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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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DEDICATION

Monge Herrera Silvana:

    This research work is dedicated to my father Galo Monge, my mother Aída Herrera and to my sister Lorena who encouraged me to study more, and who taught me that the best kind of knowledge is the one that is learned for my own sake, they also taught me that even the hardest task can be accomplished when doing it step by step.

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Mónica Valencia Vaca:

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ABSTRACT

The theme of this research is "Factors that Influence the English Language Teaching –Learning Process in Ecuadorian Private High Schools"; the purpose of this work is to identify and analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching- learning process.

This study took place in private high schools in the Cotopaxi Province in the city of Latacunga, Ecuador. The samples consisted of fifteen English teachers and fifteen teenage students of eighth, ninth, and tenth year of basic education; and first, second, and third year of senior schools. The students were between the ages of twelve and seventeen years old. Most of the private institutions had 31 or more students.

In order to gather information, the teachers were observed during their regular classes. In addition, teachers' surveys, students' surveys, teachers' interviews, and class observation sheets were applied. These results were analyzed applying qualitative and quantitative methodology.   To carry out this research, teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions were considered as main factors.

This research demonstrates that in the majority of the researched Educational Institutions, teachers use traditional teaching methods along with conventional teaching resources and classroom management.

Key words: Factors, teaching-learning process, instruments, students

RESUMEN

El tema de este estudio es "Factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en los colegios privados ecuatorianos" con el fin de identificar y analizar las causas que afectan al sistema de enseñanza del idioma Inglés.

Este estudio tuvo lugar en Colegios Privados de la Provincia de Cotopaxi en la Ciudad de Latacunga, Ecuador. La muestra fue quince profesores de Inglés y quince estudiantes adolescentes de octavo, noveno y décimo año de Educación Básica, primero, segundo y tercer año de bachillerato. Los estudiantes tenían entre doce y diecisiete años. La mayoría de las instituciones privadas tenía clases con más de treinta y un estudiantes.

A fin de recoger información los profesores fueron observados durante sus clases regulares. Además se aplicó: encuestas y entrevistas a los maestros, encuestas a los estudiantes y fichas de observación de clase. Luego estos resultados fueron analizados utilizando una metodología cualitativa y cuantitativa también se consideraron factores principales: maestros, estudiantes, aula de clase e institución educativa.

Este estudio demuestra que en la mayoría de las Instituciones investigadas, los profesores usan métodos de enseñanza tradicionales, manejo de aula y recursos didácticos convencionales.

Palabras claves: Factores, proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, instrumentos, estudiantes.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the complexity of English language teaching and the multiple aspects involved in this process, the theme, ¨Factors that Influence the English Language Teaching –Learning Process in Ecuadorian Private High Schools", was proposed for this investigation.

This research study has some objectives, such as: to identify students' English levels and their needs in the classroom, to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons are given, to analyze the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

This research intends to determine the factors that produce English language deficiencies in the teaching-learning processes in private education in Ecuador with the purpose of finding better solutions to this problem and to improve the students´ English levels in private high schools.

This study is important because it will increase the teachers' interest concerning the factors involved in the English teaching-learning process in their classes in order to make them more stimulating and interesting for students and to improve the educational system in our country.

Successful English teaching depends on several factors, such as students, teachers, classrooms and institutions. Then, the knowledge of these factors will allow the appropriate application in the English classes since these factors are essential in the teaching-learning process.

Another reason to perform this research is the students' low level of English in high schools and universities, which does not allow them to obtain various scholarships in other countries since the major obstacle is communication. According

to The Minister of Education (2012, p.6) "Learning one more language particularly English language helps people to finish with those geographic barriers between the interaction and communication".

Some prior empirical studies have been conducted in relation to the aforementioned factors. These previous investigations were completed internationally, but unfortunately for this research, it was very difficult to find studies carried out in Ecuador related to the theme. However, the present research study has a base in similar investigations developed in other countries. For instance, in 2012, Wu & Po conducted a study with the objective of evaluating the organizational management in an elementary school in Taipei, Taiwan based on the viewpoint of innovation, where the main idea is to focus attention on innovative school management.

In 2012, Hismanoglu conducted a study in North Cyprus, and did a survey concerning ITC sources with the purpose of investigating whether the new EFL teacher training curriculum provided an efficient ICT (Information and communication technology) training or not.

Another study was conducted in Wessex Region in The United Kingdom in 1999 when Lesmes-Anel Moody & Robinson piloted a study with the objective to establish the nature of the learning style preferences for the general registrars and their correlations between them.

All the above studies were conducted focusing separately on certain factors, such as school management, classroom resources, or learning styles and preferences. Nevertheless, the present research takes into consideration as a whole four main factors, such as students, teachers, classrooms and institutions, in order to obtain real data for analysis and interpretation of the results.

As previously stated, there is no research in our country about the factors that influence the English teaching-learning process, therefore, the information gathered during this research will help future investigations to get clear evidence about the influence of these factors in English Language teaching.

The major beneficiaries of this document will be the students and, through them, our country. Therefore, students must be well prepared in order to deal with global needs. On the other hand, teachers must have an interest in acquiring knowledge of the factors that influence the teaching and learning of English in order to improve the path of imparting English knowledge on their students.

The intention of this research, was to benefit principally the students, as well as, the teachers and other researchers or readers, who could find this work as a base for their own investigations.

Therefore, the carried out study reached the aforementioned objectives, since the low students' English level, the lack of consideration of students´ needs, the poor classroom conditions, the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and the lack of institutional facilities and norms were identified.

This study suggests that in order to improve the teaching-learning process institutions be aware of their role in this process. Furthermore, the institutions must organize teachers´ training, classroom monitoring, and supply appropriate classroom resources in order to contribute positively to the educational system in our country. The students must be well prepared in order to deal with global issues. On the other hand, teachers must have an interest in acquiring knowledge about the factors that influence the teaching and learning of English in order to improve the method of conveying English knowledge to their students.

Finally, the main limitation of carrying out this study was the number of classroom observations, which were not enough, considering that only one observation cannot provide the researcher enough evidence to adequately portray the professors' authentic way of teaching. Thus, more observations, of at least three in each classroom, would have been helpful to have a better perception of the teachers´ work.

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants

This investigation was carried out in 5 private secondary schools in the Cotopaxi province in Latacunga (Ecuador) where the English subject is taught as a foreign language.

The participants in this study were 15 English teachers with their corresponding pool of students. The teachers were currently in service and the students were male and female teenagers of 10th year of basic education and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of senior high school, ranging in age from 14 to 17 years old.

Procedures

To carry out this research, the first step was to collect a lot of information about themes and studies related to this topic from books, magazines, and the internet in order to support the literature review. The literature is important since it provides us with accurate information about the past and current studies concerning the investigated topic.

Information from articles, or any resource except the theses are related to the following topic, the importance of teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, and support from books on the following themes: teaching approaches and methods, managing learning, lesson designs, class size, classroom space and seating arrangement, classroom and/or teaching resources, classroom observation, learning styles and language aptitude. These were used in order to start the writing of the literature review followed by information on previous research studies related to the topic: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process". These studies were the scientific base on which our research was carried out.

After the literature review was completed, it was time to start the field research. This work started with a total sample size of 15 English teachers and 15 students in 5 private secondary institutions. These educational institutions were randomly selected.

For this study, a variety of instruments were used to collect information such as: teacher surveys, student surveys, teacher interviews, and observation sheets. These tools were applied on site of the research during the study and lasted a week in total with one class hour per teacher.

The teacher survey was a questionnaire made up of 20 questions based on the four main aforementioned factors, including information about level of education, classroom management of the teachers, lesson designs and monitoring by the institution. It was applied at the end of the classroom observation and participants were asked to read each question carefully and to answer them as clearly as possible.

The student survey consisted of a quiz of 14 questions related to their teacher´s activities and work in the classroom. These questions were only applied to one student randomly selected in each observed class and these students were asked to examine and answer the questions as honestly as possible.

As a follow-up to the questionnaires, teacher interviews were applied. The purpose of this interview was to determine the English teacher´s language proficiency level, an important aspect to obtain success in the teaching-learning process.

Finally, the observation of the participants took place once during one class hour, and using field notes. The data was gathered from the participants in action. These notes included information about the students' and teacher's English level,

seating arrangement, quality of teaching, teacher´s pedagogical knowledge and classroom management.

Classroom observation is an essential part of the teacher's work control, although in some occasions the students and teachers may respond negatively due to the presence of the observers.

After the observations were finished, the description, analysis, and interpretation of the results were carried out, where the quantitative and the qualitative analyses were done.

To develop the quantitative analysis once all the data was collected, it was necessary to tabulate and analyze them statistically. This work was performed through the teacher´s questionnaire, question by question, and this information is represented through pie charts to facilitate the visualization of data in a graphic way.

For the qualitative analysis, the data was based on observation sheets, student questionnaires and teacher surveys in order to document, support, compare and contrast with the statistical analysis.

As it was said, in the analysis process, the data was classified and graphically represented according to the four factors that influence the teaching learning process, that is to say: factors concerning teachers, factors concerning students, factors concerning classrooms and factors concerning educational institutions.

The information in the different instruments and the figures in the diagrams were read and examined repeatedly to describe and interpret clearly, using the research objectives as a guide, as well as the reasons given by the teachers and the students to support our analysis.

Lastly, based on the statistical analysis obtained through the quantitative analysis method, it was easy to determine the conclusions and to give the corresponding

recommendations with the purpose of suggesting solutions to the problems found during this research process.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

English language teaching in Ecuadorian educational institutions is not effective because the students have many deficits in their knowledge. Therefore, when they want to enter institutions abroad, this is a big obstacle due to the language. With these premises we can say that in education and business, the English language is a helpful tool, everybody should learn it, in order to increase education or job opportunities, consequently, teachers must be aware of the importance of teaching English in the right way without forgetting aspects related to the students, the teachers, the classroom and the educational institution.

The following section will present the position of the Minister of education about the importance of teaching English as a foreign language in our country, the current literature that relates to this study, and extensive studies regarding this topic.

Importance of Teaching English as Foreign Language in Ecuador

According to the Minister of Education (2012, p 6.) "The learning of more than one language particularly the English language helps the people to finish with those geographic barriers trough the interaction and communication".

Similarly, The Ministry National Curriculum Direction Foreign Language of National Division (2008) is worried about students´ education on the secondary level of Ecuador whose main objective is to contribute and stimulate students' relationship with other nations and cultures. Therefore, effective communication mechanisms are required by supervisors, headmasters and teachers who are called to apply adequately approaches and methods for teaching English.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

The information below contributes to the effectiveness of teaching English, so we should take the following methods into consideration when giving a class:

Richard (2006) says that Communicative Language Teaching appeared with a focus on communicative rather than grammatical competence, similarly Li (2012) mentions that CLT is a good process to include communicative and contextual elements, because language works according to the situation.

Additionally, Richards & Rodger (2001) state that CLT is based on a group of significant tasks. In this method the students participate in an environment of collaboration and exchanging of information where the teacher guides this activity but it results a bit difficult for the students with lack of grammar knowledge.

Kiymazarslan (1995) and Richards & Rodgers (2001) state that the natural approach is based on natural principles for language acquisition through three stages: Pre-production stage, early production stage, and the speech emergent phase. NA focuses on the exposure or input instead of practice. This method uses the language in communicative situations without the use of native language. Moreover, the students are not asked to talk until they are ready to do it but they receive and perform different commands.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) and Striker & Beaver (1997) say that content based instruction is a teaching method that emphasizes learning about the content or subject through English rather than learning about the target language. In this method the foreign language is the vehicle for content instruction, the use of authentic materials and language are required, and finally, the subject matter is the core of CBI.

Richard & Rodgers (2001) and Nunan (1995) explain that Total Physical Response is a language teaching method using physical movement, developed by James Asher, who focuses 3 dimensions on this method: Bio-program, Brain lateralization, and Reduction of stress. Total physical response uses commands developing listening skills to answer with physical actions; this method allows the students to work in a relaxed environment.

