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**Teachers and students' perceptions of teaching English in small classes in  
Ecuador**

**TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN.**

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## **Aprobación del Director del Trabajo de Fin de Titulación**

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DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de Fin de titulación: Teachers and students' perceptions of teaching English in small classes in Ecuador realizado por Jacqueline Randy Domínguez Leiva, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, noviembre del 2014

F).....

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“Yo Domínguez Leiva Jacqueline Randy declaro ser autor (a) del presente trabajo de Fin de titulación: Teachers and students’ perceptions of teaching English in small classes in Ecuador, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Mgs. Nina Nesterenko directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my loved parents, brother and sisters who motivate me in every aspect of my life and for encouraging me to continue with my professional career. I also want to dedicate it to my children and husband who are the reason of my life; they inspire me day after day, giving me reasons to continue working to be a better person as well as a better professional. Thank you for all your love and patience, but above all for trusting me and helping me to achieve my dream.

Jacqueline

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## ABSTRACT

This research is about “Teachers and students’ perceptions of teaching English in small classes in Ecuador”. Its purpose is to know the possible teaching benefits, strategies and resources used, students’ feelings, and probable limitations when teaching English in small classes. The study was carried out in Academia Militar del Valle which is a private school located in Quito-Ecuador

The methods applied in this study were quantitative and qualitative; the instruments used were students and teachers’ questionnaires and observational sheets. The participants were 5 EFL teachers and 94 students across five secondary classrooms selected. The data gathered from the questionnaires was correlated with the information registered in the observation sheets and the literature review.

The results revealed that the main benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes were that there were more opportunities of teacher-student interaction, better students’ concentration but this did not ensure the participation of all students, proper feedback provided, and the existence of a good rapport. Moreover, the teachers tended to use a whole class instruction with an increasing of individual work and less pair work.

### **Keywords:**

Teachers and students’ perception, English learning and teaching process, small classes.

## RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza la percepción de profesores y estudiantes en la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en clases pequeñas en Ecuador. Su propósito es investigar los posibles beneficios, estrategias y recursos utilizados, los sentimientos de los estudiantes, y las probables limitaciones cuando se enseña inglés en clases pequeñas. Este estudio fue realizado en la escuela Academia Militar del Valle, localizada en Quito-Ecuador.

Los métodos utilizados fueron cuantitativos y cualitativos; los instrumentos empleados fueron cuestionarios dirigidos a los estudiantes y profesores y hojas de observación. Los participantes fueron 5 profesoras de inglés y 94 estudiantes de las cinco clases participantes. Los datos obtenidos de los cuestionarios fueron correlacionados con las observaciones realizadas por el autor y con la revisión de la literatura.

Los resultados revelaron que los principales beneficios del aprendizaje y enseñanza del inglés en clases pequeñas fueron que existió más oportunidades de interacción entre el profesor-estudiante, mejor concentración de los estudiantes aunque no aseguró la participación de todos los alumnos, una oportuna retroalimentación y el establecimiento de una buena relación entre el profesor y los alumnos. Además existió una tendencia a utilizar una instrucción dirigida a toda la clase, con incremento en el trabajo independiente y menos trabajos en parejas.

### **Keywords:**

Percepción de los profesores y estudiantes, proceso de aprendizaje y enseñanza del inglés, clases pequeñas.



## INTRODUCTION

English is currently a widely useful tool required to get a higher education and better employment opportunities. Therefore, the government of Ecuador has driven a project with the purpose of strengthen the teaching quality of English in its educational establishments. This program is addressed to improve the professional development of English teachers and to update the English national curriculum (Ministerio Coordinador del Talento Humano, 2012).

Evidently, a well-designed national curriculum and a better professional training of English teachers will contribute to achieve a high-quality of education; however, there are some other aspects that may also affect the teaching and learning process like large classes which are generally considered as a difficulty by most teachers who are currently working in this professional field.

With regard to class size, Jeremy Harmer (2001) asserts that large classes' teaching implies some adversities that small classes do not entail. This suggests that small classes contribute positively to the teaching and learning process. Similarly, Peter Blatchford (2003) states that "there is a consensus among many in education that smaller classes allow a better quality of teaching and learning".

For this reason, the present study was conducted to search on teachers and students' perceptions of teaching and learning English in small classes in Ecuador. The outcomes obtained will help to know if small class size is associated with students' progress. To this effect, the researcher posed four research questions:

What are the benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes?

What teaching strategies and resources benefit the teaching of English in small classes?

How do students feel about learning English in small classes?

Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?

Previous studies have been carried out around the world to investigate how class size influence students' learning which are related to the topic of this research from different point of views. Here, it will be cited three studies which were considered the most important to this investigation.

First, Zeinab Khazaei, Ahmad Zadeh, and Saeed Ketabi (2012) investigated the effect of class size on the Iranian EFL students' willingness to communicate. Three classes with different sizes were used for data collection. The researchers observed all three classes to record the amount of time each student talked and participated during the activities. The results demonstrated that class size had a substantial effect on the students' willingness to communicate. Students were found to be more disposed to communicate in small classes since they had more opportunities to practice their oral skills.

The next study was conducted by Maurice Galton and Tony Pell (2009) to determine whether pupils in small classes had a better progress in attainment and improved attitudes and motivation than students in regular classes in Hong Kong primary schools. The method used was quantitative and it involved three stages of analysis from the school, the class and the students. The findings showed that the benefits of small classes were prominent during the first year of elementary school. The more successful schools were those that had more skillful Principals who had stronger confidence in small class teaching, promoted improved attainment and motivation, and fostered better relationships between teachers and pupils. There was little evidence that supported that one teaching approach rather than another had a better effect on pupils' progress. Small classes also supposed an increasing of pupil participation in their learning, and thus, it was often required extra resource materials.

Nonetheless, the results did not suggest that smaller classes solved by themselves all the difficulties identified in classes like declining attitudes and motivation.

The third study was carried out by Paul Bassett, Peter Blatchford, Harvey Goldstein, and Clare Martin (2003) to establish whether class size differences affect pupils' academic achievement in United Kingdom schools. The investigation employed an observational technique in order to monitor the relationship between class size and students' achievement. It was reported that teachers in smaller classes had more individual contact with pupils and gave them more support for learning; in contrast to larger classes where pupils received less support from the teachers and therefore learners were more inattentive during the lessons.

The findings obtained from the present study will serve as a reference point that help the education authorities of Ecuador be aware of the possible benefits that small class size may represent to student' progress and take measures necessary to improve the teaching and learning process of English in the country. Furthermore, this investigation will also represent a valuable source of information to schools, institutes, researchers, teachers, parents, and students since it will help them understand the benefits of teaching English in small classes and consider those aspects which are not influenced by class size.

Notwithstanding, there were several limitations in the present study. For instance, not all classes at the school which was the site of study were small enough to be considered in this investigation so that there was not at random selection of the participant classes. For this reason, those classes might not allow to make generalizations to the entire population under study. Another limitation was that interviews to the participants were not considered during this study which could help the researcher to have a better grasp of the responses obtained in the teachers and students' questionnaires. Additionally, one observation per class is not enough to capture all the aspects involved in the learning process. Moreover, students and teachers' behaviors may be affected by the observational process which could influence the

outcomes. Further investigations are recommended that take into account the limitations already mentioned.

## METHOD

### *Settings and Participants*

The current research was carried out in Unidad Educativa Academia Militar del Valle which is a private school located in Quito, Province of Pichincha - Ecuador, from May 5<sup>th</sup> until May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The sample selected for this study was five secondary classrooms from the above mentioned school where English is taught as a foreign language. These small classes were selected at nonrandom sampling since not all of the classrooms fulfilled the class size requirement which was to be comprised by 20 students or less. The participants were 5 female EFL (English as Foreign language) teachers and 94 students across the five secondary classrooms selected. These included 2 ninth-grade classes of 20 students each one who were in A2 level (elementary level) and 20 tenth-grade students and 2 first of high school classes of 17 students each class who were B1 level (pre-intermediate and intermediate level respectively) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The participant students were boys and girls whose age ranged from 12 to 16 years old.

### *Procedure*

The present study used quantitative and qualitative methods in order to get data on the subject under investigation. The author carried out a bibliographic research through varied books that contained information about the main aspects that must be generally involved in a teaching and learning process of English in small classes. Among these aspects, it can be mentioned the importance of managing learning, the importance of interaction, the benefits or difficulties for teaching English in different class size, teaching techniques, strategies or activities used for teaching English in small classes, and the learning environment in small classes; and thus, the author selected relevant and specific facts such as theories, definitions, and concepts from two different sources for each theme cited.

Moreover, the researcher consulted journal articles and reliable internet sites in order to include information of five previous studies related to the research topic with the purpose not only to recognize the procedure of similar studies but also to gain a deeper insight that enabled to support the analysis of the findings.

After that, once the target population was identified, the author obtained permission from the Principal, the highest authority in the Institution already mentioned, through a formal letter. During the current study the privacy and confidentiality of the participants were protected since personal information was not requested.

