assigned for the lessons needs more space. During the observations, the space of the majority of the classrooms did not enable the teachers to encourage the interaction of the whole class because of the number of the students was large. Therefore, the educators were not able to make the learners do activities (i.e. role plays) which requires moving from one place to another. Besides, the teachers could not monitor the learning and progress of the whole class and even some students started to be inattentive since their attitude toward the lessons was negatively influenced by the lack of space.

According to the students' questionnaire, ten learners stated that the space of the classroom allows them to learn English comfortably, whereas five students said that the space available in the classroom does not enable them to learn this foreign language in a comfortable way. As it was already mentioned, the space in most of the observed classrooms did not contribute to creating a pleasurable environment to teach and learn the target language because it was too small in comparison to the number of learners (40-50).

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

Graph 15



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 15 reveals that 60% of teachers indicated that they arrange the seats of the students according to the tasks they are going to teach; in contrast, 40% of the educators said that the seats of the class are not arranged in relation to the activities planned for their classes. During the observation, only 13% of the teachers (2) asked the students to arrange their seats in circles, semicircles, and in pairs to work on different task which were funny, cheerful, and interesting for them. Moreover, when the seats were arranged in different way, the students were motivated to participate in the EFL classes because they were able to interact with their classmates and teacher in a dynamic way. Nevertheless most of the teachers made the learners work in traditional seating arrangement (in rows). This may be since the amount of the students was big compared to the space of the classrooms, which did not allow the students to move their desks from one place to another.

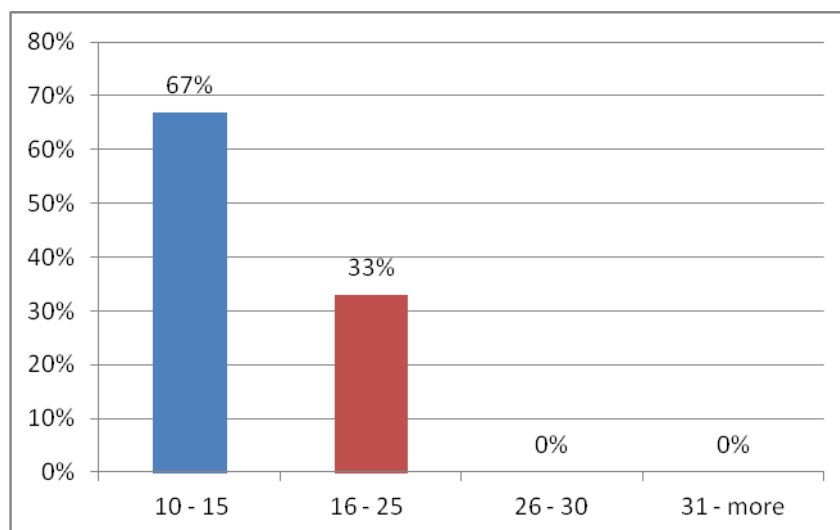
Regarding the students' survey, 80% of them mentioned that they do not like the way their teachers organize the seats, while 20% of the learners affirmed that

they like the way the educators arrange their seats in the class. It was evidenced, during the observed classes that most of the students enjoyed learning English in the two classrooms where they changed the seating configuration to work on different tasks.

It is important to say that Scrivener (2007) states that when the seating arrangements are changed, students interact with different peers. What Scrivener says somehow was observed when 2 of the teachers changed the seating arrangements to help the students interact with a different partner.

How Many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English?