Bjorklud (2012) declares that the Whole Language Approach highlights reading in a meaningful way in which the learner reaches a proficient reading, similarly Richard & Rodgers (2001, p 108), say that "reading and writing should be taught as a 'whole' if language is not kept as a whole, it is not language anymore", the learning is not centered on the teacher, since the teacher is only a guide while the students collaborate and work together.

Ediger Bhaskara Rao &Venkata Dutt (2003) and Richard & Rodgers (2001) suggest that Grammar Translation Method is based on grammatical explanations and translation, with this teaching method the English language is taught through the mother tongue, the students have to memorize rules of grammar, and the vocabulary is learnt in form of lists of isolated words.

Managing Learning

With reference to managing learning, Harmer (1998) says that   Students´ feedback is crucial in measuring progress, through different activities as short questions, heartening the students to tell how they feel or think about the lessons, evaluating the student's progress through homework, learners' participation or keeping a record about their achievements.

Additionally, Wajnryb (1992) argues that aspects like: instructions, time and pace of lessons are also important. For instance, the time between one activity and

another requires clear instructions from the teacher, since the good students´ performance will depend on this, in other words, good understanding brings good results. Moreover, Wajnryb (1992*)* argues that aspects like: time and pace of lessons are also important to keep the students motivated.

Lesson Designs

The Lesson plan is a vital guide in teaching. It allows knowing what and how to teach. In addition, it helps to manage efficiently the time, resources and efforts. So that Spratt & William (2005) and Cross (1991) state that there are 3 aspects that the teacher must consider in the elaboration of a lesson plan, these are: the aims of the lesson (practical and clear); appropriate language (choose the language and quantity you need) and the selection of the approach (how to teach).

Teachers also follow three stages in the design of a lesson plan such as: presentation stage (introduction of vocabulary and grammar), practice stage (from controlled practice to guided practice and use) and performance stage (linguistic innovation). Additionally, it is important to consider other aspects such as: the warm up (motivation), extra activities (homework revision), reserve activity (games), teaching aids (didactic resources), and comments.

In the same line, Harmer (1998) argues that a lesson plan is a proof of the time and dedication from the teacher toward the class. A lesson plan must contain: The classroom description (number of students, students' age, students' sex, students' likes, and so on) activities (what the teachers and students are going to do) Method (how the teachers and students are going to do the activities) didactic resources (teaching aids: tape recorder, projector) and comments.

Class Size

Referring to this theme, Leahy (2006) argued that large classes can have undesirable effects on students´ success, due to, there are difficulties in managing learning, poor attention to each student, problems with monitoring and giving feedback, issues in attending all students, and difficulty in moving around the classroom, consequently there will be a decrease in students' attainment.

On the other hand, Costello (1992) claimed that smaller class sizes lead to effective teaching and enhance learning…the curriculum took greater depth and discipline problems were reduced. Furthermore, Braverman (2002) mentions several advantages of smaller class sizes. For instance, substantial gains for students, extra gains in the test scores, and lastly, the students retain their gains. Similarly, Murphy (1998) states that smaller class size do lead to considerably faster improvements

The last but not less important considerations about class size from, Leahy (2006) who points some problems of reducing class size, such as extra rooms, and the increase in the need for more teachers.

All the researchers cited coincide in the aspect that small classes have better results rather than big ones.

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangement

Referring to this theme, Harmer (1998) and McGregor (2007) suggest that teaching and classroom are directly implicated into the learning of a second language, due to a comfortable classroom environment affects positively to the students' achievement .On the contrary, the students' failure is a result of a bad atmosphere.

Therefore, in order to get a good learning surrounding, teacher can rearrange the seats, which will go according to class size, as Harmer (1998) and Lewis & Hill J

(1985) say that classes between 40 and 200 students at a time arranged in rows may be the best solution. Meanwhile, to small classes between 5 and 20 occupants, circles and horseshoes are a good alternative. Furthermore, in a school classroom of 30 students the teacher may use the arrangement centered on the teacher, but giving them the opportunity to move. Lastly, separate tables are advisable for small classes, they allow the students to develop their work, but this arrangement may cause the students' boring because they could also work with other classmates.

Similarly, McGregor (2007) states that the varieties of class designs facilitate or do not the learning. There are some classroom designs to be taken into account in the educative process like: 'Fat L' classroom (the students engage on this learning), triangular classrooms (created at a special school for children with misbehavior problems. This classroom was designed for small number of students).

Finally, University of Washington (2008, p. 2) suggests that:

> The adequate dimensions for classrooms are 2:3 or
>
> 3:4 widths to length ratio but these can vary. In
>
> addition, there are several types of rooms according
>
> to the number of students: seminar (10 to 25
>
> occupants), Breakout Rooms (5 to 25 students), Case
>
> Study with "U" shapes (20 to 25 seats) or over (100
>
> seats), Computer Classroom from small (10 to 15
>
> seats) to large (30 – 35 occupants) and finally
>
> Auditoriums that can accommodate many hundreds
>
> of students.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

About classroom and/or teaching resources, Nagaraj (2005) and Haycraft (1978) say that there are some kinds of didactic resources used in English teaching such as: blackboard, flash cards , picture cards, wall charts (presenting: grammatical tenses, drills), pictures for oral compositions (descriptions of stories), overhead projector (save time), slides (present images), films (improve the English language comprehension), tape recorder (practice to improve listening skills), language laboratory (practices through technology), realia (real objects), tape recorder, (listening and reading exercises), television (influential tool).

Additionally, Tomlinson (2011) suggests that interactive materials give feedback in written or spoken way, meanwhile the new technologies such as the Internet, e-mails, You Tube, chart rooms, and, so on, enable electronic communication between learners. All these previous materials are related to the development of the four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Classroom Observation

About this topic, Muijs & Reynolds (2005) express that there are some types of classroom observation like: Observation by outside agencies (monitor teaching practice providing teacher´s valuable information), observation by school management (allows personal professional development and growth); peer observation (gives the opportunity to identify the teacher's strengths and weakness to improve teaching). Nevertheless, these observations may be stressful and threatening for the observed teachers.

Equally, Fast (2009, p. 6) mentions that:

In Observation for evaluation the good point is that it allows the observed teacher's teaching practice to get

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better, but the negative point is that the teaching can't be

defined as good or bad. Meanwhile, in observation for

development allows self-reflection of the observed

teachers because observation or self-observation in

practice gives the opportunity to reflect on the teacher's

work in class, thorough examination and interpretation of

the recorded information.

Another type of observation is Trainer/Manager observation in which trainers

and managers cooperate with this activity instead of judging the observed teacher,

but the disadvantage is that it is difficult to perform this observation when the

observers play a dominant role. Finally, in Peer observations the positive point is the

active practice which allows the personal growth through other´s comments and

information. In conclusion, all of these sorts of observation have many advantages

most of them produce a greater or lesser degree of stress on the observed people.

Learning Styles

Nunan (1995) and Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2005) mention that learning

styles, are the preferences of the students for getting knowledge. For instance, many

learners learn better seeing (visual) rather than listening (auditory), other learners

prefer to use the body, hands and sense of touch to learn (kinesthetic).Meanwhile, for

others is easier to catch the language working alone and being reflective, but other

students prefer to work in groups with impulsive behavior.

Similarly, Nunan (1995) says that some students learn fast and easily with

games, pictures, films, and so on. These students are called concrete learners, while

the analytical ones prefer to learn studying grammar, reading newspapers, and

studying English books; other students as communicative learners like to listen to

native speakers, talk to friends, and watch television. Lastly, the authority-oriented prefer the teacher explain everything.

Finally, as Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2005) comment that leaners learn in different ways, hence they need to be taught differently, they may not fall precisely into one category of learning style.

Language Aptitude

Considering language aptitude to teach English, Grass, & Selinker (2008) and Willis (1996) suggest that people have an innate ability to learn a language, but this ability requires investment of the person and positive attitudes, which will be the best predictors of success.

Furthermore, the memory plays an important role in the learning of a language, for this reason the children will learn better than the adults although the adult people have developed metacognitive strategies for learning. The positive or negative attitude also influence in the learning. Thereby, extroverted students like taking risks in language learning while introverted learners do not. They are quiet in the class, but they always are listening very well. Shy learners will learn in a better way if they work in groups or pairs.

Meanwhile, Grass, & Selinker (2008) mention that J.B. Caroll who is the originator of what Skehan called standard four components such as: First, phonemic coding ability where the ability to discriminate foreign sounds is the principal factor. Second, grammatical sensitivity allows the students to recognize the functions of words into sentences. Third, inductive language learning here students have the capability to infer, induce or abstract rules of the language. A finally, memory and learning go together where students make and recall associations between mother and target language.

In the last section as we mentioned at the beginning, we will state five studies related to the different factors that influence in the English language teaching learning process, these studies have allowed presenting the research as a tangible base for the literature review.

In the year 2012 Wu & Po conducted a study with the aim of evaluating the organizational management in an elementary school in Taipei, Taiwan based on the viewpoint of innovation, where the chief idea is to focus attention on innovative school management.

This research used the qualitative approach with a comparative method well matched with the deductive. The sample of this study contains 4 schools in Taipei City, Taiwan which was selected through purposeful sampling, the schools are represented as S1, S2, S3 and S4 while the school principals as P1, P2, P3 and P4. This unique sample was based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of phenomenon of interest.

In this study the information was gathered through observations and interviews, which were analyzed using comparative method of data analysis, where the researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set.

Most of the school cases utilized a mixture of different strategies to solve the problems.S1 in implementing environmental innovation, during the different stages of innovations;S2 in implementing process innovations, the school uses color coding to distinguish different management styles,S3 in implementing concept innovation, the school principal uses the suggestion of the academic affairs in giving a survey to fully understand the current school situation,S4 in implementing product innovation,

the school stresses the cooperation between the administrative and the academic departments with a rewards system.

In conclusion, the base of the value in Taiwan is the creative leadership due to this guide towards quality and excellence. The school organization innovation results difficult at the first stages, for this reason, the authority's role is very fundamental because if a principal clearly knows the school's current competitive advantages, together with the cooperation of the community and its resources, this would really be of great help in developing the school.

Similarly, during the year 2007 Sakui conducted a study with the purpose of describing the challenges of classroom management that Japanese English teachers experience in their work.

This study used a qualitative approach. The participants for this study were three metropolitan area teachers for classroom observation and 15 additional teachers for interviews. This paper used a qualitative approach.

For data collection observation and interviews were conducted, the researcher visited each school once a week observing two to three 50-minute class periods per day. In addition, he applied interviews to 15 teachers whose classes were not observed, the interviews were conducted in Japanese, audio taped, transcribed and translated into English.

The data were analyzed following an inductive and qualitative method as funnel. In addition, observation records were completed when it was possible to observe.

After the research the author reached some conclusions such as: The field of language teaching in Japan failed to take into account managing classes. The problem of classroom management becomes particularly difficult when teachers are

encouraged to incorporate CLT activities; Culture-specific teacher training should be included in teacher training curricula.

The third study was conducted by Büyükbay & Dabaghi in 2010, with the purpose of determining the efficacy and the impact of the repetition as a type of corrective feedback on the successful acquisition of the English language.

The general approach of this study is quantitative. The sample consisted of 30 pre-intermediate level students of two universities classes of Turkey. There were 15 students in the control class (7 females and 8 males) and 15 students in the experimental group (8 females and 7 males). The same teacher worked with two classes.

In order to gather information from participants, the two groups were applied grammar tests which were created based on transcribed, analyzed, and coded feedback episodes. Each class was videotaped for ten hours .Meanwhile, the feedback episodes that focused on grammar were coded as student-initiated FFEs or teacher-initiated FFEs.

The feedback episodes were made with purpose of find out whether the students successfully learned from the errors that were the focus of the feedback episodes, also this allowed to compare the responses of the students to the feedback and to find out whether repetition as corrective feedback led to more successful uptake and, consequently, more correct answers in the test.