Regarding the instruments employed for data collection, the researcher made use of rating scale questionnaires, one addressed to the students and another to the teachers, and it also used observation sheets. All instruments were provided by Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. The questionnaires for teachers and students consisted of four sections with close-ended questions about the benefits, teaching strategies and resources used, students' feelings and limitation when teaching English in small classes. The participants were asked to choose an option in each statement from four possible answers which were: *totally agree*, *agree*, *partially agree*, and *disagree*. The observation checklists were comprised of twenty two "yes" or "no" questions to gather information about how the English teaching and learning process in the class was performed; the researcher's own personal impressions could also be added as notes below each question.

In consequence, the present study involved three levels of analysis from the students, the teachers and the researcher. On one hand, the survey technique was used as quantitative data collection to obtain information from the participants about the teaching and learning process of English in small classes. The researcher administered the questionnaires at the end of each class; some instructions were given before so the participants could fill out the questionnaires appropriately. Moreover, the study also included an observational and note-

taking technique as forms of qualitative data collection. The observation process took a week to be completed. The researcher monitored one class per day in order to register the development of the teaching process and to take notes. During the classes the observation checklists were filled out by the researcher and some notes also were added as necessary. It is appropriate to inform that the students regularly receive two hours of English classes every day but actually each hour in the school time is 40 minutes; this means that each class lasted 80 minutes. As a result, the researcher observed 6 hours and 40 minutes of English classes in a week.

The quantitative database gathered was tabulated to be displayed in tables to have a better view of the information obtained from the teachers and students' questionnaires organized in such a way that one by one the four research questions were answered. After that, the author proceeded to describe the statistical results presented in the tables; moreover, this information was compared or contrasted to the data gathered in the observation sheets. Finally, the findings obtained through the study were correlated with the theoretical support from books and previous studies included in the literature review.

## DISCUSSION

### Literature Review

Nowadays the importance of learning English as a foreign language is without any doubt an essential skill required not only to access information and technology, but also to communicate in a globalized world. According to this reality, the government of Ecuador is working really hard to improve the English teaching quality in its schools. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has launched an effort that is addressed specifically to the updating of the English national curriculum, the distribution of new textbooks based on that curriculum, the professional improvement of English teachers who are already working in this field, and the development of the foresaid professional career (Ministerio Coordinador del Talento Humano, 2012).

Certainly, all these factors can influence the quality of teaching and learning process, but there is especially one enduring and arguable issue that both teachers and students are concerned about, it is class size and all the aspects that are included in it. There are many studies that have researched about how class size can affect the teaching of English language in primary and secondary instructions. Nevertheless, the starting point has always been to prove that large classes in contrast to small classes have a negative impact on the learning achievement of English language learners (Finn & Voekl, 1992; Glass, Cahen , Smith , & Filby, 1982). Beyond this point at issue, small classes imply different features that may influence how teachers and students sense the teaching and learning process of English. Therefore, it is necessary to review some of those aspects that are usually involved in teaching English to small classes, which are discussed below:

#### *Managing learning*



Regardless of class size, managing learning is an essential part of the teaching and learning process that all English teachers should pay special attention to in order to get the learning goals proposed in each lesson plan.

As one of the main points, it can be stated that the way of how teachers give instructions to students is really important to ensure success with the different types of activities carried out during the class. Jeremy Harmer (2007), a course designer and tutor on the MA TESOL at the New School in New York, has asserted that “this issue of how to talk to students becomes crucial when we give them instructions. The best activity in the world is a waste of time if the students don’t understand what it is they are supposed to do”. Indeed, the instructions that teachers give before carrying out an activity in and extra class is always important in any subject matter, but it is especially true in English classes, where students are acquiring a new language as an additional one different from their mother tongue.

Therefore, the author previously mentioned also claims in other of his educational works *The Practice of English Language Teaching* that at all levels it is extremely important that teachers make sure to present instructions in a “clear, simple and logical way”. Teachers should use structures and vocabulary that students can understand but they also should check that learners have understood the instructions given before starting any activity in order to ensure the achievement of the learning objectives proposed. There are many ways to monitor students’ understanding of instructions. For instance, asking students to repeat the instructions given by the teacher, in English or in their first language, or organizing a quick demonstration which is considered as a powerful tool in instructions that almost always helps students understand what they are expected to do in a concrete and accurate way (Harmer, 2001).

Another important challenge for teachers is to take the most advantage of academic learning time during classes since the time students spend working in the learning activities and getting the learning outcomes proposed by the teacher is one of the most influential variables that benefits students' progress (Long & Levin, 1981). For this reason, the amount and use of time allocated for learning activities has got to be a well-designed aspect when teachers prepare their lesson plan because these are valuable opportunities that students have to learn. Additionally, Harmer (2001) affirms that when teachers start an activity, they should not only know and inform the students how much time they have to carry out the activity, but they also should know when to end. For instance, because the students are not engaged in the activity or because some students have finished before others, or perhaps the class time is almost finishing and teachers want to have a couple of minutes to give a recap of what has been seen during the class.

Feedback is also another important aspect considered as a key part of an effective teaching. Paul Black and Dylan William (1998) have asserted that “feedback on students' work probably has more effect on achievement than any other single factor”. So it is important to make sure that the feedback teachers give is suitable to the students concern and according to the task they are working on during the class. The goal of feedback is to help students get the maximum learning as possible, make them aware of those limitations that are affecting their learning and take actions with the guidance of the teacher in order to improve. Consequently, the feedback provided helps students to get actively involved in the learning process; besides, it helps teachers to measure and assess whether the class has been understood or whether it needs to be reinforced. The results should be used by teachers to continue or adjust the teaching process that help students to get an effective learning.

Similarly, Charles Lockhart and Jack Richards (1996), specialists in second and foreign language teaching, have asserted that effective feedback practices not only let students know how well they have performed but it can also have a powerful effect on their motivation, and contribute to a cooperative learning environment. In language classrooms, feedback may be a response either to the content of what a student has produced or to the form of an utterance. In brief, feedback is an ongoing learning process that helps increase students' knowledge, proficiency, and self-confidence as well as it lets students to get an insight about themselves as learners.

#### *Teacher-student and student- student interaction*

Educational Field researchers have also indicated that interaction in the second language classrooms is an important factor for acquisition. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2010) reports that since the goal of any language program is to develop students' communicative competence, there must exist recurrent opportunities for student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction; and to warranty this learning occurrences, ACTFL supports the recommendation that class size should have no more than 15 students, made by both the National Education Association (NEA) and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL).

Lockhart and Richards (1996) also support that in language' classrooms, learning is influenced by the quality of interaction between the teacher and the students, and among the learners since it is considered as opportunities to practice the language. These authors describe student-teacher interaction in teacher led whole class activities in which the teacher describes, explains, and questions, and pupils are expected to answer, then the teacher responds according to pupils' responses, comments, questions, or lack of answers. Moreover, it is suggested that whole class teacher-led activities in ESL classrooms that contain a small

number of students allow pupils to work as a group without being single out for individual participation and it can also serve as a preparation for other activities that can be worked individually or in groups. Nonetheless, this kind of interaction is teacher-dominated with little opportunities for active student participation and limited to interact with a small number of learners in the classroom; and therefore, the use of pair work and small groups in the classroom is recommended to motivate students to use the new language. In brief, it is through student-student interaction that communicative competence is developed since learners must draw upon to their linguistic knowledge of the target language and use it to complete a task in a collaborative and nonthreatening context.

Similarly, Michael Long (1983) has asserted that student-student interaction is a kind of cooperative work that allows learners to obtain “comprehensible input”, input that is obtained when learners negotiate for meaning in order to understand and be understood. This negotiation not only helps make input more comprehensible, provide feedback to the learners, and push students to make an effort to get the level of their partner’s comprehension, but above all it supports language acquisition.

Additionally, Wilga M. Rivers (1987) who is an Australian academic and writer about teaching languages states that teachers should give up on being the center of attention and create situations where students can involve in real interaction with the teacher and among them. Since interaction in English courses is not only expected but required to practice the language that have been learned in a more common way, teachers should not correct every error that students make while they are attempting to convey their ideas during these interaction opportunities. Moreover, students can gradually expand their vocabulary and knowledge of the language to communicate when they work in authentic tasks that stimulate interaction like debates, problem solving task and dialogue journals, especially in small

classes, in which their focus on attention is to convey and receive messages using their oral and non-verbal skills. To sum up, interaction helps students to develop communicative skills and fluency of the foreign language.

### *Class size*

There is a large body of studies that pointed out class size as a factor that can benefit or hamper the teaching and learning of English language in relation to students' achievement.

According to Jeremy Harmer (2001), English language classrooms can vary from private lessons of one student to classes of 100 students or even more. The effectiveness of teaching English depends on the educational system that the teacher makes use of rather than the class size. For this reason, if people ask teachers what is considered a large class, some of them might consider that is one which is formed by 20 students whereas other teachers might believe that is one of more than 40. However, most of teachers generally see large classes as a dilemma that presents numerous challenges. For instance, there is limited space for activities unless it is a big room and difficulty to maintain students working on task as well as difficulty to satisfy the individual students' needs. Conversely, in small classes there is a more personal attention to students concerned, easier to organize different tasks, more opportunities to interact with each other, among other reasons. Despite of the disadvantages that large classes could present, they could be fun and dramatic because of the diversity of human potential that teachers can encounter in big classes.