Graph 16



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

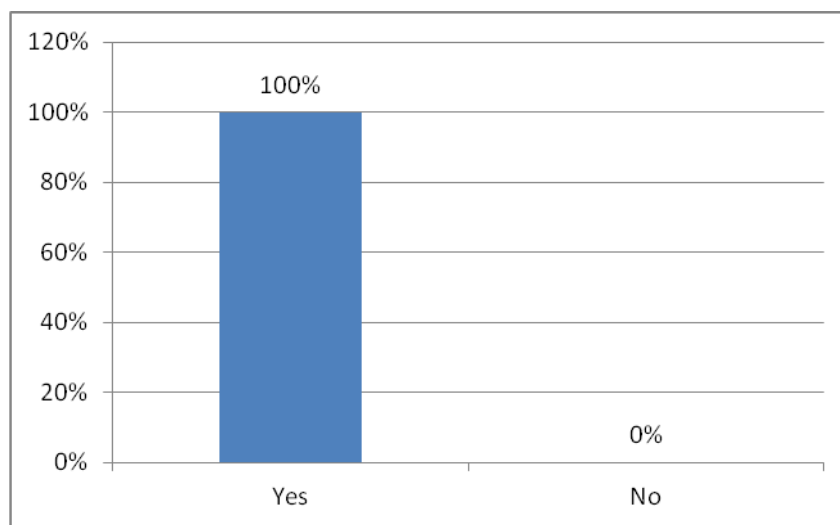
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 16 shows that 67% of the teachers consider 10 to 15 students to be the appropriate number to teach English, whereas 16 to 25 students is considered by 33% of the teachers as an adequate number to teach their lessons. To remember, it was mentioned earlier that in the observed classes there were 40-50 students. Also, it was explained that most of the teachers do not feel comfortable working with the amount

of the students they work with since they do not have enough space in their classrooms. Given this information, it is necessary to say that the teachers may probably consider 10-15 and 16-25 students to be the appropriate number to teach their lesson because the amount of the learners they work with does not enable them to teach English effectively as it was already indicated.

Do teachers use Teaching Resources?

Graph 17



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 17 reveals that 100% of the teachers in the questionnaire indicated that they use teaching resources such as TV, tape/CD recorder, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials. During the observed classes, three teachers used a CD recorder to help students develop their listening skills. Regarding this teaching resource, Gower et al. (2005) say that CD players are one of the most useful resources that provide students with different language input. Taking into consideration what Gower et al. state, it is necessary to say that the three educators

who used this supporting material offered the students an opportunity to get involved in assimilating a variety of language input.

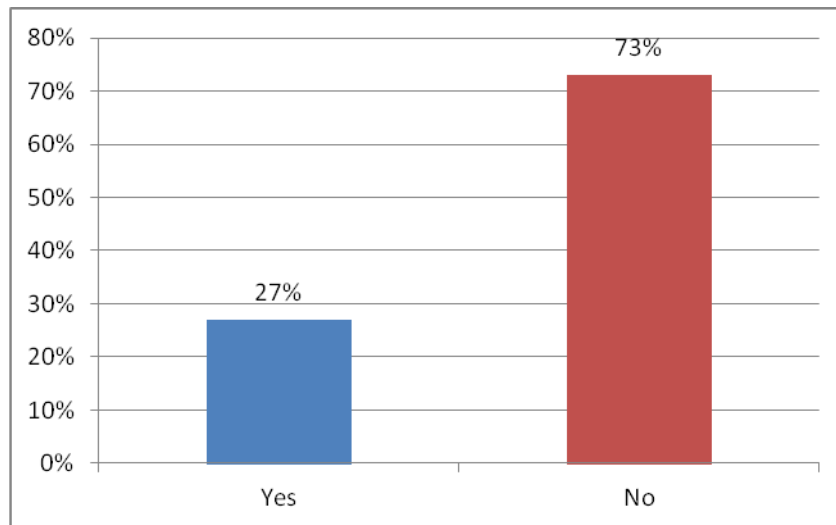
An important point to remark is that Harmer (2007) suggests teachers use technological materials such as computer programs, audiovisual aids, etc. In most of the observed classes, the teachers did not use these teaching resources because it was found that any of the public institutions where the research was conducted had a language laboratory. Hence, the students did not have the opportunity to learn English by using tools related to technology which offer a rich source of this language in use.

Another relevant point to say is that the researchers emphasize that there are teaching resources and supplementary materials such as flash cards, pictures, stories, songs, etc. that the teachers can use to supplement the students' book and to offer the whole class a great variety of language input. However, twelve observed teachers (80%) only focus on using the book and the whiteboard; therefore, they did not add variety to their classes through the use of extra teaching material different than the book and the board.