The previously collected information was analyzed through a quantitative approach as it was said. Feedback episodes were transcribed and coded qualitatively; these episodes were identified according to the teachers' response to error and the students' response to the feedback.

After that, the feedback episodes and teacher-student turns were examined according to three categories: error, feedback, and uptake, which were transcribed according to whether the student turns, had an error or not, what kind of correction the teacher used, and whether the students repaired or not.

If the students erred, then the researcher identified the way the participating teacher responded to the error, whether he corrected the errors or not, and how the students responded to the feedback.

After identifying the feedback type, the researcher transcribed and coded the episodes according to the students´ response to feedback, or uptake. Students´ uptake was sorted in three categories: no uptake, uptake and successful uptake.

Next, some grammar tests based on these feedback sequences were prepared, after that, these tests were quantitatively analyzed and compared to find out whether the repetition made a difference in students´ knowledge of the tested structures.

Finally, this paper showed some conclusions: Repetition can be used as an implicit correction method by the teachers being predictor of success. Additionally, the teacher repetition may conduct to more uptakes in class. Furthermore, grammar tests also demonstrated that peers were benefited from the errors, although they did not participate in active way in the different feedback episodes.

Other research study was conducted by Hismanoglu in the year of 2012 with the purpose of investigating whether the new EFL teacher training curriculum provides an efficient ICT (Information and communication technology) training or not. This paper used the qualitative and quantitative approach for data analysis.

This study was conducted in a higher education context in North Cyprus, the Department of English Language Teaching was the context for the research, and

computer aids Language Teaching and Internet develop better attitudes toward ICT-integration which encourage students to employ ICT in their subject learning.

The sample involves 124 prospective English teachers at different grades of the ELT department at EUL, 38 first and 86 forth-year students, which were randomly selected, all participants were known to have a high level of language proficiency, which is a requisite for attending to the ELT departments in Turkish Higher Education System. In this paper ethical considerations were taken into account. Furthermore, each participant was assigned a number during the data analysis procedure.

In order to gather data, a questionnaire was made and broached by a number of experts including two professors of educational technology, two native experts and two non-native EFL teachers who evaluated the instrument for the content and faced validity, to check the reliability, the instrument was analyzed through the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient $\alpha = 0.90$, this number shows a high level of reliability.

The questionnaire contained nine items based on 5-point likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Also, to ensure maximum control of variables, prospective EFL teachers´ personal characteristics (gender, age, type of higher education) were taken in account.

Participants were requested to respond to nine Likert-type statements dealing with prospective English teachers´ attitudes toward ICT integration into education and the ICT attitudes of prospective EFL teachers.

After that, data collection was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and a Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Therefore, descriptive statistics was utilized, applying discrete data (nominal and ordinal), to

analyze the demographic variables. Finally, parametric analysis was used, such as Independent samples t-Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between two sets of scores or to compare means and correlation (Coakes 2005).

In conclusion, the knowledge of Pedagogy and the subject is not enough in education, to improve the instruction in schools is necessary the use of technology. In addition, it is necessary the teacher's initial formation in order to promote the best teacher's performance. For this reason, the English language teaching curriculum must be renewed.

Lastly, in the year 2000, Lesmes-Anel Moody & Robinson piloted a study with the objective of establishing the nature of the learning and style preferences for the general registrars and their correlations between them. This research took place in Wessex Region in The United Kingdom on April, 1999.

In this paper a descriptive approach was used. The sample for this study included fifty-seven registrars with a minimum experience of six months in general practice. Furthermore The Wessex Deanery was identified from the summative assessment database with a population of 57 such registrars.

For data collection a questionnaire was applied which was designed to gather demographic data (sex, age, experience in general practice, years' post-registration, and postgraduate qualifications), also this instrument helped to collect registrars´ views on their learning experiences as a registrar working in general practice, and piloted by registrars from the Portsmouth city release course not eligible for the survey.

A six-point Likert scale was used to get learning preferences, within the training practice, day release course, and summative assessment. The questions consisted in closed questions being scored from 'very helpful' to 'very unhelpful' or

'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree, this instrument consisted of 80 statements. Three weeks after the initial postal survey a second questionnaire was sent to non-responders.

For data analysis a computer database was used, along with SPSS.18, in which the results were introduced. This information was previously anonymised, and coded, in order to ensure and preserve issues of confidentiality.

Finally, this study found several learning styles and preferences in Wesex but four of them are preferred by the learners. Additionally, the professional growth depends on the way or preferences to learn. These styles or preferences will accompany us along our life. This work offers the bases for the use of learning style theory in order to enhance professional learning.

<center>Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results</center>

In this section, the collected information will be examined using quantitative analysis and the results will be divided into four main factors, such as: factors concerning teachers, factors concerning students, factors concerning classrooms, and factors concerning institutions.

Each question from the teachers' questionnaire will be presented through a graph with percentages, which will be described and analyzed based on the students' questionnaire and class observations, which will be compared and contrasted with the research objectives.

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?
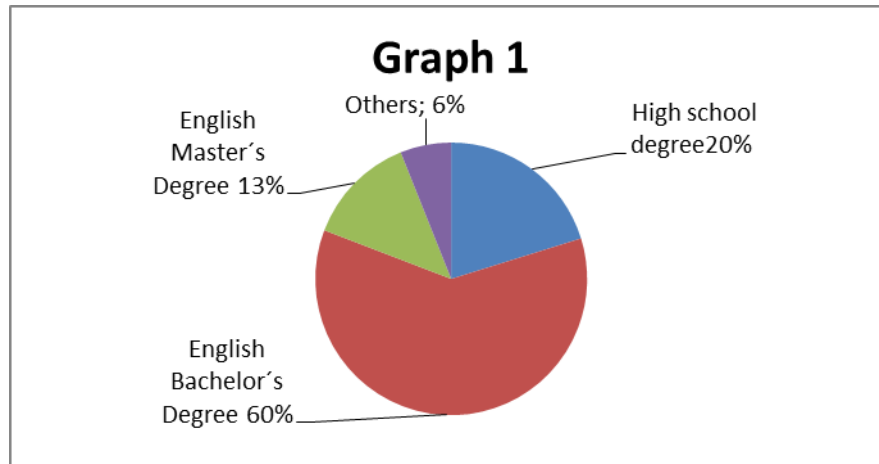
Graph 1

Others; 6%

English Master´s Degree 13%

High school degree20%

English Bachelor´s Degree 60%

Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As we can see in graph one, from the fifteen teachers interviewed, nine of them have English Bachelor's degrees which corresponds to 60% of the total population. Meanwhile, only two teachers have English Master`s Degrees, corresponding to 13% of the sample, three teachers said that they have a High School degree represented as 20% , and one teacher represented by 6% for other degrees.

According to the chart, only two teachers have obtained English Master´s degrees, which is an excellent degree for giving good guidance to students; however, these teachers did not demonstrate a good English mastery, neither in their English classes nor during the interview.

Also, it can be seen from the graph that 60% of the sample have a bachelor's degree, which is the highest percentage, that is to say, the majority of teachers have an average trainee to teach English, which was supported in their English classes and interviews.

Besides, in the graph we can see that 6% selected another type of degree, which corresponds to one teacher, but curiously this teacher showed an excellent English level in his class and interview.

During the observation, it was evidenced, that this teacher demonstrated an adequate use of vocabulary, considering the students' English level, good pronunciation, speech and intonation. Additionally, in the interview, he showed a good understanding to each question and provided a satisfactory answer, but unfortunately, this brilliant mastery of English was showed by only one teacher out of fifteen, which is not enough for a worthy English learning process.

Likewise, in the survey it could be perceived clearly that most teachers had a regular mastery of English. The majority of teachers used translation to the mother tongue in order to give instructions or explanations to their students and had regular pronunciation and intonation. Also, some of them did not use adequate vocabulary.

 In addition, during the interviews, the majority of teachers gave unsatisfactory answers, and some of them did not show understanding of the questions. As a result of this, the majority of teachers were placed in a B1 level.

Similar to this finding, in one of his Saturday TV speeches, our president, Rafael Correa, mentioned that in the evaluation given to the English teachers in public institutions in 2012, teachers showed an A2 level in the majority of cases but followed closely by a B1 level. However, the suitable level is B2. Although this survey was given in the public education sector, we can assume that it does not vary much in relation to the private institutions in which our survey was carried out.

This means that the reality in our country is general and not a matter of public or private education. Therefore, all the above results show us that teachers need training in order to obtain a better English level.

Which of the following methods were used in the observed classes?
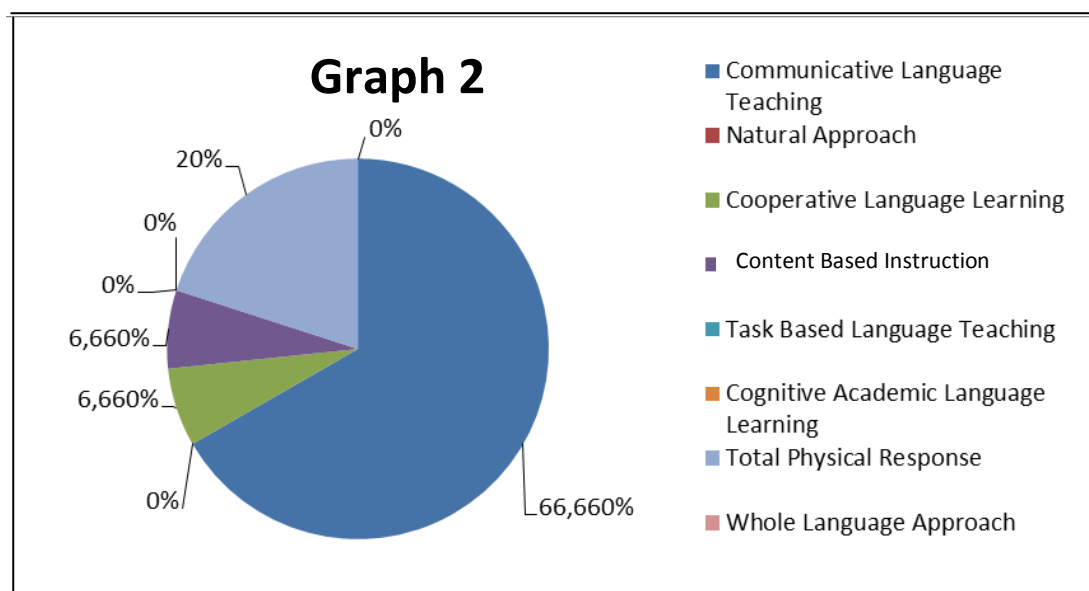
Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As it can be seen in this graph, of the fifteen teachers interviewed, 66.66% which corresponds to ten of them, answered that they used the Communicative Language Teaching method.

Another part of the population said that they used Total Physical Response, that is to say, three teachers answered accordingly, which corresponds to 40% of the whole sample.

While one teacher said that Cooperative Language Learning is used in the teaching process; this statistic represents 6.66%. Similarly, one teacher answered that he applies Content Based Instruction Method.

The above pie chart shows us that most teachers use Communicative Language Teaching, which is an excellent method to teach English. However, unfortunately, during the class observation it was clearly refuted, considering that the majority of the teachers preferred the method of Grammar Translation, due to their

constant translation to their native language in order to give their students, instructions, and grammar explanations.

In addition, the class observations demonstrated that the students did not use the English language to communicate amongst themselves. They had few opportunities to practice speaking, neither answering questions from the teacher or classmates nor with dialogues between each other, which are typical activities in Communicative Language Teaching.

On the other hand, in very few observed classes, the students did participate verbally, but not enough, given that these classes were centered around the teacher. That is to say, there was a large amount of time spent with only the teacher speaking, reducing the chance for student communication.

Another significant result from the data collected was the percentage of 40% that corresponds to the option Total Physical Response. Yet, in class observations, it was evident that those teachers did not apply a true TPR method, since very little or no activities related with this method were made. However, in those classes in which the teachers stimulated physical response, the students seemed bored and tired, and unwilling to collaborate with the teacher.