In similar way, English language Professor Anna V. Saraswati (2004), has argued that the concept of large classes not always has the same sense in all parts of the world. While a class of forty students is seen as large class in the west, in India to be considered a big one has to consist of at least eighty pupils. Most teachers in India have pointed out that large class can cause disciplinary problems and attention to individual needs can be almost impossible.

Teachers may also feel that they do not get to know all their students and it is difficult to get attention from all students. Nonetheless, small classes by themselves do not guarantee discipline, attention and interest from all students, or a better performance from them. In fact, a large class could become a great experience for teachers if they help learners assume an active role in learning the language, implement group work activities and know them better while teachers monitor students' group work.

#### *Teaching Techniques, strategies or activities for teaching English to small classes*

Undoubtedly, it is of great importance that teachers make use of appropriate instructional strategies, techniques or activities for small classes in order to get an effective teaching of English language.

Jerry Jesness (2004), educator of English as a Second Language, in his *Quick Start guide* suggests that in a well-balanced English course, the study of grammar, listening, writing and speaking must be always present. First, some ideas for teaching grammar in small classes include both exposure to patterns that help students to apply grammar rules in an automatic way, and controlled practice which can be done either chorally or individually by nominating students in a random way and asking them to elicit a sentence. Next, listening has been considered the most used and important language skill that requires mental decoding process. Typical activities organized by teachers involve the use of large quantity of taped materials with songs, conversations, stories, and so on, which include the support of objects, pictures or gestures to make the language input clear. One technique that works as well as one tutor is the use of computer programs to teach question forms, complex sentences and the use of tenses; moreover, teachers can create their own files to reinforce the topics treated in class. Dictation is another teaching technique that has been used for many years not only because it requires the integration of listening and writing skills, but also the grammatical

knowledge and phonological recognition of words. And finally, speaking is an important skill which is considered the most difficult one to teach because the only way like students learn to speak is by speaking; therefore, students must be encouraged to produce the language orally.

The author mentioned above also adds that in small classes, some techniques from the Direct Method are appropriate for teaching speaking. For instance, controlled conversation helps students to practice structures and vocabulary with the guidance of their teacher. Besides, there are many attractive group activities that also help elicit oral production like describing and drawing an object, giving instructions and directions, and so forth. Another activity that also allows students to practice speaking in groups in a very creative way is role playing. Role play can be controlled in the beginners' level providing key words or demonstrations where students represent situations like shopping trips, trips to the doctor, going to the airport, so forth; and in advanced levels, role playing can be more complex where students might represent more authentic situations. A good way to monitor students' performance is to give them the chance to reproduce their work in front of the class (Jesness, 2004).

On the other hand, Mick Randall (2007), Director of the Centre for English Language Teaching Research at University College Chichester, emphasizes the importance of including meaning focused and form focused learning activities as essential factors involved in language comprehension and production in order to get the language competence. English learners need rehearsal, repetition and frequency in the learning environment to make automatic the use of any particular feature; in small classes with the use of high tech resources is easier to manage. Strategies like word and sentence repetition which involve the noticing rather than naming of pattern are more effective for teaching grammar. In EFL classrooms, reading aloud is a highly popular technique that contributes both to production and rehearsal

of the language and it is a good way to provide exposure to the spoken language; and thus, it helps to improve both receptive and productive skills.

### *Learning environment in small classes*

Learning environment involves the social, physical, and psychological contexts wherein learning occurs and which affect students' achievement and their attitudes to the English language.

With regard to physical environment, Harmer (2007) states that circle seating arrangement is suitable for small classes in which the chairs are forming a circle and the teacher's location is where the board is located. The position of the teacher is less dominating than in other seating arrangements and it allows students to strengthen feelings of equality.

Nevertheless, language teachers Zoltan Dornyei and Tim Murphey (2003) assert in their book *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom* that the most common seating arrangement used in small classes are orderly rows of desks and chairs in which the teacher can see the whole class and the whole class can see the teacher, and U-shape in which the teacher is located at the open end and the students are sitting in a semi-circle that allow learners to see one another and be able to communicate among them. As regards the social environment, they assert that remembering students' name not only has a beneficial effect on the communicative classroom but it is also a powerful rapport building tool for the classroom.

In addition, Christopher Candlin and Neil Mercer (2001), second language researchers, emphasize the importance of the social context where learning occurs since it contributes to build learners' identity and create a relationship with the learning context. This relationship between an individual learner and the social context is not static but dynamic and reflexive at the same time where individual differences such as aptitude, anxiety, motivation are factors



that may contribute or inhibit the desire to learn the language or their attitudes toward the language and its speakers. Therefore, one teachers' main responsibility is to make their classes enjoyable places and help to sustain their students' motivation. They can do this in a number of ways like making the lessons more interesting that provoke students' participation and offering support and guidance.

In similar way, Garold Murray, Xuesong Gao, and Terry Lamb (2011) have said that "learning a language is a process of identity construction across time and space where students are searching for possibilities for the future. So teachers should treat students as "people" rather than simple language learners promoting learners autonomy". This learning autonomy can be accomplished when teachers give students the opportunity to make decisions about their interests, needs and wishes, and at the same time they encourage students to be more responsible for their own learning. In this way, teachers will be increasing students' motivation that helps passive learners to become active learners that are excited to acquire and use the language.

All of the factors discussed above should be considered in the teaching and learning process of English language in small classes since they can contribute or inhibit the acquisition of the language. And in order to have a deeper knowledge, the most important aspects of five studies that are related with the research topic will be discussed below.

The first study was carried out by Rashed Alghamdi and Robyn Gillis (2002) to assess the impact of cooperative learning in comparison to traditional small group learning on the achievement of EFL learners. The researchers gathered quantitative data and the instruments employed were a pre-test and post-test of English grammar achievement. The participants were 4 English teachers and 139 tenth grade male students, whose ages were 14 and 15 years, across four secondary schools in Al-Baha city.

The main results showed that there were evident differences in the post-test scores between the students who were taught English in the cooperative learning environment (the experimental group) and those who were taught English in the traditional small group method (the control group). This gain in students' achievement was in favor of the students in the experimental group. The researchers claimed that the improvement in students' achievement was due to cooperative learning environment and they gave two reasons for that. First, learning English using cooperative learning allowed students to work in groups in which they could talk about many tasks and topics (Gillies, 2007). And second, the so called weak students in each group learnt cooperatively from those classmates who were more able than them. These authors just as the researchers in the cooperative learning field agree that students can learn more effectively in a cooperative learning environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

The second study was developed by Zeinab Khazaei, Ahmad Zadeh, and Saeed Ketabi (2012) to determine the effect of class size on the Iranian EFL students' willingness to communicate among three different class sizes. The data gathered was through observation of three classes to record the amount of time each student talked and participated in the activities. The participants were chosen from three separate classes: one class formed by five students and it was named class A, the second class had ten students and it was called class B which was also referred as small class, and the last class was the large one which had fifteen students and it was called class C.

Among the main conclusions can be stated that class size had a strong effect on the students' willingness to communicate and therefore students were more cooperative to communicate in small classes where they had plenty opportunities to practice the speaking skill. According to the researchers mentioned previously, their study has some pedagogical implications for both second languages teaching and learning. Furthermore, they did not only

claim that class size can affect the participation of learners in class discussions and their desire to communicate but they also advised that teachers in larger classes should employ more communicative strategies that encourage students to participate more actively in classroom interaction.

The third study was conducted by Maurice Galton and Tony Pell (2009). Its purpose was to determine the benefits of Small Class Teaching (SCT) in Hong Kong primary schools and to find out what teaching strategies, professional support and resources are necessary in order to maximize the benefits of SCT in the local context. The sample selected was large about 700 classes participated during the analysis. The method used was quantitative and it involved three stages of analysis from the school, the class and the students. The instruments used at the school level were surveys; at the class level were applied opinion' surveys, observations, and interviews; and at the students' level were used observations about pupils' characteristics, outcome measures of individual characteristics, and observations of time on task, pupil-pupil interaction, and pupil-teacher interaction.

The main results revealed that the more successful schools on Small Class Teaching had more skillful Principals who encouraged improved attainment and motivation, overcame pupil diversity, and fostered better rapport among teachers and pupils. There was little evidence that could prove that the use of one specific teaching method had a better impact than another on pupils' progress. Nonetheless, teachers during the study started to use more individual and pair works activities with an increasing on group work and whole class instruction. And considering that small classes increased students' participation in the learning process, it was generally necessary to count with additional resource materials.

Furthermore, it was identified that the most useful benefit for teachers in small classes was time: time to prepare the lesson and to share ideas with co-workers, time to add extra

educational materials besides the regular textbook which provide learning in different contexts that contribute to get a better understanding for students. All of the participant teachers during the study agreed that they felt more comfortable teaching in small classes. Nonetheless, there was evidence that showed that teachers did not know the use of teaching techniques for small classes. Therefore, the researchers indicated that teachers should be instructed for teaching small classes in order to learn appropriate techniques. Finally, the results did not suggest that smaller classes were by themselves a solution to the entire problems encounter in the classrooms such as lack of motivation and declining attitudes.