Regarding students, 53% of them said that their teachers use teaching resources such as TV, tape/CD recorder, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials; in contrast, 47% of the learners stated that their teachers do not use these kinds of resources. In favor with the students who answered positively, the teaching resource used in three observed classes was the CD recorder. On the other hand, in total agreement with those students whose answer was negative because the observed teachers did not use teaching aids such as TV, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials to teach their classes.

Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

Graph 18



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 18 shows that 73% of the teachers indicated that the teaching materials available in their classrooms are not adequate to be used because they are damaged or destroyed, while 27% of them affirmed that the resources they have in their classes are appropriate. In the observed classes, the CD recorder, the book, and the board used to teach English were adequate.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that the teachers claimed that the institution does not have enough money to invest in new didactic materials, especially in those related to technology.

Based on what the teachers answer in the survey and in the resources used in the observed classes, the researchers emphasize that if teachers do not consider the materials they have in their classes to be appropriate to teach English, they can supplement their teaching by creating or elaborating easy and simple teaching aids such as flash cards, pictures, word cards, posters, short stories, etc. These materials

are useful to offer students a wide range of activities that motivate them to learn English.

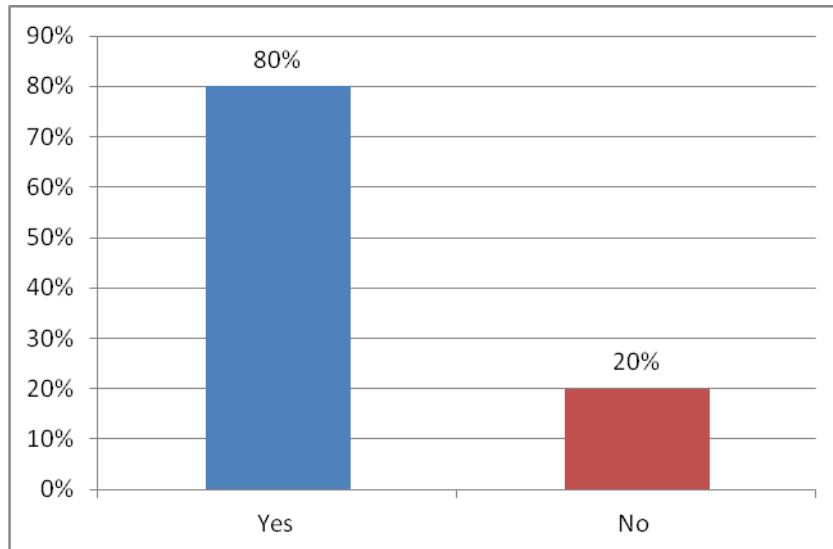
In addition, resources such as songs and dialogues offer learners a great English language input. Regarding these teaching aids, it is important to remark that if teachers are not provided by an educational institution with a tape/CD recorder, or if the equipment they use is damaged or is not in good conditions to be used, the researchers suggest educators bring to the class both their cellphones which includes a Mp3 file or a flash memory attached to a small loud speaker to provide students with audio material that stimulates their listening skills. The pieces of equipment mentioned are easy to be brought to the class, are very helpful to add variety to the lessons, and help students hear the language in use.

All the information given in the two paragraphs above is useful to be taken into account both by the teachers who consider appropriate the resources they have in class and by those who express the contrary point of view.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

Does the institution review your lessons plans?