The above finding was supported with the student questionnaires, in which they complained about the method used by their teachers and also expressed the desire for a change in the teaching method, desiring an interesting and more active dynamic. Total Physical Response is a good method in beginner and lower English level students. On the other hand, this method used alone in an intermediate or advanced English level as in high schools, is not enough. In those cases, it is necessary to apply other complementary methods, due to the needs of the students to practice listening and speaking.

One teacher answered that he/she used Cooperative Language Learning. However, during the class observations, it was evident that this teacher did not apply the mentioned method, since as Richards & Rodger (2001) state that CLT is based on a group of significant tasks… students participate in an environment of collaboration and exchanging of information. Yet, in this class, the students did not work collaboratively, and the teacher neither monitored the students' work phase nor organized the class in pairs or groups in order to develop social skills, reducing the competition between them, which are the objectives and activities common in CLT. On the contrary, the students were involved in writing and reading activities and they were working alone throughout the entire English class, creating a teacher-centered class. As such, the grammar translation method was yet again the method applied, refuting the teacher´s answer.

Another teacher chose the option of Content Based Instruction. However, it was not demonstrated during the observed classes, since as Richards & Rodgers (2001) and Striker & Beaver (1997) say that CBI is a teaching method that emphasizes learning about the content… the foreign language is the vehicle for content instruction, but, during the observed class the teacher organized the class into groups in order to work in reading and discovering grammar structures. Contrary to the given answer, the CBI language teaching method focuses not on the language itself, rather, the second language is taught using it in context, reducing the attention to grammar or explicit explanations. For example, CBI is used in studying other customs and cultures, or interesting topics like sports. In addition, the students had the opportunity to learn by doing, although this method is demanding for them, it depends on the teacher´s skill to facilitate the learning, while considering the

students´ English level, rather than involving them in a simple language analysis as it was observed in the mentioned class.

Finally, unfortunately, in most of the cases, English teaching at the Secondary School level is using the Grammar translation Method, which is not a bad method. However, in high schools, learners are supposed to be prepared to have access to higher education like universities where a good proficiency of English is required. Thus, teachers could have combined methods that offer students the opportunity to achieve communicative competence.

Do teachers use whole-group activities to teach their lessons?
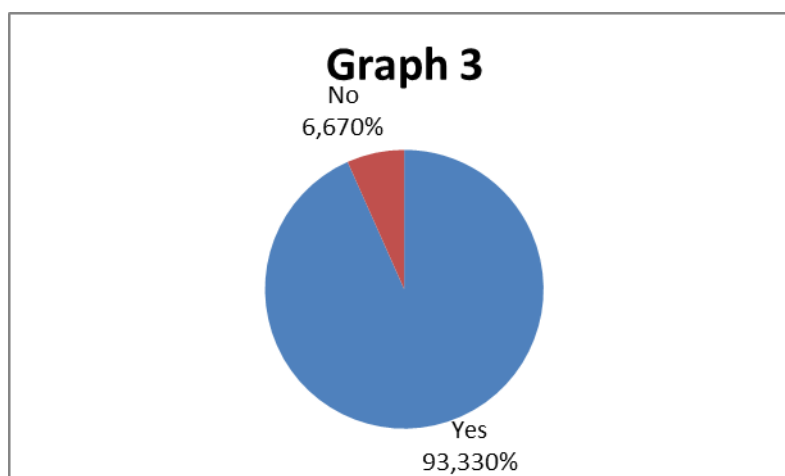
Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga

As the pie chart shows, fourteen teachers, 93.33%, mentioned that they perform whole-group activities during their classes, and only one teacher chose the option 'no', which amounts to a percentage of 6.67% of the sample size.

In the graph, it is clear that there is a significant percentage of positive answers. However, in most observed classes, students did not participate in songs, drills, imitations, chorus, answering questions, or solving puzzles, which are typical

activities of whole-group; rather, in most observed classes the students worked alone or in pairs.

During these classes, there was neither a discussion nor a meaningful argument of ideas among whole participants and the students did not have the opportunity to participate actively and collaboratively, which are the goals of whole-group activities. As such, it is impossible to use the competence of evaluating students' progress, nor does it help to enrich social behavior, which is useful inside the classroom as well as outside of it.

Also, when teachers were asked: "Why do you use whole-group activities?", most of the teachers revealed that they did not have clear knowledge about this strategy, considering that the teachers think using whole-group activities will allow the students to learn from each other, exchange information, and acquire information from each other; however, this actually occurs in pair and group work.

In contrast, three surveyed teachers demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the concept, claiming on their questionnaires that whole-group activities help them to maintain the class, with students working together following a common goal and feeling a sense of belonging and involvement in the teaching process. Despite these claims, when the visits were carried out, we could not verify the use of this activity, and instead, those teachers tended to use individual work.

Continuing with this analysis, only one teacher that corresponded to a 6.67% does not use whole group activities claiming that it brings discipline difficulties. Teachers are neglected to use this kind of strategy because, in some tasks such as games or dramas, the students may make a lot of noise, but when this apparent disorder is the result of camaraderie and focuses on the topic, it can be very beneficial. But, if the noise is the result of misbehavior or unplanned teacher

instructions, whole-group activities would be a disaster, causing the teachers´ fear to lose the control of the class.

In contrast, we could say that whole-group activity is a good option when working with a large classes, since all the students have to participate, creating an environment of involvement, in which each student knows that he or she is part of the learning process; therefore, the students feel engaged with the group. In addition, this kind of activity reduces the fear of speaking English, and thus, whole-group activities improve teaching by offering a learning-centered approach.

As Angelillo (2014, p. 1), in the overview of her book, suggested that "Whole-Class Teaching offers learning-centered ways to maximize entire-class instruction by creating energizing, engaging teaching that everyone will find useful."

Finally, despite the results showed in the pie chart, it was clear after the class observation that teachers were confused about the correct application of whole-group activities.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?
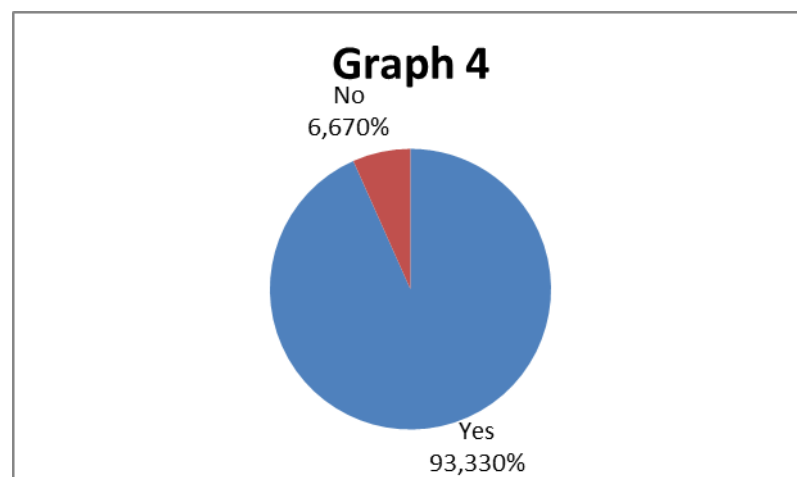
Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga

According to the graph, fourteen teachers answered that they prefer individual activities in their classes; this is 94% of the population while one teacher said that

33

she does not work with individual activities, this number represents 6. 67% of the sample.

The above percentages indicate that almost all teachers use individual activities in their classes and this assertion was clearly observed during the observation where students were asked to work alone, and on some occasions, in pairs.

Also, these percentages show us that, one teacher chose the option "no", but during the class observation this teacher used individual activities with the students asking them to work independently solving a task on their English books, and when it was finished, the students did not share information about the task amongst themselves.

These outcomes confirm that there was not a variety of activities in the classroom and due to this, the learners seemed bored. Therefore, it is necessary to use a diverse range of class activities to keep the students' interests and motivation as Harmer (1998, p.22) says "Good teachers are able to use different class groping for different activities". And yet, the teachers think that individual activities contribute in maintaining discipline in the class.

In addition, analyzing the teachers' questionnaires, their answers supported the preference to individual activities. Curiously, in contrast to these answers, all surveyed students said that the activities given by their English teachers allow them to interact with their classmates.

From these findings it can be said that almost all teachers prefer to use individual activities, and work with the English book.

Do teachers use group activities to teach their lessons?
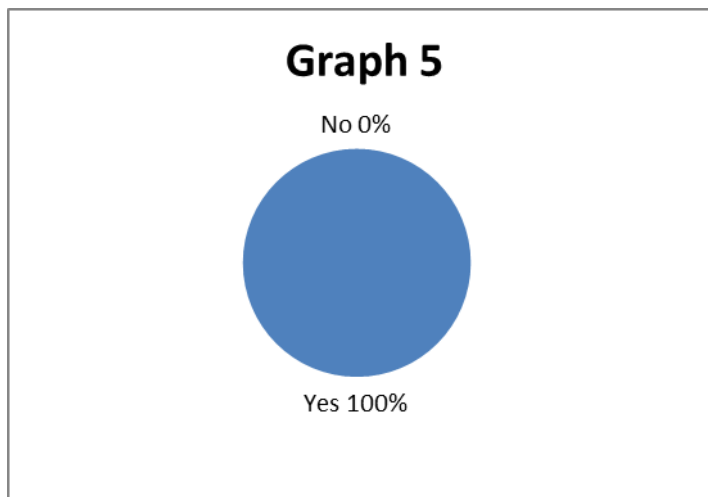
Graph 5

No 0%

Yes 100%

As it is indicated in this pie chart, fifteen teachers, that is to say 100% of the population, answered that they use group work activities in their classes, and 0% stated that they do not.

Looking at the chart, apparently the students have the chance to practice the language in groups; however, the class observation proved the opposite, since the students worked individually solving grammar reading or writing exercises in their English books.

During the observed classes the students worked filling in the blanks or looking up the meanings in their dictionaries. As a result of this, they neither put in practice their English knowledge nor had the opportunity to perform oral production in a relaxed way as it occurs in group work.

As stated, group work helps the students to behave in a relaxed way because they are able to interact with people who are in the same conditions. The pressure to participate and the fear to speak are reduced, since they are talking to their friends,

exchanging information and taking risks without the fear of being constantly evaluated.

Sadly, in the most observed classes the teachers did not take advantage of working in groups. To put it clearly, when the class is divided into groups, students have more opportunities to talk, each student can practice speaking, and they also gain confidence, they are more spontaneous, and social skills are developed. In addition, they learn to work collaboratively diminishing competition. Pair or group work is a great technique of classroom organization with which teachers can create a natural setting free of stress.

In groups, the students are more engaged emotionally because they are willing to accept their friends' observations and corrections. Here, the stronger students help those who may be weaker, especially introverted students. Although, when teachers assign smart students into groups, they might do the work and the rest may become disruptive. In order to avoid this, teachers must assign roles and adequate tasks for each group in order to get the whole group working.

In very few classes, teachers assigned their students to small group work but in certain groups, the students used their native language most of the time, which is a disadvantage in using pair or group work. For this reason, teachers must plan carefully the group work activities taking into account the English students' level, and encouraging them to use the target language as much as possible.

Some teachers are reluctant to apply this technique in order to avoid noise or misbehavior. Although this might be a disadvantage of group work, if students are concentrated on their work, the noise of their neighbors will not actually bother them. Yet, if the noise is harmful, it can affect the effectiveness of this technique. So, to

prevent this, group activities should not be too long and have to be planned according to students' interest and level.

The correct application of this technique depends on adequate planning considering level, needs and styles of the students, clear and exact instructions about what to do, time investment in managing and monitoring each group, and especially the creativity and teachers' skills.