The fourth study was performed by Paul Bassett, Peter Blatchford, Harvey Goldstein, and Clare Martin (2003). Its purpose was to determine whether class size differences affect pupils' academic achievement and to study connections between class size and classroom processes, which might explain any differences found. The investigation employed an observational technique in order to monitor the relationship between class size and students' achievement as well as a longitudinal design. The participants were over 10,000 children from school entry from the preschool stage. The researchers used both a multilevel statistical procedure to manage any variation that could influence the relationship of class size with academic achievement and a multimethod research approach to correlate teachers' opinions and experiences with similar case studies. Pupils were separated in three groups, based on their pre-Reception year English scores; the bottom group was formed by the 25% of the students, the middle one with the 50% of the participants and the top one with the rest of the students.

The authors mentioned above concluded that small classes showed to work best in teaching English for children who were most in need academically since teachers in small classes could provide more individual instruction. Nonetheless, one disadvantage was to see

the benefits of smaller classes just in terms of increased opportunities to meet individual students' needs. Therefore, the investigation warned that it should not be disregarded the advantages of other learning environments such as large classes where teachers can include effective group work activities and let students interact more actively with one another. Finally, it was found that smaller classes did not imply necessarily more productive work in groups. On the contrary, there was less cooperative work and teachers seemed not to realize the importance of including effective group work activities in small classes that allow students to interact among them in order to get a productive learning (Blatchford, Bassett, Goldstein, Martin, Catchpole, & Edmonds, 2003)

The last study was conducted by Alan Krueger and Diane Whitmore (2001) to analyze the effect of past attendance in small classes in the early grades correlates with an increased likelihood of taking a college-entrance exam, especially among minority students. The participants were selected according to certain requirements such as sufficient enrollment and geographic criteria, and they also were volunteered to participate. In consequence, the 79 participating elementary schools were not a random selection of Tennessee elementary schools. The schools included in the study were large enough with at least three classes per grade so students could be placed in different class sizes. It was a long-term study that followed-up test score results of the STAR students in different tests and in different grades. The participant students and their teachers were randomly assigned to small, regular-size, or large classes with a teacher aide in the first four years of school. And then it was analyzed the effect of past attendance in small classes on student test scores and whether they took the ACT or SAT college entrance exam.

At the end of the study, the researchers already mentioned concluded that since the ACT or SAT are generally mandatory tests that students take in order to enter at colleges in

the United States; the results obtained demonstrate that small class size attendance in the elementary school grades can increase the likelihood that more students attend college. In consequence, small class size in schools could contribute to raise academic aspirations of getting a college degree by fostering student motivation and by increasing their skill levels. Furthermore, there was proof that teaching in small classes can reduce the difference in students' achievement between white and black students.

## Description, Analysis, and Interpretations of Results

In this section, the researcher describes, analyzes and interprets the results obtained from the participants. Therefore, it constitutes the most essential part of the whole research since the findings will contribute to get a better picture of how teachers and students from the five participants' classes perceive the English teaching and learning process in small classes. For that purpose, the current study made use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis that will be explained below.

The elements considered in the quantitative analysis were the responses obtained in each part of the teachers and students' questionnaires. This information was displayed in database tables in such a way that allowed to response each one of the four research question. And then, a qualitative analysis was included since the statistical findings in terms of percentages were not only described but also correlated taking into account both the information registered in the observation sheets and the theoretical support presented in the literature review.

The results will aim to get a vision of how teachers and students from the participant classrooms feel the teaching and learning process of English in small classes in Ecuador.

## *Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*

*What are the benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes?*

Table 1

### Teachers' Perceptions

N°	In small classes:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	It is easier to design activities that help students to apply what they learned in class.	3	60	2	40	0	00	0	00	5	100
2.	The students are attentive and participative in class activities.	2	40	2	40	1	20	0	00	5	100
4.	Classroom space allows students to properly do the activities designed.	0	00	3	60	1	20	1	20	5	100
5.	Appropriate feedback can be given	1	20	3	60	1	20	0	00	5	100
6.	Activities that allow more interaction among students are performed.	2	40	1	20	2	40	0	00	5	100
7.	There is more interaction between the teacher and the students.	2	40	3	60	0	00	0	00	5	100
8.	It is easier to remember students' names.	4	80	1	20	0	00	0	00	5	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Teachers' questionnaire



*Table 2*  
*Students' Perceptions*

N°	In small classes:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn.	47	50	42	45	5	5	0	0	94	100
2.	The students are attentive and participative in class activities.	17	18	47	50	30	32	0	0	94	100
3.	The students can better concentrate because there is less noise in the classroom.	40	43	33	35	17	18	4	4	94	100
4.	The classroom space allows students to carry out the activities assigned by the teacher.	41	44	39	41	12	13	2	2	94	100
5.	Students receive proper feedback from the teacher.	45	48	30	32	18	19	1	1	94	100
6.	There is interaction between the students.	41	44	36	38	15	16	2	2	94	100
7.	There is interaction between the teacher and students.	51	54	34	36	8	9	1	1	94	100
8.	The teacher remembers the students' names.	63	67	23	24	8	9	0	0	94	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Students' questionnaire

In section A of the questionnaires, teachers and students were asked to rate the factors that benefit the teaching and learning English in small classes. Table 1 indicates the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire and table 2 reports the responses obtained from students' questionnaire.

Statement 1 shows in table 1 that 60% of the participant teachers totally agree that in small classes it is easier to design activities that help students to apply what they learn in class, 40% of them agree but none of them disagrees. Table 2 reports that 50% of the students

totally agree that in small classes the activities done during the class help to apply what students learn, 45% agree, and 5% partially agree.

As a result of the observations, the researcher noticed that the activities done during the classes were just those that were included in the teacher and students' book. Due to the activities carried out by all participant teachers were part of the class textbook; they had explicit objectives which were to practice the vocabulary, expressions, and grammar structures covered in the lesson, taking into account the development of the four language skills. Therefore, almost all participants (100% of teachers and 95% of students) totally agree or agree that the activities done during class help apply what students learn and the observation sheets support this fact.

According to Lockhart and Richards (1996), the amount of time that students spend in classroom activities and succeeding with them are valuable opportunities for them to learn and it is considered one of the most important factors that can contribute positively to students' progress.

Regarding the statement 2, table 1 reports that 40% of the participant teachers totally agree that in small classes the students are attentive and participative during class activities, 40% agree, 20% are partially agreed, and nobody disagrees. Table 2 indicates that 18% of the students surveyed totally agree that in small classes they are attentive and participative during class activities, 50% of them agree, 32% partially agree, and no one disagrees.

Clearly most of the teachers (80%) and students (68%) totally agree or agree that students are attentive and participative during the class activities; however, there is a significant percentage of students (32%) who partially agree with this statement. These results are due to that according to the observations which indicate that even though all students seemed to be attentive to the class, not all of them participated actively during the

activities. Students' attention was maintained by all participant teachers who fostered pupils to remain quiet and pay attention to the class. But not all of the teachers encouraged the less active students to participate in the proposed activities. Only 3 participant teachers tried to involve all the students in the tasks by naming those who were not interested in participating. Nonetheless, if these pupils didn't provide the answer, the teachers just continued asking someone else until getting the correct answer. The less active pupils just participated when they had to work individually in their activity book.

Effectively, Anna Saraswati (2004) states that small classes by themselves do not guarantee attention and participation from all students or a better performance from them but teachers can help learners to assume an active role in learning the language. For this reason, Candlin and Mercer (2001) suggest that teachers should promote a supportive atmosphere that helps students to feel comfortable to participate as well as to make them understand the importance of their active participation in order to get an effective learning.

Moreover, the researcher could realize during the class observations that 3 out of 5 participant teachers did not check students' comprehension of the given instructions before starting the proposed activities. And it was also noticed that some of the students asked in Spanish to their classmates what the teacher wanted them to do. As a result, not all students participated actively due to the lack of comprehension of what they had to do during the activities.

Therefore, as Jeremy Harmer (2001) appropriately claims teachers should always make sure that students understand the instructions given before starting any activity in order to ensure its success. This can be done in many ways; for instance, by asking a student to repeat the instructions given, in English or in the same first language, or by organizing a demonstration to show how the exercise is supposed to be done.

With regard to statement 3 in the students' questionnaire, table 2 indicates that 43% of the students surveyed totally agree that in small classes they can better concentrate because there is less noise in the classroom, 35% agree, 18% partially agree, 4% disagree. This question is not included in the teachers' questionnaire.

The results show that 78% of the students believe that they are more concentrated in small classes because there is less noise. This fact is supported by the class observations since there was a low level of disruption during the classes and all participant teachers could easily manage those situations. Therefore, students could concentrate better on the lesson. In this way, it can be stated that teachers in the small classes observed were able to be more aware of their students' behavior and spent less time controlling the discipline. This suggests that small classes could contribute positively to students' concentration during the class.

Similarly, Pate-Bain et al. (1992) reported that dairy records of teachers who participated in the START project research indicated that in small classes there were fewer students' interruptions and latent discipline problems were identified and solved more efficiently.

Statement 4 in table 1 shows that 60% of the participant teachers agree that in small classes the classroom space allows students to properly do the activities designed by them, 20% partially agree, and 20% disagree. Table 2 reports that 44% of the students totally agree that in small classes the classroom space allows students to carry out the activities assigned by the teacher, 41% agree, 13% partially agree, 2% disagree.