Graph 19



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

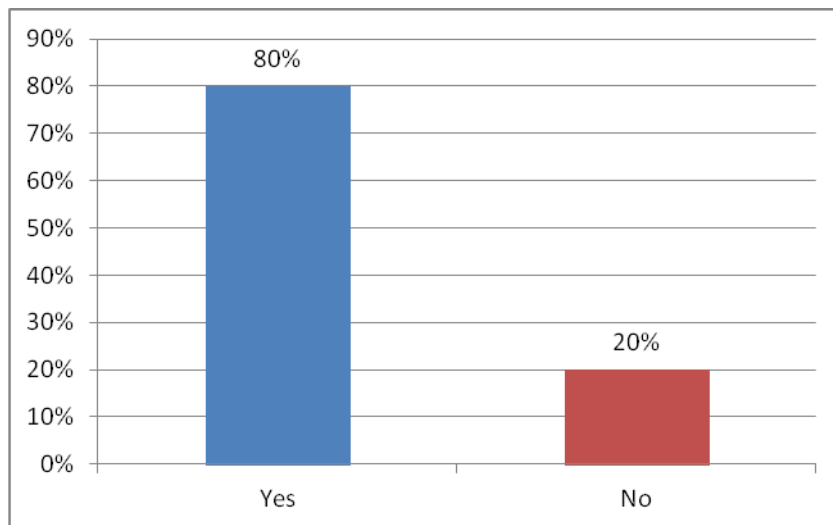
Graph 19 indicates that 80% of the observed teachers (12) stated that the institutions where they work at review their planning. Eight of these educators affirmed that the educational institutions check their lesson plans once a month while four of them said that their lesson plans are reviewed once a week. It was even mentioned by two teachers that the deputy headmaster checks the English lesson plans very often. However, in the observations, carried out in a six period-week, no authority or English language supervisor checked the teachers' lesson plans.

On the other hand, 20% of teachers outlined in the survey that their institutions do not review their lesson plans. Two of these educators also commented that the language supervisor of the institution where they work for is not well-instructed to check their planning. Therefore, they think that checking a lesson plan by a qualified educator would be appropriate because he or she knows whether it is well-done and

is able to offer useful suggestions to improve the content of a lesson plan. The researchers totally agree with these both educators since the planning of the classes have to be reviewed by teachers who are very familiar with important aspects such as aims, procedures, activities, materials, timing, etc. that a lesson plan contains.

Does the institution monitor your teaching?

Graph 20



Authors: Arboleda Gabriela and Cárdenas Jorge

Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph 20 shows that 80% of teachers mentioned that their institutions monitor their teaching; from this percentage, eight teachers (53%) affirmed that they are monitored once a week and four of them (27%) said once a month; however, 20% of the educators stated that no authority observe their classes.

In relation to monitoring teachers, Richards and Farrell (2011) state that the purpose of classroom observation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educator who is being observed. What this authors point out was not evidenced in the observed classes because no authority or language supervisor monitored the teaching

process of the educators; therefore, their strengths and weaknesses were not identify by an observer belonging to the institutions where the research was conducted.

At this point, the researchers would like to mention that if educators are monitored regularly, they might constantly improve and increase their teaching quality. On the other hand, if the classes of the teachers are not observed periodically, they may probably decrease their professional growth in the English teaching process.

Conclusions

- The space of the majority of the classrooms is not big enough in relation to the number of students (40-50). As a result, the environment is not conducive to teaching and learning English.
- Most of the classrooms are overcrowded, which does not help the teachers manage their classes in an effective way and check the work of the whole class.
- Eleven observed teachers have a Bachelor's Degree in teaching English, but seven of them lack pedagogy and competences to teach this language.
- Five teachers do not use the target language very often in their classes, which limits the students' opportunity to improve their language skills.
- The English knowledge of three teachers is very poor; therefore, they cannot help the students to increase and improve their learning.
- The authorities or languages supervisors neither review the lesson plans of the teachers nor they monitor their teaching.

Recommendations

- Teachers should study more English to have a good language proficiency.
- Educational institutions should offer to teachers permanent training courses to help them update their teaching methodology.
- Institutions should monitor English teachers regularly to let them know the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching so that they can keep the 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

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 (<i>age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles</i>)	
YES ()	NO ()

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

Students' Level (<i>Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced</i>)	
YES ()	NO ()

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 ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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 ()
---------	--------

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 ()
---------	--------

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 ()
-------------	-------------	-------------	---------------

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!!!!!!

ANNEX 2



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?

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ()	Fáciles ()	Diffciles ()	Muy diffciles ()
-----------------	-------------	---------------	-------------------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

¿Por qué?

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

7. ¿Tu profesor controla la disciplina en la clase?

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

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

YES ()	NO ()
---------	--------

GRACIAS!!!!

ANNEX 3



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

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

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 4



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

	and teaching English as a second language (ESL)?
--	--------------------------------------------------

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