Do teachers use English most of the time in their lessons?
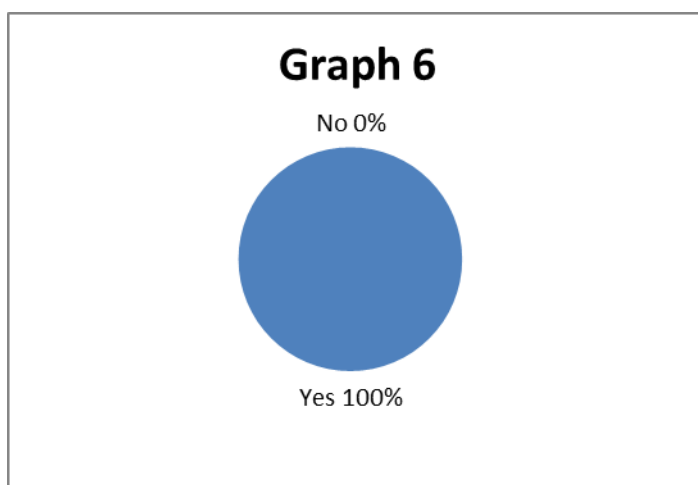
Graph 6

No 0%

Yes 100%

Authors: Monge Silvana& Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga

As it can be seen in the graph, the entire sample answered ´yes', representing 100% of the teachers surveyed. Meanwhile, 0% symbolizes the option 'no'.

Looking at the graph it is easy to appreciate that all of the teachers questioned say that they use English 100% of the time during classes, but this data also contrasts with class observation.

But, based on researchers´ observations, only two teachers spoke English all the time, eight professors used English 75% of the time in their classes, while five teachers spoke the English language 50% of the time or less.

During the class observations, it was perceived that in the classes in which the teachers used English 100% of the time, they constantly translated their speech into

the native language. In consequence, evidently it showed us that the teacher's English use is unusual.

Regardless, it was easy to recognize the students´ behavior toward the teacher´s English speech, since they clearly looked anxious, and very worried about understanding, maybe due to their lack of training. But, curiously, when students were asked about their Teachers' English use, all of them answered that their teachers speak English 100% of the time.

Despite the above teachers´ and students´ claims the researchers´ observation evidenced the contrary, since only two teachers spoke English 100% of the time, and all the students in the observed classes seemed anxious.

Do the teachers make a plan for their lessons?
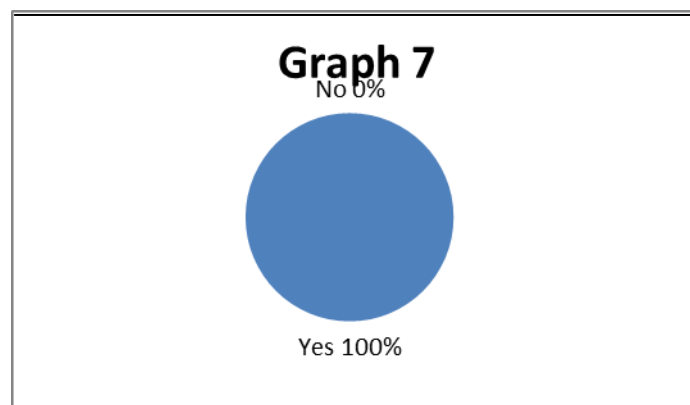
Authors: Monge Silvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga

As the diagram demonstrates, all surveyed teachers plan their lesson. This statistic is represented by a percentage of 100%, while from the graph it can be seen that 0% is matched with the option ´no´.

As it can be seen in the figure, all teachers claim that they make a lesson plan for their English lessons, but based on the observations it was evidenced that only two teachers planned their lessons. This was clearly demonstrated through their

correct organization of activity time, the use of teaching resources that attract the students´ interest, and adequate classroom management.

Meanwhile, thirteen teachers demonstrated lack of planning, since several inconsistences could be noticed easily, such as: disorder in the lesson stages, absence of warming up at the beginning of the lesson, difficulty in controlling discipline, and additionally, most teachers did not use adequate teaching material.

The classroom observation showed that a high percentage of teachers did not plan their lessons and they did not consider it as an essential part in teaching. A good lesson plan is the framework of all teaching-learning processes and shows the teacher's concern as Harmer (1998) argues that a lesson plan is a proof of the time and dedication from the teacher toward the class.

Also, Spratt & William (2005) and Cross (1991) state that there are 3 aspects that the teacher must consider in the elaboration of a lesson plan, these are: the aims of the lesson (practical and clear); appropriate language (choose the language and quantity you need) and the selection of the approach (how to teach). However, in most classes the objectives were not communicated to the students at the beginning of the classes, forgetting that it is advisable to announce them in order for the students to take part in the responsibility of their own learning.

Additionally, almost all observed classes started without warming up. All the surveyed teachers forgot that the motivation allows the retention of a deep understanding.

Harmer (1998) argues that all lesson plans must contain didactic resources, but in the observed classes, most teachers did not use teaching aids such as a tape recorder or projector. In the majority of the observed cases, the only material that they used was the student's book.

Although the teachers' and students´ questionnaires showed the teachers' awareness that a lesson plan is a vital part of a good lesson, the students agreed with the strategies of their teachers. In most cases, it was supported with class observation that the lessons were disorganized, denoting lack of planning by English teachers. *Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instruction to teach their lessons?*
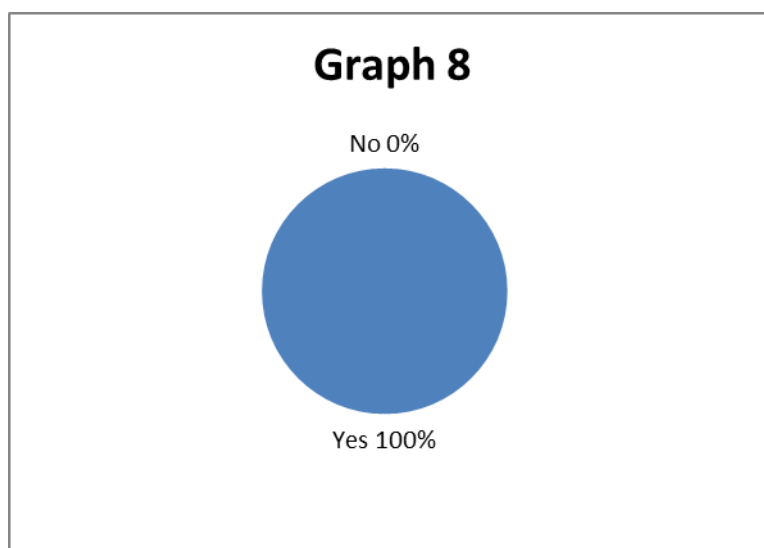
Graph 8

No 0%

Yes 100%

Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As it can be seen from the pie chart fifteen of fifteen interviewed teachers answered that they consider the aspects above mentioned to teach their lessons. This represents a percentage of 100% of the sample; while 0% represents the option 'no'.

According to these percentages, all of the interviewed teachers answered that they consider the students´ needs when teaching English, but the observation demonstrated that only four teachers took into account all these parameters since these teachers controlled discipline, timing, give clear instructions and corrective feedback to their students. Thus, it was evidenced easily when students made an error the teachers gave them implicit corrective feedback through repetition allowing them to react to the corrections.

With this type of feedback students were able to gain positive uptake, because in their next chance at participation, they correctly used the phrases which they mistook previously, demonstrating that the feedback through repetition is a good technique to focus on what students are trying to learn. Likewise, it was confirmed in a study carried out by Büyükbay & Dabaghi in 2010, in which the researchers concluded that repetition can be used as an implicit correction method by the teachers allowing for a predictor of success. Additionally, the teacher repetition may lead to more uptakes in class.

As it was previously stated, only four teachers applied all parameters correctly, meanwhile eleven teachers considered three or less of these aspects in their lessons, for instance in approximately 70% of these eleven, the teachers considered instruction, but they did not worry about discipline. Therefore, students were noisy and restless, thus teachers were always trying to control discipline, and in two of those classrooms, the students were out of control. As a result of this, the class activities were disorganized, incomplete, and feedback was impossible.

In those classes in which teachers were able to control discipline, the instructions were given in English but instantaneously translated to the native language; therefore, students were able to follow the teachers´ instructions, and although feedback was given, it was only assessment feedback, since teachers gave it immediately without waiting for learners to notice. Consequently, it was not proven that there was sufficient student uptake.

Continuing, it was easy to notice that discipline and class management are closely intertwined, hence in those controlled classes the students were able to concentrate better and follow the teacher´s explanations and instructions easily, but unfortunately, in most observed classes timing was not fulfilled, that is to say, the

length of activities and time management were not measured by teachers; consequently, some students' tasks were incomplete, because the bell rang, and additional feedback was not given.

Also, analyzing the teachers 'quiz, they mentioned that all the inquired aspects are essential to fulfill the academic objective. In addition, they said that control over discipline in private high schools for many students is difficult to handle because of their home education. Similarly, in the students' questionnaire, they gave similar answers. However, the class observations showed the contrary.

Lastly, despite the results showed in the figures, the observations demonstrate lack of implementation of mentioned aspects in the majority of English classes, proving that professors are failing in planning some aspects as: length of activities, discipline control, instruction and feedback, which are very important aspects for an adequate teaching-learning process.

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?
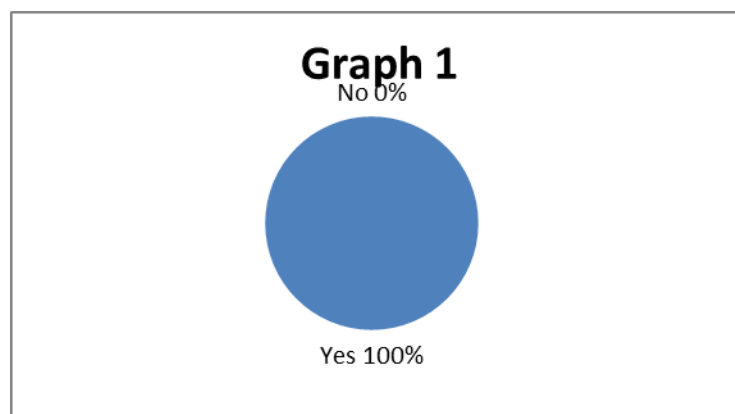
Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As the pie chart demonstrates, all surveyed teachers consider students´ needs to teach English successfully, which means a percentage of 100%, while from the picture it can be seen that 0% is matched with the option no.

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According to these statistics, all the teachers surveyed stated that they consider the students´ needs when teaching English to them, but in class observations it was evident that in only two cases the teachers took the needs of their students into account.

The students´ needs are the basis for good English teaching because the identification of the learning styles provides the teacher with the keys to plan adequate activities according to the students' preferences like Nunan (1995) says that some students learn fast and easily with games, pictures, films, and so on. These students are called concrete learners. While the analytical students prefer to learn studying grammar, reading newspapers, and studying English books, other students, as communicative learners, like to listen to native speakers, talk to friends, and watch television. Lastly, the authority-oriented prefer the teacher to explain everything.

On the basis of the information cited above, in one observed class, the teacher considered the learning styles of the students since she showed her students some slides on Power Point through a projector as a visual and auditory aid, demonstrating the teacher's concern about student attention and motivation using something new, funny and with relevant technology. With this technique, the teacher immediately captured the students' interest, greatly reducing the tedious grammar explanations. In the same way, another teacher took the learning styles into account, showing the students several flash cards in order to teach vocabulary, considering these students as visual learners.

To teach English or any subject is very hard because it requires time investment and the consciousness about styles and preferences of learning. In order to make a lesson plan in concordance with the students´ needs it is important to know the class very well, like as Pulverness, & Williams (2005) comment that leaners learn in

different ways, hence they need to be taught differently, they may not fall precisely into one category of learning style.

As it was said, it is impossible to fit into one category of one style or attitude of learners since as Grass, & Selinker (2008) and Willis (1996) suggest that: the positive or negative attitude also influence learning. Thereby, extroverted students like taking risks in language learning while introverted learners do not. They are quiet in the class, but they are always listening very well. Shy learners will learn in a better way if they work in groups or pairs. Therefore, teachers, as the first step in the teaching-learning process, must identify the kind of class to whom the English knowledge is directed as the class may not be heterogeneous.

Considering the above information, in most of the classes observed the students were involved in reading or grammar exercises in their books individually, denoting the fact that the teachers did not consider the possibility that some students would be extroverted and like to talk. Unfortunately, those observed classes gave the impression that the teachers fitted their students into an introverted attitude.

Additionally, analyzing the teachers' answers, they showed that their concept of students´ needs is very superficial because teachers' statements denote too general knowledge about this topic.

Only three teachers out of fifteen interviewed showed with their answers that they really know the needs of their students and consider aspects such as personality, motivation and learning styles. Furthermore, teachers said that motivation is an essential aspect to obtaining a good learning process. These three teachers also mentioned that students have different ways of learning, and each kind of student needs different strategies to learn English successfully. Unfortunately, it is a low

number of teachers that know and consider students´ needs to teach English successfully.

Do teachers consider Students' level to teach English successfully?
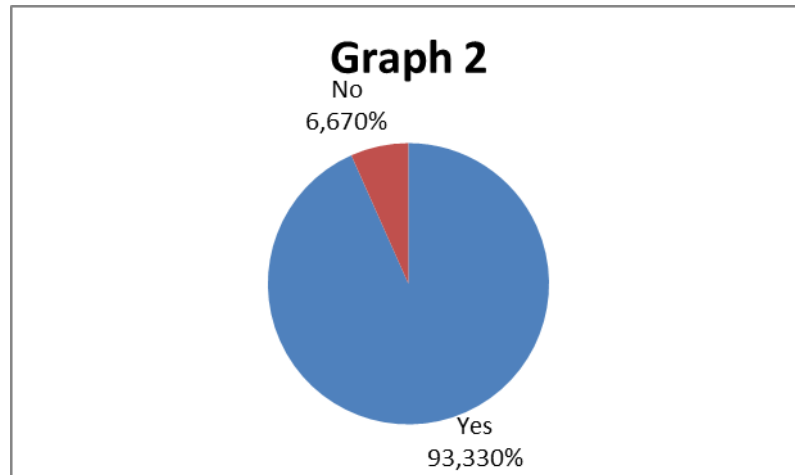
Graph 2

No
6,670%

Yes
93,330%

Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

In this question, fourteen teachers answered that they consider the students' level when teaching English. This is a percentage of 93. 33% from fifteen studied teachers, while one teacher stated that he/she did not regard this aspect representing 6. 67%.

Looking at the pie chart, we can appreciate that most teachers consider the students' level in teaching English. However, it was evident in class observation that only one of the whole observed institutions considers students' English level, classifying them by their level of proficiency such as basic, intermediate and advanced. Despite this fact, in most of these classes the students showed a basic English level.

During the observations, the students had few opportunities to speak in English and instead were involved in grammar, reading or writing exercises, and some teachers used inadequate vocabulary for the students' English level.

As additional information related to the student´s level, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education says that the student`s level is not considered sufficient enough for learning English with a communicative purpose.

Also, in the class observation, it could be appreciated that only two teachers considered students´ learning styles. One of them presented her students with some pictures and another teacher showed her students many slides using a projector.

In addition, to the collected information above, some teachers interviewed responded that the students' level is an indicator of English learning and progress which must be considered to know where to start and continue teaching. Also, teachers stated that they consider the level of their students in order to use adequate vocabulary and behavior.

Another teacher mentioned that not all students have the same level and they cannot learn at the same pace. Consequently, students need different techniques and methods to be taught successfully.

Teachers also think that the students' English level allows them to organize their class in a better way. For instance, when the students are working in groups, one of them must be a good level student in order to support the others with a lower level.

Meanwhile, one teacher answered that she does not consider students´ English level adding that the class is heterogeneous and to consider it is impossible.

Furthermore, some surveyed students said that the assigned tasks are difficult for them; this supports the idea that the majority of teachers in the present study do not consider students' English level. In addition, most of the students are not familiarized with the vocabulary used in their English textbook while a small group knows and dominates the vocabulary.

Despite the teachers´ assertions on their answers, the majority of them did not consider their students´ English level, since little or almost no motivation was given. Teachers did not use visual, audiovisual, realia or online resources. Consequently, there was a great barrier to work on students´ comprehension and acquisition of the foreign language.

Which is the students' English level?
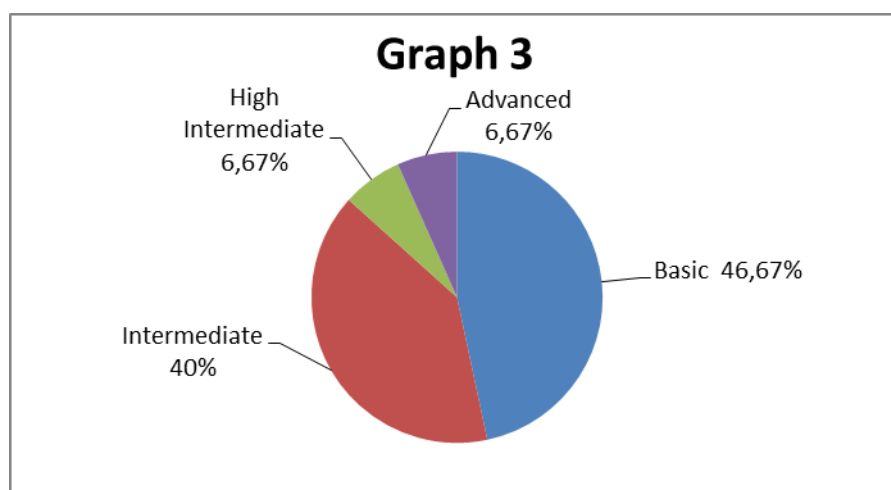
Authors: Monge Silvana & Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

With respect to this question, seven teachers placed their students in a basic level. This quantity represents 46.67%, while six professors situated their learners in an intermediate level, this is 40% of the population, one teacher placed the students in the advanced level and one teacher situated their learners in a high level, these amounts show a percentage of 6.67% in each case.

The above results display that most students in the researched institutions have a basic level independently of their year of study, which was confirmed with the observation performed, where there was a lack of student participation and the teachers translated constantly to their native language in order to confirm understanding and development of different activities in class.

Through observation it was also evident that few teachers used English 100% of the class time, and although exposure to the target language is good, it is not a magic formula to learn English, only practice, practice, practice and more practice brings significant learning. However, the observed teachers did not give their students enough time to practice the language. For this reason, some students expressed having difficulty in doing the given tasks.

Sadly, very few teachers took into account the student´s English level in their classes, using adequate vocabulary, basic grammar, correct visual and audio material, good feedback and most importantly, recognizing that learners might learn slow and they need to be taught according to their level and pace, also helping them to reduce hesitation and difficulty in using the newly acquired utterances.

A good student's English level is a path of performance in which learners have to construct their knowledge step by step, and teachers must recognize the pace of their students, like as Haynes (1998) says "All new learners of English progress through the same stages to acquire language. However, the length of time each student spends at a particular stage may vary greatly."

How many students do teachers have in observed classes?
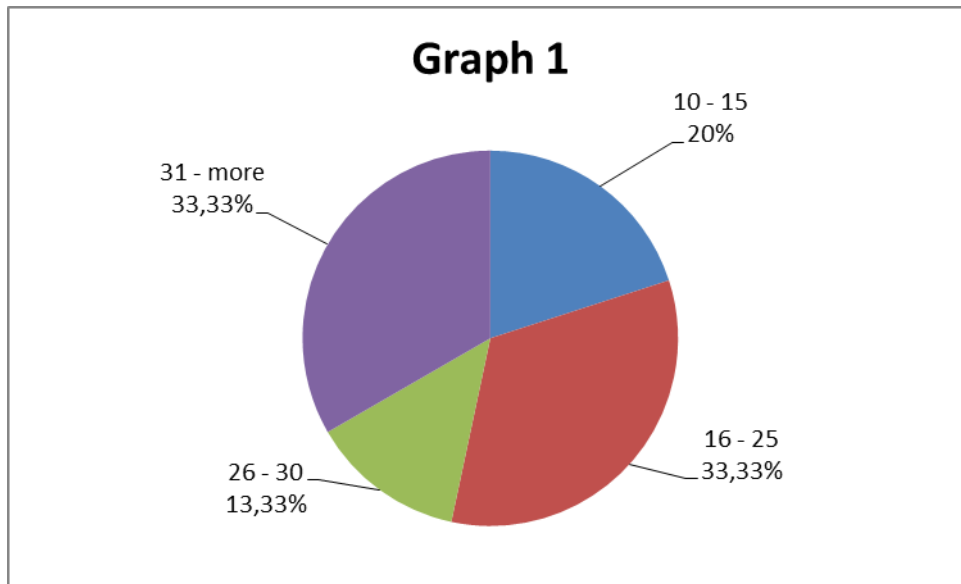
Graph 1

- 10 - 15 20%
- 16 - 25 33,33%
- 26 - 30 13,33%
- 31 - more 33,33%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As it can be seen clearly from the chart, 33. 33% of interviewed answered that in their class there are 31 or more students; 33 33% stated that there are between 16 or 25 students; the next percentage represents two teachers who indicated that there are $26 - 30$ learners, and three teachers said that there are $10 - 15$ students.

Based on class observation the above information was confirmed, since in the majority of observed classes there were a lot of students, and in some cases more than 31, in which it was evidenced clearly that due to the number of students the teachers had problems controlling them, also the physical environment did not help to develop different and varied activities such as: group work or games.

Additionally, in those large classes it was difficult for the teachers to have direct contact with the students, especially those who sat in the back, that is to say, the students did not receive individual attention.

Also, in our field research there were few small classes with 16-25 students in which, like in large classes, the teachers had problems with discipline due to the lack of interesting activities and the students' motivation, rather than class size.

In addition, one interviewed teacher answered on his quiz: "It is the Ecuadorian reality", where large classes are almost a general characteristic of Ecuadorian education. Sadly, there are very few educational institutions that really care about the number of students in each classroom. Consequently, learning may not be very effective.

Peculiarly, contrary to the teachers' answers and researchers´ observations, the students expressed on their questionnaire that they feel comfortable with the number of classmates in their classrooms.

To conclude, as we can see, the problems found in large classes may also be found in smaller environments. In these cases, the efficiency of the teaching–learning process depends in great part on the teacher´s innovative and ingenious characteristics.

Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with?
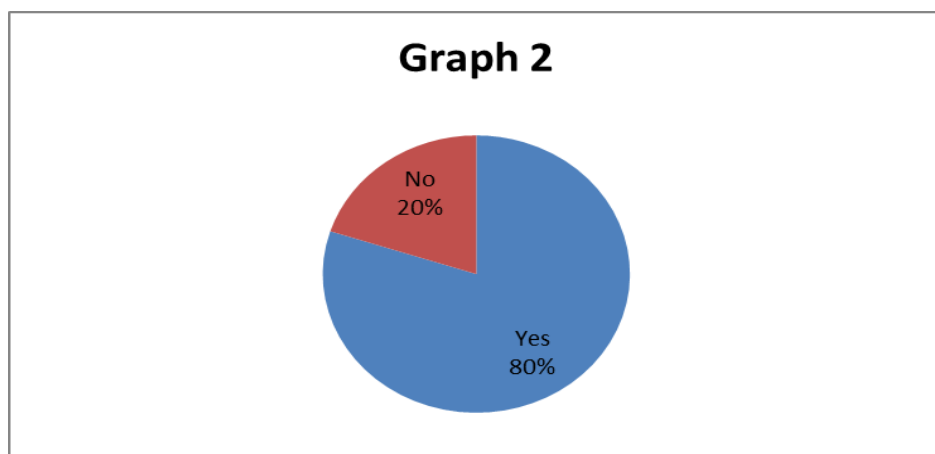
Graph 2

No 20%

Yes 80%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

Out of fifteen interviewed teachers, twelve of them answered that they feel comfortable with the number of students, which is represented by 80% of the

population, meanwhile three teachers that is 20% inclined their answer to the option no.

According to these results, a large part of teachers feel comfortable with the number of the students in their class because they consider that the class size is sufficient to teach, and in smaller proportion, some teachers disagree with these aspects due to the difficulty of working with big groups.

Considering the answers on the teachers' questionnaire, classes with 31 students or more influence the students' attention, due to the fact that learners may chat while the teachers are explaining the lesson, therefore students are unable to gain a significant amount of learning.

Another part of interviewed teachers said on their questionnaires that they feel very comfortable with classes in which there are 16 to 25 because they consider that this number of students is good and it allows them to share knowledge with each one adequately, also the teachers who said 16 or 25, said it is group with a normal number of students, in which discipline is a controllable factor. Meanwhile, teachers who have 26- 30 students in their class expressed that they are accustomed to working with large classes, and obtaining good results.

The last part of interviewed teachers said that they feel comfortable with $10 - 15$ students because, with this number of students, the teacher can give support and correct feedback to the learners.

In the observed classrooms, it was seen that in large classes it was difficult to meet the students' needs but it was also evident that in small classes there were problems because the teachers feel apparently comfortable since they think that these types of classes are synonymous with fewer problems and availability of resources. But curiously, in these small classes, it was evidenced that there was not sufficient

classroom management, due to the lack of classroom (varied) activities, adequate arrangement of seats, and correct use of existing teaching material. This means that the teachers do not always take advantage of working with small classes.

As we can see, the success of teaching does not depend only on the class size, the success also depends on adapting the physical space, the teaching methods, the resources, the classroom arrangement to the students' needs and interests, and giving the learners major opportunities to participate and interact.

Do teachers have enough space to work with the number of students they have been assigned?
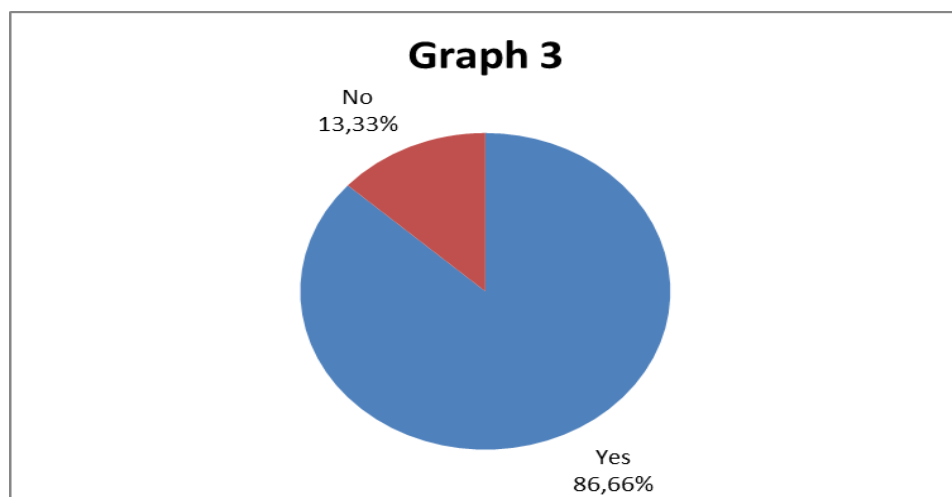
Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As we can see the percentages from the graph show that thirteen teachers that represent 86.66% answered that the space of their classrooms is enough, meanwhile two teachers gave a contrary opinion, representing 13. 33% of the population.

As we can observe, the majority of teachers said that they have enough space to work comfortably with their students. However, through the class observation it could be refuted since as it was said previously in the majority of observed classes

there were so many students which inhibited the free movement of the teacher between the aisles.

Also in class observation, it was evidenced that the small classes had enough space to work with the learners in different activities and some of them had extra student chairs, but this aspect was not taken advantage of by the teachers due to the lack of variety of activities and group formations in the classroom.

In addition, the large classes observed did not have enough space to develop some activities like communicative or collaborative, and similarly to small classes the students sat in rows making the development of communicative language activities more difficult. As a result of this situation, individual work was performed by the students.

In some classrooms there was work in pairs but only joining the learners' chairs. Obviously, this task did not allow greater teacher mobility and freedom, and there was evidently difficulty on the part of the teacher in working in these reduced learning spaces, especially when the students developed different tasks, it was noted that some of the students were not engaged with the task because unfortunately the teacher stayed in front of the class instead of monitoring the students' work around the class.

On the contrary, a lot of students mentioned being comfortable with their class size because it was according to the number of them, while a few were not at ease in this space.

The classroom space is a great influence in the creation of an active setting in the class, and it can be taken into account by teachers to create a lively and engaged environment.

As Harmer (1998) and McGregor (2007) advocate that teaching and the classroom are directly implicated into the learning, since a comfortable classroom environment affects the students' achievement positively, and on the contrary, the students' failure is a result of a bad atmosphere.

Do teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their Classes?
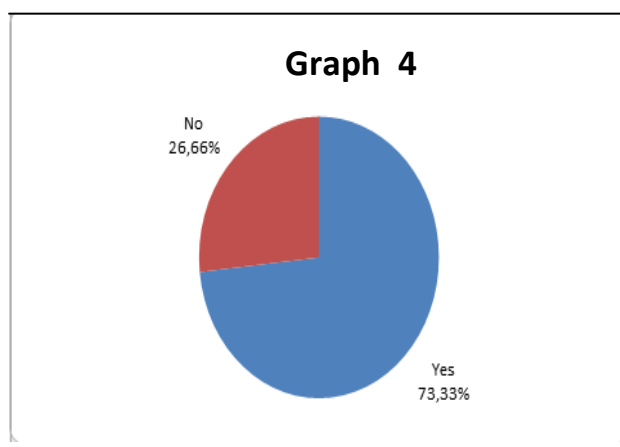
Graph 4

No 26,66%

Yes 73,33%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

From the pie chart, eleven of fifteen interviewed teachers selected the option yes which represents 73. 33%, while four teachers answered no, representing 26. 66% of the whole sample of teachers.

Even though the majority of professors expressed that they organize the class environment depending on the topic and activities, the class observations proved the opposite, since in very few classes the teachers arranged seats horseshoe in two rows demonstrating that for large classes there are other ways to arrange furniture rather than in rows, as Harmer (1998) and Lewis & Hill J (1985) suggest that circles and horseshoes are good alternatives.

Groups and pair work were another option of arrangement used by few teachers, making individualized instruction easier, and reinforcing collaborative activities.

In relation to the teacher questionnaire, a few teachers indicated that they do not organize the students' seats in different ways since there is not enough space to do this, therefore for these teachers, arrangement in rows was the best option to solve space problems, which was supported in class observations.

In relation to the learners' responses one student did not agree with the row arrangement, because this type of arrangement causes boredom.

As we can see, it is important to consider the classroom arrangement as an important aspect since this influences the students´ interaction contributing to diminish misbehavior.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?
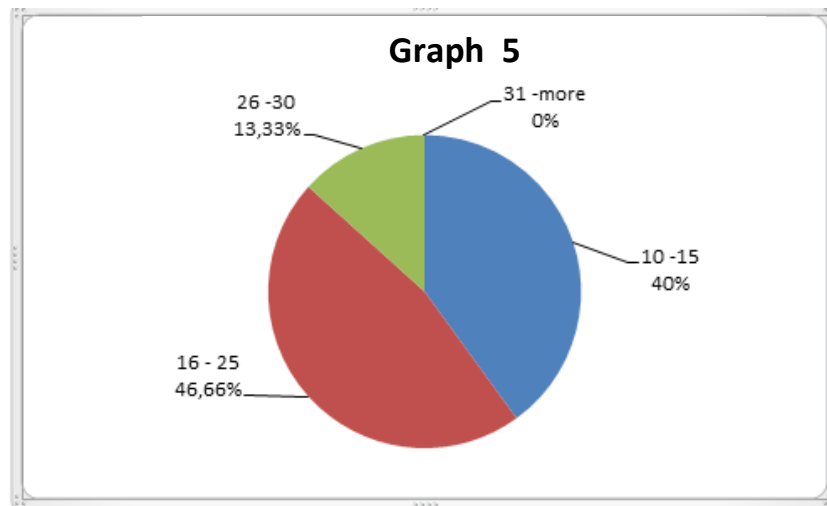
Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As we can see from the graph, seven of the surveyed teachers answered that the appropriate number of students to teach English is 16- 25, which is represented by 46.66% of the sample, meanwhile 6 teachers said that 10 – 15 is a good number to teach, this is symbolized by 40% of the population.

Two teachers are represented by 13.33% who think that 26 -30 students is an adequate number of students to teach English, and 0% symbolizes the option 31 – more for any teacher.

As it can be seen in the chart, no teacher thinks that 31 or more students is a good number to teach, as such, this data was confirmed during the observations since in big classes there were problems such as: difficulty to create lively activities, discipline control, poor student attention and lack of student feedback.

As Leahy (2006) says, large classes can have undesirable effects on students' success, due to there being difficulties in managing learning.

Large classes make it difficult for the teacher to pay attention to each student. And students have fewer opportunities to participate; consequently they may feel bored or unwilling to participate and may not overcome the challenge of speaking to many people.

When teachers were asked about the ideal number of students to teach English, the majority of inquired teachers thought that 16 – 25 was a good number of students to teach English, adding that with an average class it is possible to develop the four skills and students have more opportunities to participate.

Teachers also said that with this number of students, control over the class is easier since they can work in groups and individually, making the class more manageable, and when students work on their own teachers are able to check each student's work, making teaching as individual as possible.

Other teachers expressed that in a class with 10 – 15 students, they can teach better because in a classroom with fewer occupants there is more space in which students can move freely and feel comfortable.

The teachers surveyed said that small classes guarantee that the teacher has enough time to dedicate to the progress of each student, and the teacher can do a lot of activities while the students can practice the language one on one.

It is important to note that in this question, most of the teachers think that small classes are better than large, however when they were asked if they feel comfortable with the number of students with whom they work, the majority of teachers answered 'yes', making their answers contradictory.

Do teachers use teaching resources?
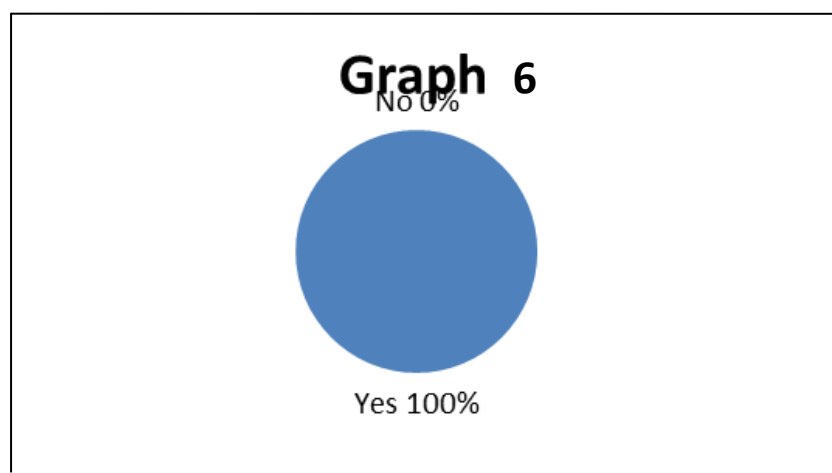
Graph 6
No 0%
Yes 100%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

As it can be seen from the pie chart, fifteen of fifteen teachers interviewed answered that they use teaching resources, whereas the option no is represented by 0% of the sample.

All teachers surveyed answered that they use teaching resources such as a TV, a tape/Cd recorder, computer, projector and/or supplementary materials. Though, regarding the class observation, it could be evidenced that in only four of the classes observed the teachers used supplementary materials such as a CD recorder for listening practice, flash cards for vocabulary, slides for lesson explanations and a computer – projector for grammar explanations. The use of teaching materials by

these teachers indicated educator´s investment of time to prepare a good lesson, which facilitates the teaching-learning process.

In some classrooms it could be seen that there were certain teaching resources, for instance CD recorders, computers, or headphones, which were not used by the teachers, and in the majority of cases the students worked in their books, or notebooks, and the teachers used only the white board for supplementary explanations. Although the whiteboard is a good resource, teachers could have used various aids to increase the students´ interest and provide a refreshing break to learners.

Although, observations showed that very few teachers used some supplementary materials, all teachers said that they use many materials to teach English to their students. Similarly, fifteen students said that their teachers use different teaching materials.

Finally, as we know, the use of didactic material in each class clarifies the lessons, improving the student´s comprehension and retention, but unfortunately in most observed classes teachers neither used adequate supplementary materials nor took advantage of existing materials in the classroom.

Do the teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?
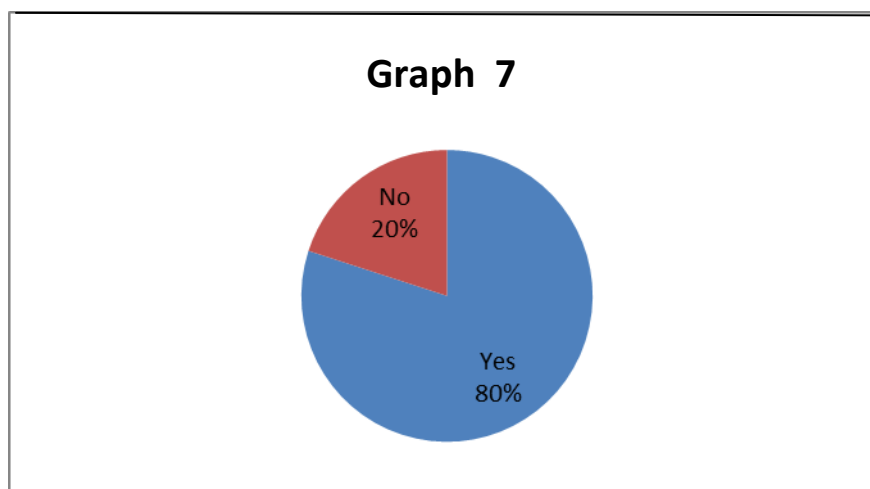
Graph 7

No
20%

Yes
80%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

About this graphic, we can see that twelve teachers, with a percentage of 80% consider that the resources they have in the classroom are suitable to teach English and three teachers with a percentage of 20% think the contrary.

According to this graph, a great number of teachers in this study consider the didactic instruments that their classrooms provide them appropriate. However, during the observation, it was evident that the mentioned resources were not enough to conduct the teaching-learning process since in most classrooms there were no resources such as TV, projectors, CD players or computers. Also, it could be seen that most teachers used the board and the textbook as the only resources in their classes, that is to say, they did not prepare supplementary materials.

In only two institutions visited, there were resources such as computer, tape recorder and projector, and in one of them there was an English Laboratory, but the teacher did not use this, instead the students were asked to use their dictionaries. But curiously, most of the students surveyed answered that their teachers use many resources in their classes.

Similar to the observations, 20% of the sample thinks that the materials supplied by institutions are not enough, adding that the didactic resources play a very important role in the teaching-learning process and also since, they provide the students with more motivation and interest.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

Do institutions review teachers´ lesson plan?
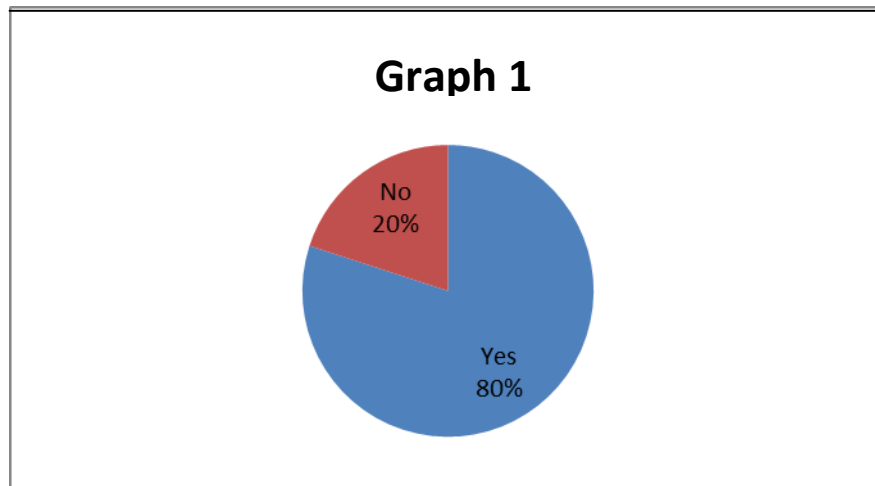
Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica
Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

The graph shows that thirteen of fifteen teachers surveyed selected the option 'yes', this statistic being represented by 80%, and two teachers chose the possibility 'no' which is represented by 20% of the surveyed sample.

Looking at the graph, it is easy to perceive that the highest percentage shows a positive answer to the question about institutions' supervision to the teachers´ lesson plans. Though, based on what was evidenced during the class observations, some teachers had an unsatisfactory development of their classes denoting that there was not adequate preparation prior to the class. Consequently, it was noted that there was not a revision by the institutions.

As we said, very few teachers prepared supplementary materials such as slides, pictures and CD's and sadly, the majority of observed teachers only used the

60

students' book as an aid to teach and to practice the target language, clearly showing the lack of preparation for the class.

In addition, the frequency of revision of these instruments according to the teachers´ responses in the applied questionnaires are the following: 6 lesson plans are reviewed once a week, 5 plans are revised once a month, 2 of them are checked every day but 2 of the teachers did not answer how often their plans were revised.

In relation to the importance of the lesson plan in the teaching-learning process, The Ministry of Education (2012) states that "A lesson plan is a guide because it serves as a map or checklist that leads us in knowing what to teach, in what order, and for how long". From this perspective, the lesson plans carry great importance in teaching due to the fact that they are a valuable instrument and a key developmental factor for teachers since they provide the appropriate framework for teaching practice.

Finally, the teachers' responses and the observations demonstrated that the majority of the professor's plans are not revised because teachers have difficulty in: classroom management, control of the time for each assigned activity, general accomplishment of the teaching steps, demonstrating the lack of control of the lesson plans.

Do the Institutions monitor the teacher´s teaching?
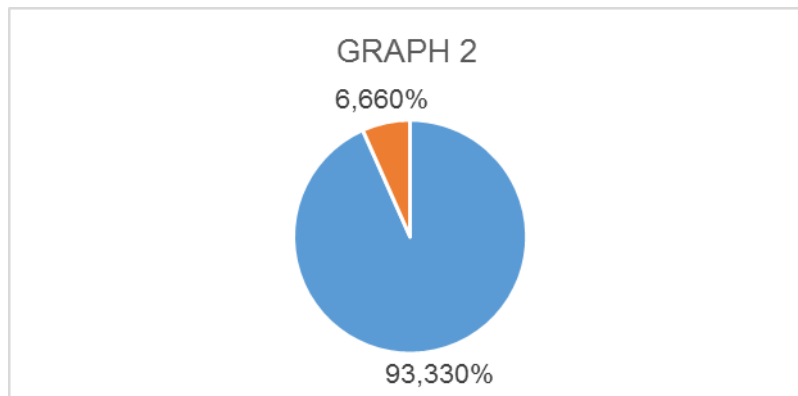
GRAPH 2

6,660%

93,330%

Authors: MongeSilvana& Valencia Mònica

Source: Private High Schools in Cotopaxi – Latacunga.

The figures represented in this graph indicate that fourteen teachers, 93.33%, express that their classes are monitored while one teacher, this is 6.66% in study stated the contrary.

In addition to this data, the frequency of the supervision of classroom is: eleven teachers are monitored once a week, two teachers are supervised once a month, one professor expresses to have other type of observation but it was not mentioned by the teacher, and finally, one teacher did not give any answer. Nevertheless, the statistical graph indicates the existence of classroom monitoring.

From this perspective, the majority of teachers are monitored in their classes with more or less frequency; however, the observations demonstrated the opposite since, similar to the revision of the lesson plans, the majority of teachers had problems with managing the class classroom, time, discipline, use of resources, so on, and all of these parameters go together in classroom supervision, providing correction in order to encourage the teachers to reflect and to make a decision about their work .

As it was said, although the majority of teachers said they were supervised, the observations revealed the opposite since, when a teacher is observed he or she receives suggestions from his or her colleagues in different aspects as: the use of methods and materials, the change of their teaching style, the use of technology (how technology can be incorporated in the classroom), all these aspects in order to generate an improvement in teaching, however as proof of a lack of monitoring in the institutions it was observed that these aspects were not treated properly.

Classroom observation in our Ecuadorian reality is considered as a strategy applied in the educational institutions. Generally, it was practiced in some private institutions to assure the quality of education inside these contexts. Now, classroom observations are also applied in public institutions with the same purpose as in private education seeking to improve the teaching in our country. Normally, this activity is carried out by the Vice-principal or Pedagogical Commission Members in each institution.

The effectiveness of monitoring in both public and private education depends on the educative climate where respect and the culture are main parts of these contexts. Interestingly, at present this practice is rigorously controlled by the corresponding authorities in two educational environments.

In the end, the classroom observation is an important and useful practice in the classroom although it was not applied completely in the observed schools but is the only practice in which the teachers reflect on their own teaching practices and the observers can learn from each other.

Conclusions

- This research shows that the students' English level is basic, despite the fact that they belong to a high school.

- This study demonstrates that teachers in private high schools do not take into account neither the needs nor the English level of their students during their lessons.

- During this research process, it was determined that the classroom conditions in most of the observed institutions were not appropriate in relation to physical space, technological equipment, and didactic resources to develop a variety of motivational activities for the students in comfortable surroundings to reach a successful English language teaching process.

- In this research study, it was identified that a great part of the in-service English teachers have English Bachelor's degrees with a level of proficiency B1, which was clearly observed in the majority of the classes where the teachers did not have enough mastery of the linguistic profile.

- Most of the teachers have traditional characteristics because they applied old fashioned teaching methods in their classes such as: Grammar Translation or Total Physical Response. They neither use attractive teaching materials nor refreshing seating arrangements. Besides, the preferred activities were individual rather than collaborative, limiting active and fun learning.

- The lack of continuity in the teaching steps in the majority of the observed English classes determined that there are very few or no institutional facilities and norms that consider the quality of education to control and monitor the teachers work.

Recommendations

- Teachers must try to encourage their students to use English for communicative purposes rather than academic. That is to say, to teach English using more time to practice, in order to generate pleasure in learning instead of simply getting a score.

- Teachers should consider their students´ needs and styles before planning and teaching their lessons.

- The institutions must supply the adequate physical space, technological equipment, and didactic resources in order to generate comfortable classroom conditions, because students' relaxation and learning success are closely intertwined. On the other hand, the professors must use the existing resources in the institution, such as tape-recorders, laboratories, and televisions. And in other occasions to put into practice the teacher´s creativity with the preparation of their own materials like: flash cards, pictures, realia material, photographs, posters, and so on. Hence, these aspects will generate interest in the subject matter.

- Institutions must train their English teachers through courses, teaching conferences or seminars. Because if the teachers are trained, they will have enough tools to give high quality guidance to their students. Meanwhile, the teachers should always be in constant self-preparation to improve didactic skills, communicative competence and refresh their knowledge about teaching methods, didactic materials and classroom management.

- During the observations it was found that most of the observed teachers applied the Grammar Translation Method. Although this method is not bad, it is important that teachers vary the teaching method in each class, taking

into account the students´ preferences, needs, and English level.

- It is recommended that private institutions monitor the teachers' work through lesson planning, class observation and opportune institutional norms, which help the teachers to reach a high quality level in education. In that way, they will make learning more effective and enjoyable for their students.

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