A great majority of the students (85%) and more than half of the participant teachers (60%) considered that the physical space of the classroom allows carrying out appropriately the assigned activities. It was noticed during the observations that the physical space of the classrooms was small enough to fit columns and rows of desks and chairs of twenty students

and the desk of the teacher located in the front of the room just under one side of the board. And as a result, the observed teachers included activities during the class to be worked as whole class instruction and then switched to individual or pair works in which the students just worked with the nearest classmate in order to avoid making any change of the furniture or causing any disruption in the environment of the class. In this way, individual and pair work activities were done properly in the space available in the classrooms, but group work activities were not done during the class in any of the five observed classrooms. Consequently, students always maintained the same seating arrangement.

In this sense, authors like Zoltan Dornyei and Tim Murphey (2003) assert that the physical environment is a factor that can inhibit or contribute to an effective teaching; however, teachers' perception that a major physical modification is not feasible in most school may be regrettably a real situation. And therefore, the most common seating arrangement in small classes continues being columns and rows of desks and chairs with the students facing the teacher. Nonetheless, a creative teacher can make use of different seating and group arrangements suitable to the planned activities and the space available.

In statement 5, table 1 indicates that 20% of the teachers totally agree that in small classes appropriate feedback can be given, 60% of them agree, 20% partially agree, and no one disagrees. Table 2 shows that 48% of the students totally agree that in small classes they receive proper feedback from the teacher, 32% agree, 19% partially agree, and 1% disagrees.

Similarly, most of the students (80%) and teachers (80%) totally agree or agree that proper feedback is provided by the teacher during the class. These results are consistent with the observations since it was evident that all teachers gave feedback either during or at the end of the class. Three out of five teachers gave feedback at different moments during the class according to the students' needs; for instance, when they checked students' work and

provided immediate individual support as necessary or when they corrected pupils' pronunciation. And the rest of teachers (2 out of 5) generally waited until the end of the class to make summarized comments a couple minutes before finishing the class or ask some questions that students had to answer in order to show their understanding of the themes treated during the lesson.

This feedback, as Paul Black and Dylan William (1998) claim, is in fact a key factor that help students get the highest learning possible because it makes learners aware of those deficiencies that are affecting their comprehension and take actions with the guidance of the teacher in order to improve their learning. Therefore, teachers should always monitor student's comprehension by continuous checking, clarifying, explaining and summarizing to help pupils have an insight of their progress.

With regard to statement 6, table 1 reports that 40% of the teachers totally agree that activities that allow more interaction among students are performed in small classes, 20% of them agree, and 40% partially agree. Table 2 indicates that 44% of the students totally agree that there is interaction between students in small classes, 38% of them agree, 16 % partially agree and 2 % disagree.

As can be seen more students (82%) than teachers (60%) totally agree or agree that in small classes there is interaction between students. Despite these outcomes, the observation sheets support a significant percentage of teachers (40%) who partially agree with the statement. It was found during the observations that student-student interaction occurred only due to the use of a few pair work activities in which students interacted just with the classmate next to them in 4 out of 5 observed classes. Plus the fact that group work was not included in any of the five observed classes.

Given the importance of student-student interaction in EFL classrooms, Lockhart and Richards (1996) assert that lessons need to be more dynamic where students interact in different group arrangements. For instance, group work activities help learners take a more active role in their learning and increase the amount of student participation in the class. And thus, through this interaction learners can develop both linguistic and communicative competence.

Statement 7, in table 1 indicates that 40% of the teachers totally agree that in small classes there is more interaction between the teacher and the students, 60% of them agree, and nobody disagrees. Table 2 shows that 54% of the students totally agrees that in small classes there is interaction between the teacher and students, 36% of them agree, 9% partially agree, and 1% disagrees.

The entire sample of teachers (100%) and the majority of students (90%) totally agree or agree that there is interaction between the teacher and students. These results are consistent with the classes observations since all participant teachers had a tendency to make use of a whole class instruction where the teachers during the class presented the topic and new vocabulary, explained grammar rules and expressions, asked many questions to check students' understanding and responded to students questions; however, the researcher noticed that the students in all five classes observed asked the teacher questions in Spanish. Moreover, three out of five participant teachers also interacted with pupils when they monitored students while they were working individually or in pairs.

Indeed, authors like Lockhart and Richards (1996) have asserted that most of the time the teaching process is dedicated to teacher-students interaction and the quality of this interaction has a substantial influence on learning. However, this kind of instruction is teacher-dominated where teachers assume that all students develop at the same pace, they can

only interact with only a few students, and there are little opportunities for pupils to participate actively.

Furthermore, Galton and Pell (2009) also demonstrated in a similar study that small classes were constructed around continuous teacher-pupil interactions, and this represented the main difference from large classes.

As can be seen in table 1, statement 8 shows that 80% of the teachers in the sample totally agree that in small classes it is easier to remember students' names and 20% just agree. Table 2 reports that 67% of the participant students totally agree that in small classes the teacher remembers their names, 24% of them agree, 9% partially agree, and nobody disagrees.

From the information gathered in the observational sheets, it can be confirmed that all teachers in the sample effectively remembered their students' names which fostered a better relation between the teacher and students and it also contributed to the existence of a friendly environment.

Related to this aspect, Zoltan Dornyei and Tim Murphey (2003) have pointed out that remembering students' name does not only have a beneficial effect on the communicative classroom but it is also a powerful rapport building tool for the classroom. Because students feel they are part of a group which recognizes them as people and not only as a simple number of students.

What are the benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes?

According to the results obtained in this part of the investigation, the author of the present research can state that the benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes were in the following aspects: there was more teacher-student interaction due to all of the teachers tended to give a more individual attention to students during whole class instruction,



the activities done as part of the class textbook helped to apply what was learnt during the class, the participant teachers could provide proper and immediate feedback which allowed students to know their performance, students' concentration were not disrupted during classes since the observed teachers could control the class discipline more effectively due to the low number of students, and all teachers remembered their students' name which allowed the existence of a good rapport among teachers and students.

These results also suggest that small classes seemed to contribute to students' commitment to the class since the observed teachers could foster students to be more attentive during the lesson but this situation did not ensure that all students participated actively in the assigned activities. Moreover, the participant teachers did not promote more student-student interaction in small classes. The teachers usually included a couple of pair work activities, which were part of the class textbook, during the lessons in which students could interact with the nearest classmate but group work was not considered. And finally, small classes did not imply by themselves more physical space available; in fact, the five classrooms observed had the physical space enough to hold an equal small number of students.

*What teaching strategies and resources benefit the teaching of English in small classes?*

Table 3

## Teachers' Perceptions

N°	In small classes it is easier to:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
9.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice <b>listening</b> skill.	3	60	1	20	0	00	1	20	5	100
10.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practicing <b>speaking</b> skill.	3	60	2	40	0	00	0	00	5	100
11.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice <b>reading</b> skill.	4	80	1	20	0	00	0	00	5	100
12.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice <b>writing</b> skill.	3	60	2	40	0	00	0	00	5	100
13.	Design and apply <b>group</b> activities.	1	20	2	40	2	40	0	00	5	100
14.	Design and apply <b>individual</b> activities.	4	80	1	20	0	00	0	00	5	100
15.	Use technological tools.	1	20	2	40	2	40	0	00	5	100
16.	Use didactic materials.	3	60	2	40	0	00	0	00	5	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Table 4

*Students' Perceptions*

N°	In small classes:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
9.	The activities done allow students to practice <b>listening</b> skill.	47	50	46	49	1	1	0	0	94	100
10.	The activities done allow students to practice <b>speaking</b> skill.	46	49	33	35	14	15	1	1	94	100
11.	The activities done allow students to practice <b>reading</b> skill.	63	67	21	22	8	9	2	2	94	100
12.	The activities done allow students to practice <b>writing</b> skill.	47	50	44	47	2	2	1	1	94	100
13.	Group work activities are used.	38	40	40	43	16	17	0	0	94	100
14.	Individual activities are used.	59	63	27	29	7	7	1	1	94	100
15.	Technological tools are used.	14	15	31	33	32	34	17	18	94	100
16.	Didactic materials are used.	26	28	44	47	19	20	5	5	94	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Students' questionnaire

In section B of the questionnaires, teachers and students were asked to rate the teaching strategies and resources that benefit the teaching English in small classes. Table 3 reports the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire and table 4 reports the results obtained from the students.

In statement 9, table 3 reveals that 60% of the teachers totally agree that in small classes it is easier to design and apply activities that allow students to practice listening skill, 20% agree, and 20% disagree. Table 4 indicates that 50% of the students surveyed totally agree

that in small classes the activities done allow them to practice listening skill, 49% agree, and 1 % partially agrees.

It can be seen that a great percentage of the participants (80% of teachers and 99% of students) have an agreement that in small classes the activities carried out allow students to practice listening skill. The observations support these findings; notwithstanding, it was evident that the listening activities done during the classes were not designed by any of the participant teachers. These activities were part of the tasks included in the activity book. So the material that the students listened to was on the audio Cd which comes with the respective course textbook. Among the instructional tasks used by the participant teachers during the classes can be mentioned the following: listen and match, listen and choose, true or false, listen and complete, listen and answer, listen and repeat, listen and think, so on. And most of those activities integrated different skills practice besides listening.

Certainly, the CD player has been a remarkable advantage to language teachers and learners that work very well for teaching listening skills. There are a variety of taped materials on audio CDs like dialogues, stories, and so forth. These materials are considered as opportunities that students have to be in contact with the language, especially when there is no exposure to English outside of school (Jesness J. , 2004).

Referring to statement 10, table 3 shows that 60% of teachers in the sample totally agrees that in small classes it is easier to design and apply activities that allow students to practice speaking skill and 40% agree. Table 4 reports that 49% of students totally agree that in small classes the activities done allow students to practice speaking skill, 35% agree, 15% partially agree, and 1% disagrees.

Despite that all teachers (100%) and a great majority of the students (84%) totally agree or agree that in small classes the activities done allow students to practice speaking skill; the

observation process partially supports these findings. According to the observations, controlled speaking activities (E.g. listen and repeat and listen and answer) from the class textbook were mostly done during classes. The students could practice grammar structures and vocabulary learnt during the class in guided practice and repetition. Reading aloud was another activity included that the five participant teachers utilized very often so the students could produce and practice the language. Some teachers (3 out of 5) used also pair work activities to make the students practice conversations and expressions learnt in the lesson. Most of the speaking activities done during the classes allowed the students to practice other skills like writing and reading.

Nonetheless, the researcher could realize that most of the students were reluctant to participate when the teacher proposed less guided speaking activities which were part of the student book. For instance, in one of the classes observed the students had to write individually and then talk about their favorite famous artist from history in front of the class and just some students (7) shared their work with the rest of the class. Other students (3) spoke in Spanish and English waiting for the teacher to translate those words they did not know how to say in English so they could repeat it, and the rest of them (10) did not participate. A similar situation happened with the rest of the observed classes. Moreover, during the observations none of the participant teachers encouraged students to speak only English during the class and they neither used group work to let the students practice their oral skills among them in a comfortable way.

Regarding speaking, Jesness (2004) affirms that it is the hardest skill to teach since students learn to speak only by speaking. So, teachers with small classes should include activities that allow students to practice speaking in groups such as describing and drawing

the object, giving oral directions, and role playing, and then students can have the opportunity to show their work in front of the class.

According to the results obtained in table 3, statement 11 indicates that 80% of the participant teachers totally agree that in small classes it is easier to design and apply activities that allow students to practice reading skill and 20% agree. Table 4 reports that 67% of students totally agree that in small classes the activities done allow them to practice reading skill, 22% agree, 9% partially agree, and 2% disagrees.

The whole sample of teachers (100%) and most of the participant students (89%) totally agree or agree with the statement mentioned above. The observation process confirms this finding. Even though, these activities were not designed by any of the five teachers observed but were part of the class textbook, these tasks effectively allowed the students to practice the reading skill in which pupils could show their comprehension of the language. Among the reading activities done can be mentioned reading aloud, vocabulary matching, read and answer, reading for inference, complete the quiz, true or false, and so on.

With regard to reading skill, Peter Blatchford et al. (2003) assert that in small classes it is feasible to include almost daily activities to practice reading skill with an emphasis on individual support.

As can be seen in table 3, statement 12 shows that 60% of the teachers totally agree that in small classes it is easier to design and apply activities that allow students to practice writing skill and 40% agree. Table 4 reports that 50% of the students totally agree that in small classes the activities done allow them to practice writing skill, 47% agree, 2% partially agree, and 1% disagrees.

Classroom observations indicate that 4 out of 5 participant teachers made the students work just the writing activities included in the students' book. Among the activities done were sentence completion, underline the key words, write another title, write a conversation following a model, complete the text, and write a message. Only one teacher made the students work in a worksheet prepared by her for that class, pupils had to write the past simple form of the verbs learnt during the class and transform a couple of sentences from simple present to past simple. Therefore, it can be confirmed that even though most of the teachers did not design the activities done in class, these tasks effectively helped students to practice their writing skills.

Table 3 indicates that in statement 13, 20% of teachers in the sample totally agree that in small classes that it is easier to design and apply group work activities, 40% agree, and 40% partially agree. Table 4 reports that 40% of students surveyed totally agree that group activities are used in small classes, 43% agree, and 17% partially agree.

It can be seen that most of the students (83%) and in a less percentage the teachers (60%) totally agree or agree that group activities are used in small classes. Despite these results, the observation process reveals that none of the five teachers observed broke their classes into groups for any activity. The participant teachers only applied individual or pair work activities in which students worked with the classmate next to them. One aspect that was indicated above was the fact that the physical space of the classrooms was small and therefore teachers did not use group work in order to avoid changing the seating arrangement or causing any disruption. Another aspect was that none of the observed teachers considered relevant to carry out the group activities proposed in the class textbook. Either the reason is, without group activities teachers deprive the students of opportunities to develop their oral and social skills.

In the same way, Blatchford et al. (2003) found at the end of their study that in smaller classes there was less cooperative group work and teachers did not recognize the possible benefits that effective group work could represent in small classes.

Given this fact, it is appropriate to highlight that the use of group work activities in the classroom is important to encourage students to use the new language where learners draw upon to their linguistic knowledge of the target language and use it to complete a task in a collaborative and nonthreatening context in order to get the communicative competence (Lockhart & Richards, 1996).

In statement 14, table 3 shows that 80% of the teachers totally agrees that in small classes it is easier to design and apply individual activities and 20% agree. Table 4 reports that 63% of students totally agree that individual activities are used in small classes, 29% agree, 7% partially agree and 1% disagrees.

It is clear that all the teachers in the sample (100%) and a great majority of the participant students (92%) affirm that individual activities are used in small classes. The observation process corroborates this result; it was noticed that most of the activities done during the classes were worked individually by the students. Generally, all of the participant teachers made the students work individually in their activity books and then checked answers with the whole class participation, by asking students at random, or by asking for a volunteer.

Similarly, Blatchford et al. (2003) showed in their investigation that small classes had the benefit to strengthen more individual instruction. Notwithstanding, a negative aspect was to see all the benefits of smaller classes in terms of more opportunities for individualized teaching and overlook the advantages of other context for learning such as group work.



In statement 15, table 3 indicates that 20% of participant teachers totally agree that in small classes it is easier to use technological tools, 40% agree and 40% partially agree. Table 4 shows that 15% of the students surveyed totally agree that technological tools are used in small classes, 33% agree, 34% partially agree, and 18% disagree.

According to the results, a great amount of teachers (60%) totally agree or agree that in small classes it is easier to use technological tools; notwithstanding, the classroom observations support more than half of the participant students (52%) who partially agree or disagree with the statement. Because it was noticed during the observations that there was a classroom located in the English department of the school equipped with computers and overhead projectors but none of the observed teachers made use of that multi-purpose classroom. And thus, the only technological resource used by all five teachers was the CD player since the listening activities done during classes as part of the student book required playing the audio CD that came as a supplemental item of the course textbook in order to do those proposed activities.

In regard to this aspect, Mick Randall (2007) asserts that English learners require high frequency of rehearsal and repetition to make automatic the use of any particular feature that helps them get the communicative competence, and in small classes, this could be easily and quickly accomplished by using high technological resources. For this reason, it is important that teachers take advantage of technological resources in order to get an effective learning, and even more if the school has the privilege to count with a multi-purpose classroom available.

Statement 16 in table 3 reports that 60% of the teachers surveyed totally agrees that in small classes it is easier to use didactic materials and 40% agree. Table 4 reveals that 28% of

the students totally agree that didactic materials are used in small classes, 47% agree, 20% partially agree, and 5% disagree.

The entire sample of teachers (100%) and a great majority of students (75%) agree that in small classes it is easier to use didactic materials. Taking the observations done as support, it can be said that the most used didactic materials are the teacher and student's book since all of the participant teachers planned their classes according to an established curriculum based in the content of their respective class textbook.

According to Alan Cunningsworth (1995), the usage of textbook does not have to be seen as incompetence from the teacher; on the contrary, it is a useful component in language teaching for both teachers and students that facilitate to meet the guidelines proposed by the institutional syllabus. However, teachers should use them as a resource they can draw upon with creativity to adapt and supplement additional activities according to the learners' need in order to improve the quality of teaching.

It was also noticed during the observations that the five participant teachers made use of other didactic materials such as the board, flashcards, and the dictionary. The board is used by the teachers to write the topic of the class and any information like vocabulary, grammar points, and explanations that they consider relevant so students could copy in their notebooks. The teachers also used flashcards to present new vocabulary whereas the dictionary was used by the students to look for the meaning of any unknown word. And only one teacher also made use of worksheets prepared for her especially for that class.

Here, it is important to take into account what Galton and Pell (2009) found in their study, small classes generally increase students' participation in the learning process so it is often necessary that teachers count with additional didactic materials besides the regular textbook.

What teaching strategies and resources benefit the teaching of English in small classes?

With regard to the second research question, it can be asserted that in small classes the participant teachers tended to use a whole class instruction and promoted that students work more independently during the activities and then check their answers with the whole class participation, by asking students at random or by asking for a volunteer. The teachers also made use of some pair work activities but not group work. In fact, none of the teachers made the students work the group activities included in the course textbooks. This common teaching strategy was due to the conditions of having few numbers of students and lack of physical space.

Furthermore, the participant teachers imparted their classes following closely their respective class textbook in order to meet the curriculum requirements, so teachers generally did not design the activities done during class, but since these tasks were part of the class textbook allowed students to practice the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Nonetheless, the speaking skill was the more difficult to practice since most of the students did not want to participate in the less guided speaking activities because they did not have any opportunity to practice their oral skills in cooperative groups and the teachers did not encouraged students to speak only English during the class either. Besides the class textbook, other didactic resources were used like the board, flashcards, worksheets and the dictionary. Despite the school counted with a multi-use classroom located in the English department of the school, the only technological resource used was the audio CD to practice listening activities.

*How do students feel about learning English in small classes?*

Table 5

## Teachers' Perceptions

N°	In classes with a small number of students,	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
17.	They are relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates.	1	20	1	20	3	60	0	00	5	100
18.	They are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class.	1	20	3	60	0	00	1	20	5	100
19.	They are motivated to participate because of the small number students.	1	20	3	60	1	20	0	00	5	100
20.	They are at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates.	1	20	3	60	1	20	0	00	5	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Table 6

## Students' Perceptions

N°	In classes with a small number of students,	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
17.	I am relaxed when speaking in front of my classmates.	31	33	43	46	18	19	2	2	94	100
18.	I am taken into account by the teacher because I have more opportunities to participate in class.	38	40	40	43	13	14	3	3	94	100
19.	I am motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates.	34	36	40	43	15	16	5	5	94	100
20.	I am at ease because I can healthy compete with my classmates.	47	50	31	33	13	14	3	3	94	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Students' questionnaire

In section C of the questionnaires, teachers and students were asked to rate how students feel about learning English in small classes. Table 5 shows the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire and table 6 reports the results obtained from students' questionnaire.

As can be seen in table 5, statement 17 reveals that 20% of teachers totally agree that in classes with a small number of students, they are relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates, 20% agree, and 60% partially agree. Table 6 reports that 33% of the students surveyed totally agree that in classes with a small number of students, they are relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates, 46% agree, 19% partially agree, and 2% disagree.

A great majority of the students (79%) totally agree or agree that in small classes they are relaxed when they talk in front of the class whereas more than half of the teachers (60%) just partially agree with the statement. It is so difficult to believe that a great percentage of students have answered that they feel relaxed when they talk in front of the class, since the observations reveal that most of the students showed lack of confidence and reluctance to participate in those less guided speaking activities in which they had to share their work in front of the class as it was mentioned earlier in statement 10. The main reason was that the students did not have any opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and opinions in cooperative groups in which they could practice the language with their classmates in a more relaxed way without being evaluated by the teacher. Furthermore, none of the observed teachers promoted an English culture in the classrooms where students were encouraged to speak only English during the classes.

Conversely, Khazaei et al. (2012) concluded in their study that small class size created more opportunities for students to work cooperatively during speaking activities. As a result,

pupils had a higher perception of their capability in communicating in second language because they had enough opportunities to practice speaking and build their self-confidence.

Therefore, as it was recommended previously, teachers in EFL classrooms should include activities like describing and drawing an object, giving instructions and role playing in which students can practice speaking in groups in an effective and nonthreatening way. Then, teachers can monitor students' performance when they reproduce their work in front of the class (Jesness J. , 2004).

Statement 18 in table 5 indicates that 20% of the teachers totally agree that in classes with a small number of students, they are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class., 60% agree, and 20% disagree. Table 6 shows that 40% of the students in the sample totally agrees that in classes with a small number of students, they are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class, 43% agree, 14% partially agree, 3% disagree.

A great majority of the participants (80% teachers and 83% students) totally agree or agree that students in small classes are taken into account because they have more opportunities to participate in class. This fact is not completely supported by the class observations. By one hand, the statement was true for the more active students in all five classes because they had plenty opportunities to participate in the class when voluntary participation was required. On the other hand, that statement did not represent the complete reality for those less active pupils. For instance, 3 out of the 5 teachers tried to make the less active pupils to participate by naming them and asking their participation during the proposed activities. Nonetheless, whether the less active students were not able to provide the correct answer or whether they remained in silence, the teacher continued asking to the rest of the

students (the active pupils) until the correct answer was given. The rest of the teachers (2 out of 5) just worked with the more participative students.

Regarding the less active students, Alghamdi and Gillies (2002) pointed out in their study that learning English using a cooperative learning environment increased students' achievement where the so called weak students in each group could learn from more proficient pupils instead of their teacher (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

In statement 19, table 5 reveals that 20% of the teachers in the sample totally agree that in small classes, the students are motivated to participate because of the small number of students, 60% agree, and 20% partially agree. Table 6 reports that 36% of the students totally agree that in small classes, they are motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates, 43% agree, 16% partially agree, and 5% disagree.

Almost the same percentage of teachers (80%) and students (79%) believe that students are motivated to participate because of the small number of students. The observation sheets did not support these findings. The researcher measured motivation by the way students were involved in the lesson. Therefore, the researcher concluded that not all of students felt motivated to participate. Two out of five teachers just worked with those students who wanted to participate in their class. The rest of teachers ( 3 out of 5) tried to involve the less participative students in the activities done but if these students did not provide the expected answer, they continued working with the more active pupils. In fact, none of the observed teachers spent enough time to encourage and support the less motivated students to participate in the activities done during class.

In the same way, Maurice Galton and Tony Pell (2009) also demonstrated in their research that smaller classes with between 20 and 25 pupils did not represent a solution to the

entire difficulties encounter in classrooms like the lack of motivation which is a general tendency in more developed countries.

With regard to motivation, Candlin and Mercer (2001) state that teachers can quickly recognize motivated students who show interest in the subject and participate actively during the class. Nonetheless, teachers also have the possibility to foster students' motivation by changing their attitudes toward the language and its speakers, and by making their classes enjoyable places. They can do this in a number of ways like making the lessons more interesting that provoke students' participation as well as offering support and guidance.

In statement 20, table 5 shows that 20% of the teachers totally agree that in classes with a small number of students, they are at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates, 60% agree, and 20% partially agree. Table 6 reports that 50% of the students totally agree that in classes with a small number of students, they are at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates, 33% agree, 14% partially agree, and 3% disagree.

A great majority of teachers (80%) and students (83%) totally agree or agree that in small classes students were at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates. This result was corroborated by the observations. It was noticed that the students felt relaxed and cheerful competing among them in three out of the five observed classes where games were played as warm up activities. The students played games like "Simon says", "guess who I am", and "say words that contain the letter X", wherein "X" is any letter that the teacher proposed.

Indeed, Dornyei and Murphey (2003) assert that competition among students within the class can contribute to build a friendship environment, creating positive attitudes, mutual reliance and fellowship for each other.



How do students feel about learning English in small classes?

It can be stated that even though most of the participant students felt they had more opportunities to be taken into account during the classes because there were few classmates, not all of the students felt motivated to participate in the class activities and none of the teachers supported and encouraged the less active students enough to participate actively during the learning activities. This situation demonstrates that motivation is not influenced by small class but it may be influenced by teachers.

Moreover, the majority of the students were not relaxed when they had to talk in front of the class since they did not have any opportunity to practice speaking skill with their classmates in cooperative works. And therefore, most of the students were reluctant to share their work with the rest of the class due to the lack of self-confidence and the lack of an English culture where students were encouraged to speak only English during the class.

However, it can be affirmed that the students felt very comfortable when they were competing among them in a sane way during the games done as warm up activities in which they could engage in the class and practice the language.

*Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?*

Table 7

## Teachers' Perceptions

Nº	In classes with a small number of students, In small classes:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
21.	There is anxiety among students because there is more control from the part of the teacher	0	00	1	20	3	60	1	20	5	100
22.	Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.	0	00	1	20	3	60	1	20	5	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Table 8

## Students' Perceptions

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
21.	There is anxiety among students because there is more control on the part of the teacher	28	30	38	40	24	26	4	4	94	100
22.	Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.	18	19	41	44	20	21	15	16	94	100

Author: Jacqueline Dominguez

Source: Students' questionnaire

In section D of the questionnaires, teachers and students were asked to rate if there were any limitations when teaching English in small classes. Table 7 shows the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire and table 8 shows the results obtained from students' questionnaire.

With regard to statement 21, table 7 indicates that 20% of the teachers in the sample agree that in small classes, there is anxiety among students because there is more control from the part of the teacher, 60% partially agree, and 20% disagree. Table 8 reports that 30% of the students totally agree that in small classes, there is anxiety among them because there is more control on the part of the teacher, 40% agree, 26% partially agree, and 4% disagree.

A great majority of teachers (80%) partially agree or disagree that there is anxiety among students because there is more control on the part of the teacher; in contrast, most of the students (70%) totally agree or agree with the statement. The observation process supports the students' beliefs. It was noticed that some students felt anxiety during the classes and teachers seemed not to realize of that situation. The observed teachers had a high level of supervision during the classes; they not only could control more effectively the class discipline but they also could monitor constantly their students' work. Therefore, students did not cause any disruption in the learning environment of the classes. But the researcher noticed that there were some other signs that showed that some students felt anxiety. For instance, when some students were asked to talk in front of the class, they just remained in silence or refused to pass to the front. Other students continuously checked the teacher to see if she approached their seats to continue working or they watched the clock to see how much time was left until the class finished.

It is important here to recall what Christopher Candlin and Mercer Neil (2001) claim, the relationship between a learner and the social context is both dynamic and reflexive where individual differences such as aptitude, anxiety, and motivation are factors that can contribute or inhibit the desire to learn the language. Therefore, teachers should make the lessons more interesting that provoke students' participation and they should also offer support and guidance. In this way, they will be contributing to sustain students' motivation.

In statement 22, table 7 shows that 20% of the teachers surveyed agree that in small classes listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop, 60% partially agree and 20% disagree. Table 8 reports that 19% of the students totally agree that in small classes listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop, 44% agree, 21% partially agree, and 16% disagree.

There is a contradiction in this statement between teachers and students, 80% of the teachers partially agree or disagree that it is more difficult to develop speaking and listening skills in small classes whereas 63% of students totally agree or agree with the statement. The classroom observations support both teachers and students. According to the results, the five participant teachers included listening and speaking activities during classes. Listening skill was developed properly with the entire class cooperation and the speaking skill was developed properly during guided activities. However, speaking skill in all observed classrooms was more difficult to develop when teachers proposed less guided speaking activities in which students had to work individually and use their knowledge of English language in order to complete the assigned activity. Group work was not proposed by any of the participant teachers that could allow students to practice the speaking activities among them in a supportive and comfortable way. In consequence, some students were reluctant to share their work with the class because of their lack of confidence.

On the contrary, Khazaei et al. (2012) found in a similar investigation that one of the benefits of smaller classes was that students had enough opportunities to practice speaking skill in cooperative groups that contributed to build their self-confidence and improve their ability to communicate in second language.

Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?

The author can state according to the results obtained from this part of the work that there were some limitations when teaching English in small classes. One limitation was that there was anxiety among students due to the high level of supervision from the teachers who had more control of the class discipline and they could also monitor more easily and constantly students' work. And another limitation was that the students had more difficulty to develop the speaking skill during less controlled activities since they did not have any opportunity to interact with their classmates in cooperative work in which they can share their thoughts and feelings and thus learn from one another. Therefore, some students showed lack of self-confidence to participate in the less controlled speaking activities.

## Conclusions

The benefits of teaching and learning English in the small classes observed were chiefly in terms of more opportunities for student-teacher interaction, appropriate feedback provided by the teacher, better students' concentration due to the low level of disruption, and the establishment of a good rapport between the teachers and students since teachers knew their students better.

The observed teachers generally made use of whole class instruction with an increasing of individual work and less pair work activities but group work was not considered since none of the participant teachers included the group work activities proposed in the class textbook. This common instructional style was due to the conditions of having few numbers of students and the lack of space in the classrooms.

It was a common practice for curriculum development that the participant teachers drew heavily on the textbook as the main didactic resource during the classes. The teachers also made use of other material resources like the board, flashcards, and the dictionary. Even though, the school counted with a multi-use classroom equipped with technology in the English department, the only technological tool used was the audio Cd which was part of the class textbook.

The activities done during the classes were not designed by any of the participant teachers; however, these activities as part of the textbook allowed students to practice the four language skills. Nonetheless, speaking skill was the hardest one to practice since none of the teachers allowed the students to practice the less guided speaking activities in cooperative groups and they did not encourage the pupils to speak only English during the class either.

Most of the participant students (78%) felt they had more opportunities to be taken into account because there were few classmates. However, not all students (21%) were motivated to participate during the done activities in the same way and none of the observed teachers

spent enough time to support and encourage the less motivated learners to participate actively. Therefore, the more active students were the most participative too.

There were some limitations when teaching English in the observed classes. One of them was that there was anxiety among students because the teachers had more control of their behavior and they could also check more constantly their work. And another limitation was that speaking skill was practiced with difficulty since none of the teachers made use of group work activities which allow students to practice the language in a more relaxed way.

During the observations, it was evident that small classes contributed positively to students' attention and increased their commitment to the class since teachers could control more efficiently the class discipline and they could also monitor continually students' work but these features did not ensure that all students participated actively during the activities.

## Recommendations

Teachers should receive workshops and courses that instruct them to use new strategies addressed for teaching English to small classes. For instance, the integration of group work activities that helps to increase student-student interaction. In this way, students can learn from one another in a cooperative way and symmetric relation. And thus, students will feel confident enough to share their work in front of the class.

Teachers should not only rely on the course textbook and the materials that come with it when they plan their classes, they should also include other authentic material resources and activities according to the students' level and characteristics that can contribute to awake their interest in the lesson.

Teachers should also be up to date on new technology and take advantage of these resources available nowadays. Even more if the school has the privilege to count with a multi-purpose classroom. Teachers with the support of technological resources can achieve learning objectives of the lesson quicker and contribute to students' learning.

Even though the classrooms' space is small, that is not an impediment to propose dynamic activities with different seating and grouping arrangements. It is just a matter of creativity where teachers have personal initiative and dare to take risks, without being afraid to the disruption that could cause any change. In this way, students will be more motivated and excited to participate during the proposed activities.



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## ANNEXES



### UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

#### OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

#### ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning your opinion in relation to the learning of English in small classes. The following information will only be used for academic/research purposes.

**Informative data:** Please fill in the information below

Name of institution :			
Type of institution:	Public ( )	Private ( )	
	School ( )	High school ( )	Language institute ( )
City			

**Instructions:** place an (X) in the box that best reflects your personal opinion:

**Strategy:** answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

Totally agree
Agree
Partially agree
Disagree

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes.

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn.				
2.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities.				
3.	The students can better concentrate because there is less noise in the classroom.				
4.	The classroom space allows students to carry out the activities assigned by the teacher.				
5.	Students receive proper feedback from the teacher.				
6.	There is interaction between the students.				
7.	There is interaction between the teacher and students.				
8.	The teacher remembers the students' names.				

B. Strategies and resources that favor the English teaching in small classes.

N°	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
9.	The activities done allow students to practice listening skills.				
10.	The activities done allow students to practice speaking skills.				
11.	The activities done allow students to practice reading skills.				
12.	The activities done allow students to practice writing skills.				
13.	Group work activities are used.				
14.	Individual activities are used.				
15.	Technological tools are used.				
16.	Didactic materials are used.				

C. Students' feelings when learning English in a small class.

N°	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
17.	I am relaxed when speaking in front of my classmates.				
18.	I am taken into account by the teacher because I have more opportunities to participate in class.				
19.	I am motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates.				
20.	I am at ease because I can healthy compete with my classmates.				

D. Limitations of learning English in small classes.

N°	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
21.	There is anxiety among students because there is more control on the part of the teacher.				
22.	Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.				

Thank you.



## UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

### OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

### ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear teacher,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning your opinion in relation to the teaching of English in small classes. The following information will only be used for academic/research purposes.

**Informative data:** Please fill in the information below

Name of institution :			
Type of institution:	Public ( )	Private ( )	
	School ( )	High school ( )	Language institute ( )
City			

**Instructions:** place an (X) in the box that best reflects your personal opinion:

**Strategy:** answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

Totally agree
Agree
Partially agree
Disagree

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes.

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
1.	It is easier to design activities that help the students to apply what they have learned.				
2.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities.				
3.	Classroom space allows students to properly do the activities designed.				
4.	Appropriate feedback can be given.				
5.	Activities that allow more interaction among students are performed.				
6.	There is more interaction between the teacher and the students.				
7.	It is easier to remember students' names.				

B. Strategies and resources that favor the English teaching in small classes.

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
9.	Design and apply activities that allow student to practice listening skills.				
10.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice speaking skills.				
11.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice reading skills.				
12.	Design and apply activities that allow students to practice writing skills.				
13.	Design and apply group work activities.				
14.	Design and apply individual activities.				
15.	Use technological tools.				
16.	Use didactic materials.				

C. Students' feelings when learning English in a small class.

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
17.	They are relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates.				
18.	They are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class.				
19.	They are motivated to participate because of the small number students.				
20.	They are at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates.				

D. Limitations of learning English in small classes.

Nº	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
21.	There is anxiety among students because there is more control form the part of the teacher.				
22.	Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.				

Thank you.





## UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

### OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

### ENGLISH DEGREE

### OBSERVATION SHEET

<b>INSTITUCION EDUCATIVA:</b>	
<b>FECHA:</b>	
<b>CURSO/NIVEL:</b>	

1. The activities done in class help to apply what students learn.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

2. The students are attentive and participate in class activities.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

3. The classroom space allows students to carry out the activities assigned by the teacher.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

4. Students receive proper feedback from the teacher.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

5. There is interaction between the students.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

6. There is interaction between the teacher and students.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

7. The teacher remembers the students' names.

YES ( )      NO ( )

Notes:

8. The activities done allow students to practice **listening** skills.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

9. The activities done allow students to practice **speaking** skills.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

10. The activities done allow students to practice **reading** skills.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

11. The activities done allow students to practice **writing** skills.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

12. **Group** work activities are used.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

13. **Individual** activities are used.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

14. Technological tools are used.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

15. Didactic materials are used.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

16. Students are relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

17. Students are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

18. Students are motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

**19.** They are at ease because they can healthy compete with their classmates.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

**20.** Students can concentrate better because there is less noise in the classroom.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

**21.** There is anxiety among students because there is more control on the part of the teacher.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes:

**22. Individual** activities are used.

YES ( )              NO ( )

Notes: