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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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Doctora.

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Loja, Abril de 2015

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Dedication

This research is dedicated, in first place to my mother who motivated me to continue studying; to my children for being the motor and impulse to achieve my objectives, especially to my daughter who helped me during this journey.

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Abstract

This research addresses the topic “teachers and students perceptions of teaching English in small classes in Ecuador”. The action investigated in this study is based on teachers’ and students’ perceptions related to the statement which attends as a means to find the difficulties or benefits occurring in the teaching of languages in small classes.

I observed five teachers and 60 students in two English institutes in Quito where teachers worked with a small number of students, from ten to fifteen per class. Students were of different ages and English language levels. They were asked 42 questions divided in four groups A, B, C, D, according to the purpose of the research. As a complement, extensive bibliographic materials were gathered from physical and virtual books.

To gather authentic information, all questions were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods which allows statistical measurement based in confident criteria.

The research results show that English teachers prefer working in small classes because it allows them to apply and practice techniques and strategies between teacher and students which aids their self-esteem and knowledge.

Key words: research, small classes, teachers, students, perception, English, quantitative, qualitative, tabulation, questionnaire, questions, answers, to find out.

Resumen

Esta investigación aborda el tema “percepciones de los profesores y estudiantes acerca de la enseñanza del idioma Inglés en clases pequeñas en Ecuador. La investigación en este estudio se basa en los resultados de la percepción de los profesores y estudiantes usada como medio para encontrar las dificultades o los beneficios que produce la enseñanza del idioma Inglés en clases pequeñas.

Se hizo una observación de clases a 5 profesores y 60 alumnos en 2 institutos de inglés en Quito en los cuales los profesores trabajaban con un pequeño número de estudiantes de 10 a 15 por clase. Los estudiantes son de diferentes edades y niveles de conocimiento del idioma. Ellos fueron encuestados con 42 preguntas divididas en cuatro grupos A, B, C, D, de acuerdo con el propósito del investigador. Como complemento, se recopiló extenso material bibliográfico mismo que fue obtenido de libros físicos y virtuales.

Para obtener información auténtica, todas las preguntas fueron analizadas a través de los métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos los cuales permiten medir los resultados estadísticos basados en criterios confiables.

Los resultados de la investigación indican que los profesores prefieren trabajar en clases pequeñas porque les permite aplicar y practicar las técnicas y estrategias entre profesores y alumnos que ayudan a mejorar su autoestima y conocimiento.

Palabras Claves: investigación, clase con un menor número de estudiantes, profesores, estudiantes, percepción, inglés, cuantitativo, cualitativo, tabulación, cuestionario, preguntas, encontrar, realizar, y respuestas.

Introduction

Teaching a language accurately plays an important role in improving learning. In Ecuador, the government has implemented different strategies like TOEFL tests to measure English teachers' proficiency because it seems that the teachers are not well aware of the importance of teaching language in the classroom. According to Mosquera (2012), the investigation results show the Ministry of education how to design training programs for EFL teachers, thus, teaching how to better benefit students. This study has as a goal to find out the real results from teacher's and student's opinions about teaching and learning English in small classes using as a base the questions below:

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?

Concerning previous investigation about the topic, Harfitt, G. J. (2011) manifests that several studies were focused on different Hong Kong high schools where one teacher was responsible for teaching in large and small classes at the same time and grade level. This author talks about the teacher's answer which reveals that small classes allow them to provide students personalized aid, work in a relaxed manner, and gain successful results in the goals proposed.

Concerning this assertion, Harmer (2007, p.125) remarks that "large classes present challenges than smaller classes do not". Therefore, working with a small number of students is more beneficial for a successful teaching learning development.

Along the same lines, Blatchfor et al. (2003) has similar concepts as Harfitt, G. J (2011) but this last author adds that small classes allow teachers to give students social and psychological assistance; work in groups and in pairs among others.

Even more, Budge, K., & Cowlshaw, K. (2012) have surveyed teachers and students from the Urban Australian University about their perception connected with learning and teaching. In this setting, most classes are small, so, teachers and students relationships tend to be closer than in large ones.

On the other hand, Oserk, K. (2001) reveals through a study carried out in Oslo at a school where many different language backgrounds are represented, the importance of verbal interaction in small and large classes. He adds that some schools with “high linguistic heterogeneous population have small classes in some area subjects as an important variable.” As it can be seen, benefits from small classes are countless.

This research shows multiple strategies, techniques and resources such as giving social and psychological assistance; working in groups and in pairs; increasing a successful teaching learning development; closer relationships between teachers and students; providing learners with personalized aid, among others. These benefits will aid the Ecuadorian English teachers, all types of educational institutions, future researchers, and administrative bodies. It will give them important information carefully analyzed and properly supported. As a result, students are willing to speak more than their counterparts in large classes as I could see during observations.

Regarding limitations, fortunately, I did not find any during investigation. Both groups of participants gave me enough opening to collect the necessary information in order to show the real benefits for teachers and students in small classes.

In order to improve future investigations, I suggest addressing research with larger samples from both class sizes (large and small) which might involve more schools and participants. Furthermore, small class results should be compared with the ones found on studies focused on large classes.

Method

Settings and Participants

The field research was carried out in two English institutes located in the urban area of Quito. Both language Institutes work with a small number of students from 10 to 15 per class, masculine and feminine gender and ages ranged between 12 to 35 years old. Five teachers and sixty students from all levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) were surveyed through designed observance sheets what were used honestly.

Regarding bibliographic research, the first step was looking for academic and virtual books, studies or investigations linked with small classes. The material chosen was carefully analyzed and properly endorsed for recognized authors of the academic career. Whole methodology will be described further in Literature Review segment.

Procedure

The research began by looking for necessary physical and virtual books in reference libraries and articles from the internet facilitated by Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL). To gather information, questionnaires with forty two statements for teachers and students and observation sheets previously illustrated were applied in order to scientifically support the investigation. The research also included observation. An authorization from the administrator was petitioned and accepted in order to observe teacher's and student's behavior during classes.

Data collection was carried out from teachers' and students' answers and class observations; all figures were added up in manual form and the results retrieved were entered into an electronic spreadsheet and transformed into percentages to facilitate

their analysis that was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Whole issues were reviewed after gaining genuine results and showing confident output about small classes' benefits for teachers and students.

In general, three aspects were considered during the analysis of the research results: keep in mind the purpose of the study, teachers and students surveyed answers, and quantitative and qualitative methods.

Discussion

Literature Review

As English is used around the world as a universal language of teaching and learning, it is necessary to look for the best way for increasing consciousness and achievement for students in this language. So, this segment of the investigation “literature review” is the first step addressed in finding the research’s purpose. This is centering in the following content outline as a guide to develop scientific syllabus and include: managing learning; teacher and student interaction; class size; teaching and practicing techniques, strategies and activities; learning environment in small classes; and previous studies; which will be extensively developed and properly endorsed.

Managing learning

As Jones, (2007) suggests, the primary task of a good teacher is to create positive conditions for students to feel comfortable in class. Moreover, teachers’ attitude, interaction, personality, techniques, abilities and organization, are strategies needed before to link up with learners and take under their control the “classroom management.”

About activities development, Scrivener (1994) reveals that different groups of students finish their tasks at different times, some of them do it quickly while others take longer time and feel frustrated if it is not enough, but if it is open-ended, students will try to finish promptly and their interaction will be unsatisfactory. So, this author recommends giving a time limit to students according to the needs of the lesson for planning their work’s rhythm, coordinating ideas, working confidently and relaxed in order to go in greater depth the activities assigned. Nevertheless, the teacher needs to be

reasonably accurate when he/she says “You have three minutes to finish this task” for example. As recommendation, digital clock on a cell phone is good for controlling time because it is useful to say ready students; time is closely end, finish your work adequately. Furthermore, the above authors mentioned that the teacher may stop activities and extend or shorten the time according to the task’s needs; for example: he/she can ask the students to write a summary of a lesson in eight minutes; nevertheless, the teacher can interrupt activities, announce a time to finish it or give students a measurable time of three minutes more. However, the teacher needs to be flexible because students might be enjoying the activity or maybe they do not know what to say. In consequence, it is better to give a longer time instead, as recommend by Scrivener (1994).

Even more, the feedback is another important approach in learning lessons; the teacher needs to take notes from students’ mistakes while he/she is monitoring them as Scrivener, J. (1994) proposes. Correcting mistakes at a later time can produce confusion or dismay. “The teacher needs to be systematic in his/her correction strategies” concludes the author. When we compare feedback recommendations among Scrivener, J. (1994) and Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty (1985), they agree with them; though, the last three authors speak about good timing and bad timing also. Good timing means returning tests and assignment results promptly. It benefits both the teacher’s and the student’s confidence. Bad timing is when a teacher puts assignments and tests aside. Postponing results can produce in the students feelings of frustration and being ignored. “Feedback should give to students a clear understanding of what to do next on a point or points that they need to work on,” annotate Jones, L. (2007).

Teacher- student and student- interaction

Some theories about communicative capabilities revealed by Brookhard, S. M. (2008) are, pointing significances of the interaction and recommend full interplay among teacher-students especially from the beginning of language study. “An effective teachers’ language contributes to an effective learner’s output” Brookhard, S. M. (2008).

Unfortunately, the lack of good English teachers is an enormous disadvantage because students lose interest in learning a foreign language and they are not able to develop their communicative skills. So, Jones, L. (2007) recommends that teachers should increase their cognizance by always reading books, talking with other teachers, observing others teachers’ work, getting feedback from observers of your lessons, and other options which will help to enhance student’s knowledge. Continuing with strategies description, according to Krashen (1984), “many teachers use too much time introducing and explaining lessons as a real type of monologue;” most of them remain with the old custom or traditional way of teaching English, like a dominant authority of a whole class and being the center of attention without caring what students think or feel. Furthermore, some teachers are impatient to give answers to questions and overlook students’ needs. They do not interact with students; in consequence, less time is given to student interaction.

Additionally, Krashen (1984) recommends that teaching a language should be carried out in these ways: first, introduce the background; tell students something about an interesting theme or topic of discourse; give central ideas about discusion selected; and so on.

Continuing with Brookhard, S. M. (2008) he recommends, “the teacher should

correct mistakes on time; provide clues, relevant advice and true information.” In addition, he/she ought to work with activities such as verbal and non-verbal language; pairs and groups work; interesting topic discussions; telling stories and guessing words; and helping students to develop their communication abilities with other people to improve teacher and student relationships. Furthermore, techniques of question and answer exchange should be used by teachers in order to maintain students’ interest, encourage them to concentrate on the content of the lesson, enable them to elicit particular vocabulary and allow teachers to check students’ understanding motivating their participation in class. Moreover, “through students’ interaction teachers can improve their language achievement, practice language learned,” and “exploit the elasticized of language. With constant interaction, the students acquire flexibility, facilitating coexistence in the new language and culture, concludes Brookhard, S. M. (2008). Other recommendations from the same authors show that the teachers should encourage learners to increase interaction treating them as integral persons, tolerating their mistakes and helping to reduce their stress thus, students will benefit in a friendly and easy work atmosphere. On the contrary, when a teacher is too rigorous, the stressful atmosphere demotivate students and dissuades their initiatives, concludes Brookhard, S. M. (2008).

Following the same line of thought, Johnson and Johnson (1985) adds: where the interaction is practiced, the learning is more significant, a higher level of self-esteem is achieved and student’s interactions in and out of class is unrestricted; they speak out with confidence and gain an intrinsic motivation for developing those skills.

Comparing K aufman and Felder (2000) with Johnson and Johnson (1985) the

interaction and perceptions about positive learner's attitudes when they are working in a cooperative setting are the same; nevertheless, Kaufman found that positive answers are not universal. So, students who are reluctant to interact with others may be negatively affected.

Moreover, creating balanced work groups is also an important strategy during the process of improving interaction. So, in order to carry out successful results, it is necessary to combine strong and weaker students, thus indirectly, the weaker students receive peer tutoring; on the other hand, the stronger students gain confidence reinforcing interaction in the learning process (Oakley et al., 2004).

Finally, do not forget that monitoring and keeping student's active are the keys for improving teaching – learning and the environment also. (Oakley et al., 2004).

Class size

According to Wilson, V. (2002) the class size dispute has tended to polarize investigations. Some believe that class size reductions will improve pupils attainment while others suggest that such gains are prohibitively expensive.

On the other hand, conflictive evidence from some British studies indicate that the attainment decreases in classes of 25-30 and increases with groups of over 30 pupils.

“The explanation may lie within class groupings and teaching practices.” Wilson, V. (2002)

Continuing with participants' criteria, other studies report that some teachers believe that small classes affect their teaching practices particularly in the way of organization inside of the work groups and in the amount of time devoted to individual students, reveals the above mentioned author; nevertheless, other teachers report to feel

less stressed and more competent working in small classes because it allows easier management of the class than larger ones. Some researchers are looking for connection between class size and student's attainment; so, "data from existing large-scale monitoring programmes such as it generated from the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) are analyzed"

As we have proved so far, controversies are extensive. In Scotland, for example, results from "Assessment of Achievement Programmes (AAP) in primary school would provide information of a possible correlation between class size and attainment"; studies from (Morris, 1959 and Wiseman, 1967) found that children in larger classes pay attention better than those in smaller ones; but, Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, A., & Willms, (2001) show that "class size refers to the number of students taught by teachers at determined time," nonetheless, pupils and teachers scale are always lower than the average class size ,but the disagreement among both may change according to teachers' role and the quantity of time they spend in the classroom during the school day. From economic and administrative viewpoints, student and teacher ratios are so important because it is related to the amount of time spent for each student; however, from psychological viewpoint about how students learn, "what matter is the number of students who are physically present interacting among themselves and with the teacher." Nevertheless, school administrators, parents and teachers, have long thought that the number of students in a class influences learners accomplishment.

Continuing with the same line of thought, Wilson, V. (2002) adds that some states have a set of target levels at 15, various at 17, and others at 20. Moreover, most states have adopted policies designed to reduce class sizes in the early grades (e.g.

California in grade 8) but others, install children in a reduced class size according to the type of students.

On the other hand, Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, A., & Willms, (2001) speak about timing that some states have based on the syllabus over a number of years although others have implemented it immediately “whether class- size reduction is mandatory or expressed as a goal.”

Random experiment is another subject that the above authors mentioned; they point out that students are randomly assigned classes of different sizes. Those approaches have several advantages “because it explicitly removes the threats of selection bias or confounding variables”; but they have their own problems, for example, in class size experiments “parents of children who are assigned to a large class may try to compensate for their children’s placement by providing them with after-school tutoring;” they may try to have their children re-assigned to the smaller classes and there could be jostling among teachers for more favorable classroom assignments concludes Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, A., & Willms, (2001). Nevertheless, these types of problems may be avoided by informing students before class size changes, thus, students will become capable to accept it and be involved in activities or projects at school in relaxed manner.

Finally, interview results from project START are shown to be analogous for teachers in small classes and teachers in regular classes. “Both groups think that the experimental arrangement brought more time for individualized instruction and left fewer behavior problems” concludes (Johston 1989).

Teaching techniques, strategies or activities for teaching English to small classes

A lot of strategies or activities will be shown in order to provide the best methods for teaching/learning English. Eison, J. (2010) reveals that through the use of learning activities and instructional strategies, students enhance their learning; (Bonwell & Eison 1991) adds, the use of activities and strategies engage learners in “thinking critically or creatively; speaking with a partner in a small group or with the entire class; expressing ideas through writing; exploring personal attitudes and values, and giving and receiving feedback. Furthermore, these practices involve students in doing and thinking about things that they are carrying out.

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn more sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing assignments and responding. “Learners must talk about what they are learning, writing about it, and taking relationship with their experiences applying it to their daily lives” and make what they learned part of themselves (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Thus, students learn more than when they are passive recipients of instructions. (Cross, 1987) annotate, a good student is active, not passive; they use the mind, not just the memory. One proverb says: “Tell me and I’ll listen. Show me and I’ll understand. Involve me and I’ll learn.” (Teton Lakota Indians) In other words, those who practice learning achieve better knowledge.

On the other hand, Eison, J. (2010) speaks about the importance of materials used to support learning approaches and how the lacks of these can be a barrier to developing the majority of activities and strategies successfully. Furthermore, the author recommend “Questioning Purposeful” as an effective approach in order to increase student’s engagement as well as fostering critical/creative thinking through the frequent use of questions in class from teacher to students and between students. This type of

questioning helps to improve student interest and curiosity, to develop thinking skills, apply theory's practice, and enhance their comprehension. The teacher should ask questions in a logical and sequential form in order to maintain student interest. In addition, the "student-posed questions can stimulate students-instructor interaction, identify areas of confusion or test understanding, formulate personal connections on course content and encourage student-student collaboration." Another way for increasing student engagement is to assign a short writing in-class during class presentations.

In addition, through popular films and video vignettes instructors can stimulate critical/creative thinking and elevate student interest. Also using cooperative learning strategies and taking quizzes to measure student learning, the teacher can stimulate student engagement in –and out –of-class, conclude Eison, J. (2010.)

Along the same line, in order to show an extensive support in teaching techniques and strategies to teaching English in small classes, Saravia –Shore, M (1992) attached some resources for teaching different (racial, cultural, linguistic, and lower socioeconomic status) students in order to establish a useful communication because the conversation among teacher and students or between students may change languages' understanding, emphasize something, clarify or address groups to can understand the second languages easily. These activities include reading, writing, and creating art projects.

Additionally, Hodgkinson (2003) advocates educational programs like Head Start which take into account academic needs as well social, emotional, and physical needs and strengths in a family context.

Furthermore, students learn more when they are invited by the teacher to take part in a debate that has high expectations. For example, identifying problems and collaborating in activities, (Burris & Welner, 2005). The teacher chooses activities where students must use analytic skills, evaluate and make connections, finished their homework successful, and managing their time effectively. Moreover, through Head Start Program children learn to express ideas, feelings, and requests easily if parents or guardians respond to them; nonetheless, students need guidance in learning communication including making requests, asking and responding to questions. Further, the student's self-esteem and enthusiasm improves when the teacher brings out their experiences in class discussions and he/she backs up what they have to say.

On the other hand, Tharp, and Baird-Vogt (1992) show us that when the teacher includes home cultures in class, students participate actively; likewise, the teacher feels comfortable providing learners the chances to express themselves through the visual manner because visual arts allow them to learn and developing their natural abilities and multiple intelligences "not only verbal and mathematical intelligences but also visual, spatial, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences" (Gardner, 1983).

Finally, recommendations of Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, and Yamauchi (2000) reveal that the dialogue is among the five standards for developing an Effective Pedagogy and improving learners' outcomes; for example: The teacher starts reading a story and provokes a speech between them, afterward, he/she may ask them to write the story with a different ending or continuing with the story, thus children see the connection between reading and writing. Then, the teacher asks students to break in groups of five for example, to illustrate it.

Learning environment in small classes

As Gower, Phillips, and Walter, (1995) say to us, students' position in class is of great importance, but it is necessary to bear in mind that the individual concepts about space change from culture to culture. The place where students are sitting can determine "their attitude to teacher and between each other, how they interact, and the types of activities that can be carried out." Students' position in the classroom is determined by multiples factors: if students are adults or children, whether the group is monolingual or multilingual, the personality of students and so on. The teacher can place a weaker students together with strong ones, or calm students next to a strong or outgoing student in activities where they can give extra support. In multilingual groups, it is advisable for them work together on common problems.

Carrying on with classroom space descriptions, the furniture arrangement should be fit to the activities and only will be restricted if the types of chairs, tables, or desks are not adequate. The same authors suggest some kind of furniture arrangements such as horseshoes which allows easy face – to- face contact among teacher and students, it is advised not make it with more than sixteen students. Furthermore, they recommend, when two students are talking under a teacher's control giving other learners the opportunity to hear them, it is not necessary to change the seats' position; when all students are working in 'closed' pairs outside the instructors control, chairs should be slightly moved towards each other; for student groups of four, it is ideal to sit them round a desk café style; but, when there is a lot of reading and writing or when the teacher gives a test, is advisable to seat students away from one of another. Do not forget that some activities often demand teacher's 'directing'. The teacher needs to

stand in front of students to see what everyone is doing; maintain control through gestures and eye contact because students may need aid; the teacher should be moving enough to help and correct students' errors individually, conclude Gower, Phillips, and Walters, (1995).

On the other hand, Woolfolk, (2007) recommends taking advantage of classroom space because it helps students to develop successful activities planned in class.

Woolfolk & Brooks, (1983) remark, there are two ways: "personal territories and interest areas." Personal territories: refers to where the teacher sits. It should be in front of students because this placement seem to increase students' participation, whereas if he/she sits in the back, it makes it more difficult to participate and easier to daydream. Interest area: (Good, 1983 and Lambert, 1994) Weinstein and Mignano (2003) "suggest that the teachers should move around the room when it is possible, establish eye contact with students, and direct questions to students seated far away."

Additionally, Woolfolk, (2007) suggests some scholar furniture arrangement according to lessons need, for example: horizontal rows share many of the advantages of the traditional row and column arrangement; moreover, horizontal rows facilitate working easily in pairs. Concerning group work, clusters of four are the best for student interaction and discussions; circles allow students "to talk, help one another, share materials, and work on task groups." Nevertheless, both arrangements are poor for whole-group presentations and it makes class management more difficult. When students sit close together the focus of attention should be for short periods of time because it is uncomfortable and can lead to discipline problems.

Moreover, the same author (2007) refers to computers use also when students

have only one computer during the lab time they can go to shared folder, double click the link, and go right to the site without typing the URL. In these cases, the author advises to make up a schedule that will aid all students to have access to the computers and not let one student monopolize the time, this list will save time and stress for both students and teachers. For cooperative groups, arranging students in circles around their computer can help them.

After describing the bibliographic material about literature review and its whole contents, I will refer to studies taken from the internet that will support and contribute to clarify accurately a real discernment linked with benefits to teaching and learning English in small classes.

Harfitt, (2011) sets out that the purpose of this study is finding pedagogical practices that can contribute better techniques for teaching in small classes.

Concerning the researchers' methods, these are from diverse types and always pointed to increase theories and concepts around class size's benefits. Special attention was paid to key variables which would have impact in classroom interaction, contents of the lesson, academic students' abilities, question types, and interaction between students and teachers, annotate Harfitt, (2011).

Regarding these investigations, (Anderson 2000; Molnar, Smith, and Zahorik 1999; Wang and Finn 2000) add three aspects that small classes gain in learners' profit: "better knowledge of students; more instructional time; and the uses of individualized pedagogy. Oserk, (2001) states that teacher-student verbal interactions and questioning, help students to reflect about central elements of the syllabus. Moreover, Brophy & Good (1986) say that both, divergent and convergent questions facilitate the learning of

cognitive matter demanded in the schools. Many studies have shown that a correct implementation of the techniques yield a profit in students' attainment and upkeep of the subjects known; in addition, it contributes to the development to interpersonal communication skills and self-confidence. Harfitt, G. J. (2011).

Along this line, researchers carried out surveys at bilingual schools in Oslo where many different language backgrounds are represented. Some high linguistic schools have small classes as an important variable where bilingual students are defined by their teachers with an excellent communicative proficiency in their second language. So, in order to check teachers' evaluation, data about students' achievement was collected through fifty syllabuses – based assignment, explains Oserk, K. (2001). One week after of the observation period, all students were evaluated by their teachers that had been taught them from the beginning of the school year. Oserk, K. (2001). This author shows also that two small classes and two large classes were investigated; small classes' results showed significant differences between the mean scores acquired by both size classes, for example, the outcomes demanded for verbal interaction among teachers and students. Nevertheless, the proportions of other utterances by teachers of the large classes are higher than the small classes. But, "Since the teacher did divergent questions in small classes, various of them can also say that teaching in small classes encourage the development of creativity and critical think and the ability to reason is better in small classes than in large ones."

To sum up, some linguistic schools have small classes as an important variable where bilingual students are defined by their teachers with an excellent communicative proficiency in their second language. The class size seems to be

especially important in urban areas. The most important conclusions of this study are that the teacher and students' verbal interactions occur or happen during the teaching process. Furthermore, students' creativity, originality and critical thinking increases in small classes more than in large ones, concludes Oserk, K. (2001).

Following the same line of thinking, MacQuarrie, Howe, and Boile (2012) focused on two important themes: providing a description of high school teachers' and pupils' behaviors during lesson where they work in groups to increase correlation with traditional instruction; and one investigation centralized on the pupils' talks as specific form of dialogue in order to promote learning. (Barnes and Todd, 1977; Littleton 2005; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, and Sams, 2004)

Continuing with topics described by MacQuarrie, Howe, & Boile (2012), methods used are of two types: for pupils and for teachers. For pupils: "a between subject design incorporated teaching approach, science, gender, topic stage, and year." For teachers: "a mixed design incorporated writing subject factor -observation at the introductions, conclusion and lessons, and between- lessons subjects, factors teaching – approach, science, gender, topic stage, and year"

Nevertheless, during data collection attaining records of pair or group participation was not feasible. In consequence, it was necessary to record the observations during English classes or within a conventional instruction where students finished task by themselves (MackQuarry, 2006) .Immediately after learners have completed the task, they were involved in productive dialogues analyzing the teachers' behavior, and using group work to practice the skills developed.

Furthermore, Budge, & Cowlshaw, K. (2012) used three methods in order to

carry out data collection: an electronic overlook to all students using both open and closed questions; to all teachers – a minor adaptation of Trigwell and Prosser’s ATI (2004); and one to one interviews with a sample of 21 teachers from across both sectors (HI and VET). Budge, K., and Cowlshaw, K. (2012).

Ethical issues were considered and addressed as part of methodology design. Likewise, all teachers agreed to be part of the study; some that were “exemplary” in behavior and practice were selected to be interviewed.

In summary, this study discloses many positive approaches taking place that require further attention, leadership, and support. It has shown that the majority of teachers’ conceptions are focused on conceptual changes and intellectual development that will increase aligning teaching beliefs with teaching practices.

On the other hand, Haworth (2008) shows us that the center of investigations of this paper involves teaching syllabus content in mainstream classes with a small number of English students as an additional language (EAL). Three particular distinctive roles were identified: “one – to – one teacher; class and group instructor; and class manager” Haworth, (2008).

This last investigation took place in New Zealand, a country in which linguistics diversity has increased conspicuously. Three discussions were arranged with each of the eight teachers inquired; the first discussion happened at the start of the school in terms of the participations collecting information about prior teaching experiences and practice-related beliefs; the second was further discussion talking with each teacher in the middle and at the end of their terms of participation; the third discussion was the central focus on critical incidents which was identified by both teacher and researcher.

Woods (1993, p. 157) “A total of the 133 hours of in-class observation took place in the major phase of the inquiry alongside of the narrative record of teacher and EAL student interactions.” Teachers with the most experience “often were contacted with EAL students to placing them into existing small instructional classes” Haworth, (2008). But, teachers with low English proficiency were revealed.

As it can be seen, we could find several techniques, strategies and methods that teachers and students can put into practice in order to enhance their knowledge, establish successful communication, enhance self-confidence, give and receive social and psychological assistance, and so on, because small classes provide facilities to teachers and students to develop and practice successfully the contents studied.

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

An extensive research has been carried out about English teaching in small classes in two English institutes in Quito -Ecuador using several resources from different sources of information properly documented as it has been shown in the literature review what will be used as a guide to develop activities and strategies in order to gain successful insights on the goal proposed. The analysis of four questions created for the purpose of this research will tell us more about the benefits of small classes.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

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

Tabla 1.

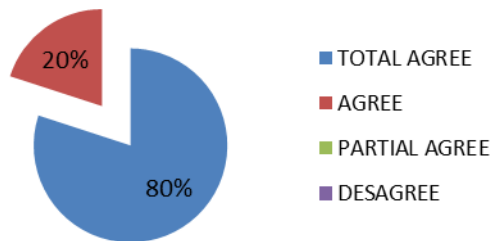
Teachers' perceptions

A.	In classes with small number of students:	TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	It facilitate to design activities that allows studens to put into practice what they have learned.	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
2	Students are attentive and participate in activities developed in class.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
3	Classroom space allows that activities designed by you can be developed appropriately.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
4	It is possible to give a suitable feedback	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
5	It allows to carry out activities that facilitate the best intraction among students.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
6	There is more interaction between teacher / students.	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	5	100%
7	Is easy for you to remember studens names.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

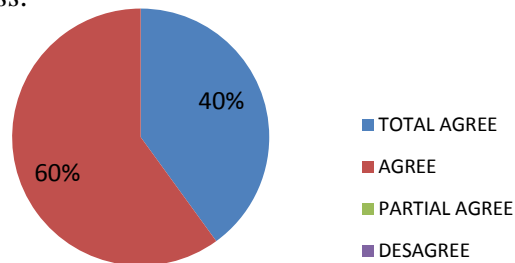
Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

1. It facilitates to design activities that allow students to put in practice what they have learned



As this graph demonstrates, the teachers' perception shows that the 80% totally agree that small classes facilitate a better environment to design activities and practice what students have learned; and the other 20% agree about the same point. I could see during observation that there is a total interaction among and between teacher and students. The teacher, through closed and open questions, practiced content studied last lesson in order to reinforce what they have learned without problems. These statements find support in Eison, J. (2010) who advises that the use of instructional strategies to engage students in thinking critically and creatively and involving students in what they are doing is positive. (Bonwell & Eison 1991). These practices are possible to carry out due to the number of students per class that allows using the time and space properly. After these practices, the teacher continued working with the programed lesson about reading and vocabulary building through dialogues in pairs.

2. Students are attentive and participate in activities developed in class.

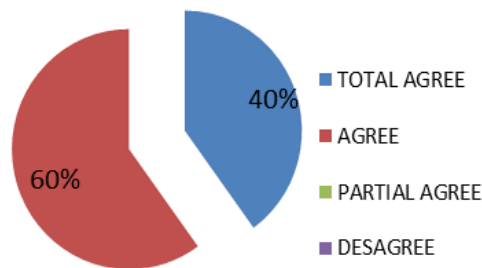


According to the statistical figure in this graph, the 40% of teachers who totally agree, and the 60% agree with small classes attention and participation in class. Furthermore, the data shows that all students have a positive attitude toward activities carried out by the teacher.

Continuing with the field analysis and according to personal observation, the interaction among all students due to small number of students per class, motivated them to remain attentive during the whole class.

Similar to item number one, I agree with the statistics because all students stayed alert to participate and interact. During this class, the teacher formed work groups as Kaufman and Felder (2000) recommend. They say that joining weaker with stronger students in order to reinforce teaching and learning enhancing their achievement, gaining confidence, and encourage interacting with each other. As it can be seen, the interaction among students and teacher -students was clear.

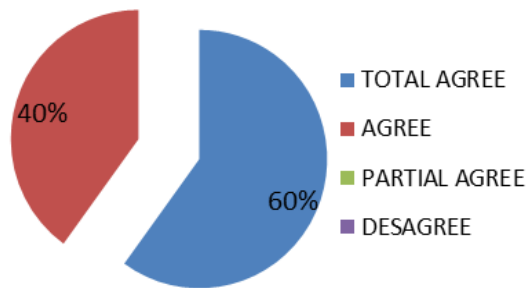
3. Classroom space allows that activities designed by you can be developed appropriately



As it can be seen in the present graph, the 60% who totally agree with class space which provides enough room to carry out appropriate activities in order to enhance students' knowledge with the purpose of reaching the goal desired, while the other 40% of teachers inquired agree with small classes.

According to statistics showed in the above graph, teachers believe that activities designed can be developed appropriately in small classes taking advantage of the space. But during field investigation, I could see that school furniture kept a traditional arrangement. The teacher does not make good use of the classroom space as recommend by Woolffolk & Brooks (1983), the use of space should be adequate according to lessons need because where students sit in a classroom determines their attitude to each other, how they interact, the type of activities that they can do, quiet reading, group collaboration, independent research, and the use of materials.

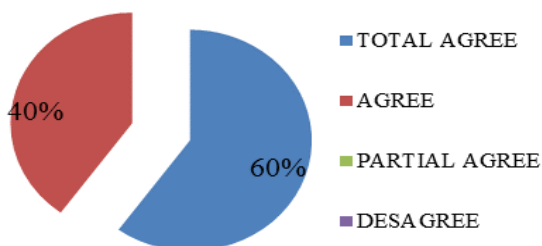
4. It is possible to give a suitable feedback



This graph demonstrates that the 60% of teachers totally agreed that classes with a small number of students allowed them to give students adequate feedback; and the 40% agree in this aspect. So they all think that small classes yield a benefit. But unfortunately during class observation, the teacher did not give any kind of feedback on time, even more, when students asked him about something they had a doubt about, the teacher ignored them. To this respect Scrivener, J. (1994) says that a good teacher needs to take note while he /she is monitoring pupils in order to give them adequate feedback afterwards. Feedback is an essential part of each lesson, says the author.

I think that this type of omission is provoked by the lack of knowledge, so, it is mandatory that English teachers update their knowledge constantly.

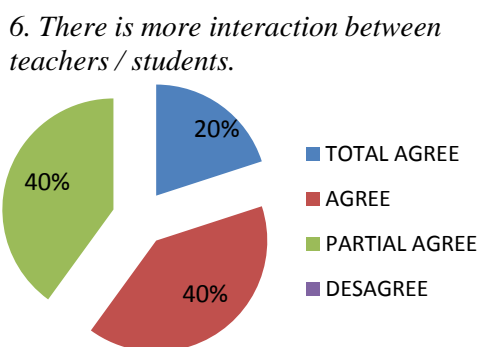
5. It allows to carryout acativities that facilitate the best interaction among students



The 40% of teachers inquired totally agreed that small classes allow better interaction among students; whereas, other 60% agree in this aspect.

According to all participants small classes allow teachers to carry out activities that facilitate interaction among students. During observation I could see students interacting through dialogues, questions and answers headed by the tutor; the teacher practiced all work planned in class without difficulty because of the small number of students. The method practiced during the interaction among students, was applied as Kaufman and Felder (2000) recommend. They say that when students work in a “cooperative setting”, they develop positive attitudes. Nevertheless, the same authors annotate that students who are reluctant to interact may be affected negatively.

This time both, class observation and statistics shown in the graphic above totally agree. It is evident that learners in a class with small number of students and the teacher felt totally free to interact among themselves and the educators because to have at one’s disposal time and space for developing the class designed without barriers.



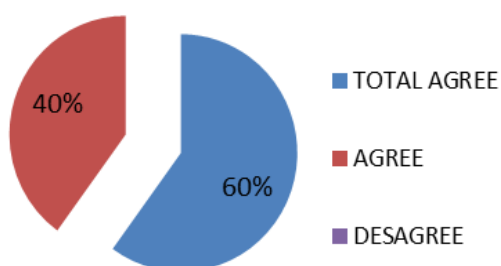
The data in this graph indicate that all teachers together agree with small classes because it allows an easy interaction between teacher and students. Percentages were divided in dissimilar rates but all in a positive way. The 40% agree, whereas other 40%

partially agree in this respect, but only a 20% totally agree.

During observation, I could see full interaction among teacher and students; he chose a stimulating topic “Ecuador Middle of the World”. All students shared among themselves and with the teacher and some of them enjoyed it. Thus, the tutor applied what Meng, & Wang, (2011) recommend. They say that interaction between teacher and students is an effective strategy for teaching English especially initial students learning, in order to get successful results in the learning process.

As it can be seen, it is clear that small classes are better to practice and develop all types of activities and strategies for the students’ benefit.

7. Is esasy for you tu remember students names



From the graph we can see that the 60% of teachers totally agree to have better opportunities to remember students’ names in small classes; and the 40% agree with it. This means that teachers can benefit from small classes because it is possible for them to recall students’ names easily and the relationships between teacher – students are better too.

In fact, I could observe that the teacher called students by their name without problem. In this sense, Anderson (2000); Molnar, Smith, and Zahorik (1999); Wang and

Finn (2000) suggest a model of teaching based in three aspects: “better knowledge of students; more instructional time and teacher satisfaction; and more individualized pedagogy in the classrooms”.

These authors’ recommendations are linked with question seven because small classes allow the teacher to know all students; the teacher has more time to share with learners covering their extracurricular needs; and it lets to him apply a specific method according to learners requirements.

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

Second part of

Tabla 1

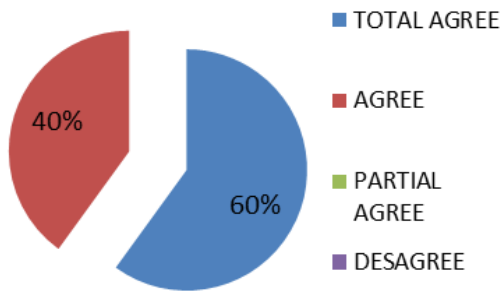
Teachers’ perception

B	In classes with small number of students:	TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
8	To design and to apply activities that allow students to put in practice listening skills.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
9	To design and to applied activities that allow students to put in practice speaking skills.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
10	To design and apply activities that allow students to put in practice reading skills.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
11	To design and apply activities that allow students to put in practice writing skills.	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
12	Design and apply group work activities.	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%	5	100%
13	Design and apply individual activities	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
14	To use technology.	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
15	To use didactic materials.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

8. To design and to apply activities that allow students to put in practice listening skills.

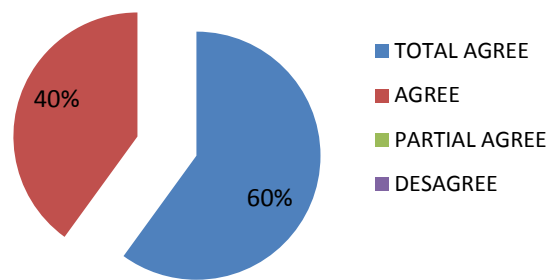


The data in the graph indicate thatr (100%) of teachers agreed that small classes allow teachers to design activities and practice listening skills. To break down, 40% of them agree and the 60% totally agree in this aspect. It is clear from the data provided that students carry out a significant practice of listening skills in this teaching situation.

Regarding field investigation, I could see listening practices through reading; the teacher was reading while students were listening attentively. After that, he asked them to make a summary in order to provoke a listening interaction. All students participated in class, discerning about the reading practice as Tharp, Estrada, Dalton and Yamauchi (2000) propose “Teaching through conversation is among the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy in order to enhance learning.” As statistics and observation agree, I also agree with both results.

Note: Because items from eight to fifteen are focused in similar activities using analogous strategies and resources, I will endorse these with the same scientific support.

9. To design an to apply activities that allow students to put in practice speaking skills.

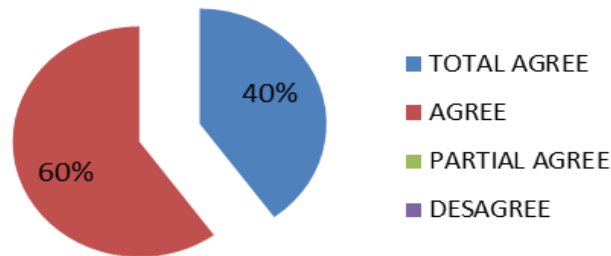


The results in the graph show that 100% (joining total agree and agree) of teachers agree in that small classes allow students to develop speaking skills. As it can be seen, 60% of teachers totally agree and 40% agree that working in small classes is good because students respond to all activities programed by the teacher.

In fact, all students participated and practiced speaking using flash cards and posters. They interacted under the teacher's directions, talking about didactic material used. In consequence, both, statistics and observation agree.

The method used was carried out according to Gower, Phillips, and Walters, (1995) recommendations. They say that students' activities demand from the teacher direct the teacher on what they should be doing; the teacher needs to stand in front of students to see what everyone is doing and maintain control through gesture and eye contact and move around the class enough to give assistance and emend their errors individually.

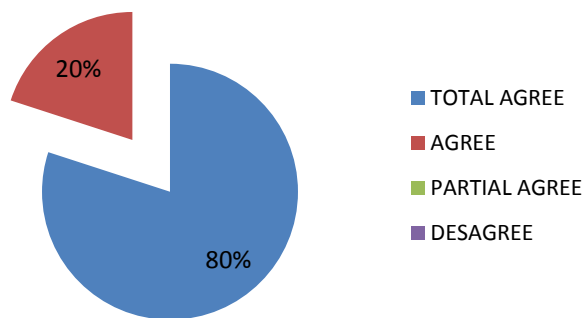
10. To design and apply activities that allow students to put in practice reading skills.



As this graph demonstrates, 60% of teachers agree that small classes enable to put in practice reading skills because in this class size the teacher can take control to students without problems, consequently, learners can speak and hear without difficult; the other 40% total agree in this respect.

I totally agree with teachers' responses because in the course of observation, I could see that while the teacher was reading an interesting topic, students were listening attentively; after that, all students discussed the topic methodically under the teacher's direction who checked individually students pronunciation. To this respect, Gower, Phillips, and walters, (1995) suggest that some activities demand from the teacher to direct what students do; the teacher needs to stand in front of students to see what everyone is doing to maintain control through gestures, eye contact, and move around the classroom to correct individually their errors.

11. *To design and apply activities that allow students to put in practice writing skills.*

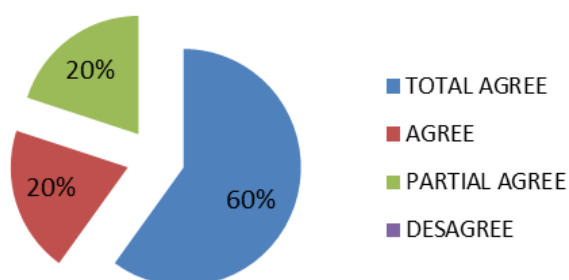


Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed totally agree, and 20% agree that all students have better probabilities to practice writing skills in classes with a small number of students.

In the same way, during class observation the teacher practiced activities by forming two work groups; after, he dictated individual words to the first group to be written on the board; the second group formed sentences with these words which were written on the board. Students finished the job copying all task from the board into their notebooks.

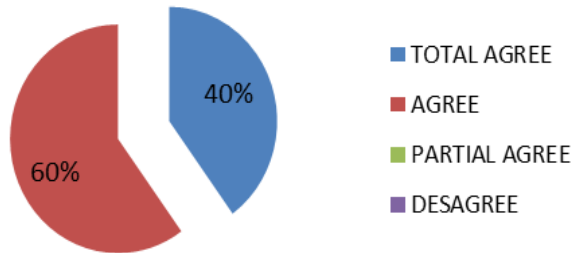
Regarding this class practice, Gower, Phillips, and Walters, (1995) say that some activities demand from the teacher to direct what students do; the teacher needs to stand in front of students to see what everyone is doing to maintain control through gestures, eye contact, and move around the classroom to correct individually their mistakes.

12. Design and apply group work activities



This graph exhibits that 60% of teachers totally agree with this statement whereas, 20% agree in this aspect and the other 20% partially agree. In general, all teachers agree that teaching strategies and resources allow the practice of activities focusing on each lesson. Unfortunately, not all teachers comply with Kumar;s, (2007) advice: practices among teacher -students and vice versa, in groups or in pairs facilitate and enhance knowledge; this is a principle that all teachers should keep in mind. From observation made during a class practice, I could see that all students carried out activities in a collective form; the teacher interacted practicing grammar lessons about verbs, nouns, and adjectives with the whole class simultaneously and all students participated enjoying the lesson but the dialogues were not ordered provoking discipline problems. Consequently, what the teacher expresses in the graph do not totally agree with what I saw during class practice.

13. Design and apply individual activities.

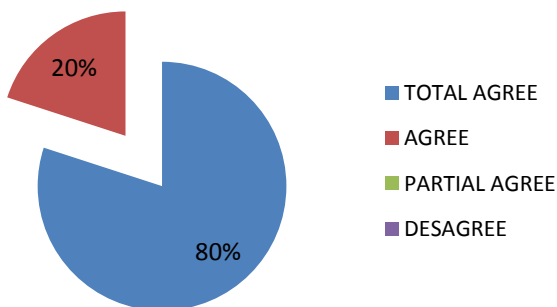


As it can be seen, 40% of teachers totally agree and the other 60% agree about the application of individual activities in small classes.

Regarding observation, I could see the teacher applying individual activities through dictation, writing, and copying. Students were working from their desks, and the teacher gave them individual assistance.

Concerning this topic, Kumar, (2007) suggests: the practices among teacher - students and vice versa, in groups or in pairs, facilitates and enhance knowledge; this is a principle that all teachers should keep in mind.

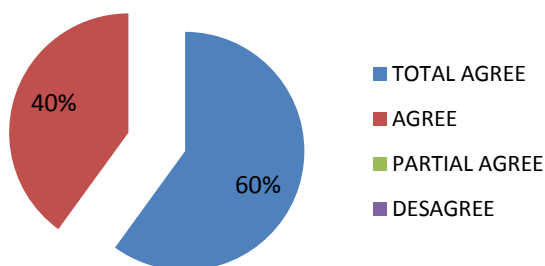
14. To use technology



The overall results from the surveys applied indicate that 80% of teachers totally agree with facilities to use technology successfully in small classes and the other 20% also agree. It means that teachers and students work or practice teaching- learning through the use of technology, which is a tool indispensable to gain successful results in English instruction as Wolffolk & Brooks (1983) recommend. They say that the use of computers is an essential resource for teaching and learning. They also say that some classrooms have several computers, nevertheless, others have only one; in this case, make a schedule to help students to have access to computers and have complete control concerning the time used.

Unfortunately, during class observation, I did not see any kind of technology in the classroom; however, in this class I could also see that the teacher replaced the lack of equipment with individual assistance to students in order to achieve knowledge easily and successfully. The teacher's creativity was satisfactory because they used all their ability in order to enhance student achievement.

15. Use didactic material



For this last item, the graph demonstrates that teachers seem to be pleased with small classes because they allow them to use didactic materials with the whole class. Sixty percent of teachers totally agree and 40% agree in this respect. Then, all teachers agree about using didactic materials effectively in classes with a small number of students.

Continuing with the analysis about the field investigation, during class observation, I could appreciate the use of flash cards and charts with an extensive vocabulary to make sentences with these words; some students enjoyed this practice. (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) remark that materials are necessary for supporting learning approaches. Lack of materials can make it difficult to develop learning activities successfully. Furthermore, Eison, J. (2010) speaks about activities and strategies created for engaging students in “thinking critically or creatively, speaking with a partner in a small group or with the entire class, expressing ideas through writing, exploring personal attitudes and values, giving and receiving feedback, and reflecting upon the learning process.”

So, comparing statistics with the class observed, I totally agree with both results because agree this entirely.

How do students feel about learning English in small classes?

Third part of

Tabla 1.

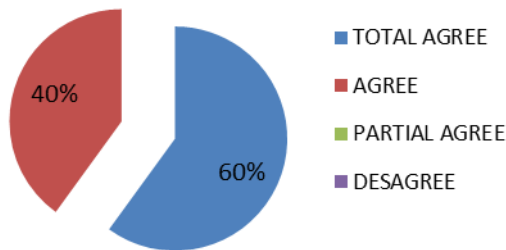
Teachers' perception

C	In classes whit small number of students they feel:	TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		16	Relaxed when they speak in front of their partners.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
17	They are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class.	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
18	They are motivated to participate because of small number of students.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
19	They are at ease because they can healthy compete whit their classmates .	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

16. Relaxed when they speak in front of their partners.



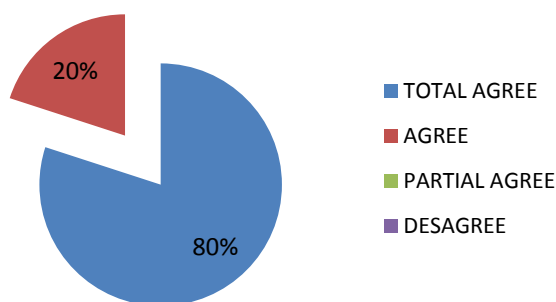
Data in this graph clearly shows that teachers and students feel happy working in small classes because it lets both give and receive psychological and social assistance; in other words, it gives integral guidance to students in order for them to increase their

self-confidence. Sixty percent totally agreed and 40% agreed in this respect.

During class observation, I could see that the teacher started the class speaking about self-confidence, telling anecdotes about it as an important part in our life. After, all students participated speaking in English without worrying about their pronunciation. This positive conduct is acquired when the teacher takes advantage of the class size to give students the assistance they need. To this respect, Hodgkinson (2003) suggests the use of the educational program “Head Start” which takes into account not only academic needs, but recognizes children as people with social, emotional, and psychological needs.

Note: (As this recommendation is linking with items 16, 17, 18, and 19 because the four items involving feelings in classes, I will support these with the same author’s recommendations.)

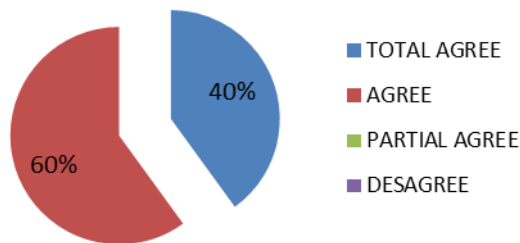
17. They are taken into account by the teacher because they have more opportunities to participate in class.



Regarding item 17, the graph illustrates that 80% of teachers totally agree and 20% agree that in small classes it allows all students to feel important by participating in class, facilitating teaching and learning which leads to a better learner’s outcome. According to what I could see in the course of observation, all students participated

sharing the task assigned by the teacher, speaking in English all time and consulting about what they did not know. This analysis is based on Hodgkinson's (2003) suggestion that says that the practice of the educational program "Head Start" benefits teachers and students because it takes into account not only academic needs, but recognizes children as people with social, emotional, and psychological needs. So, learners feel self-confident to communicate freely.

18. They are motivated to participate because if small number students.

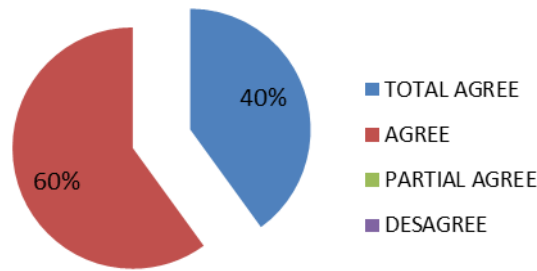


As it can be seen, 60% agree to have a better opportunity to participate in small classes; and the other 40% totally agree in this aspect.

When we compare the item seventeen with item eighteen, both questions are linked.

According to (Burris & Welner, 2005), students learn more when they are invited by the teacher to take part in a debate that has high expectations for them. Moreover, through Head Start Program, children learn to express ideas, feelings, make requests and respond easily; and the student self-esteem and enthusiasm improves when the teacher brings out their experiences in class discussions and he backs up what they have to say.

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



As it can be seen in this graph, 60% of teachers agreed and 40% totally agreed with small classes. During observation, I could see that students enjoyed sharing between teacher and students and among them; the relationship between teacher and students are so closed, consequently, all of them create an excellent environment in and out of class.

Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?

Four part of

Tabla 1

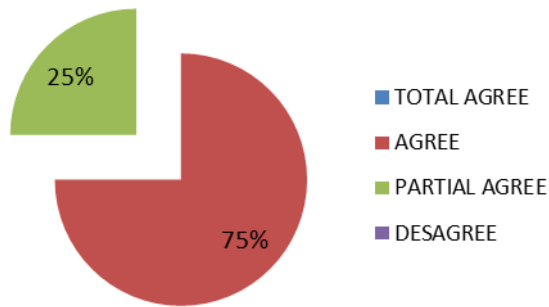
Teachers' perception

D	In class with small number of students:	TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
20	teacher's control.	0	0%	4	75%	1	25%	0	0%	5	100%
21	Isn't easy to practice listening and speaking skills.	0	0%	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	5	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

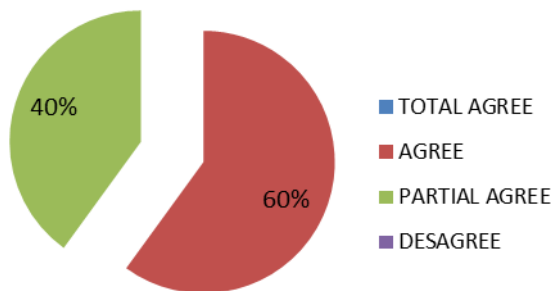
Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

20. *Students feel very anxious due to there is mch more teacher's control.*



Teachers' responses about this item are negative because the 75% agree and the 25% partial agree about the statement; it means that students do not feel comfortable under teacher's control; nevertheless, during class observation students were working, sharing with their partners, and interacting with the teacher totally relaxed. It seems that teachers surveyed answered the inquiry in an unaware form because the connection between teachers and students in and out of the classroom, according to what I saw, was very friendly, students never looked fearful.

21. *Isn't easy to practice listening and speaking skills*



This graph represents teachers' answers about facilities to practicing listening and speaking skills in small classes; 60% of them agree and 40% partially agree in this

aspect. According to statistical results, it is not easy to practice listening and speaking skills in small classes; nevertheless, throughout the course of observation, I could see different behaviors among students. This time, the teacher arranged school furniture in a circle for class; he was at the center reading a book while students listened mindfully. After, the teacher asked learners to do a summary in order to provoke a speaking interaction. Finally, students wrote sentences on the board about the reading and all students participated in a calm manner. Thus, the teacher practiced what the authors Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, and Yamauchi (2000) say “Teaching through conversation is among the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy” in order to enhance student’s learning.”

In Consequence, I do not agree with this statistic figure in the graph above because it contradicts what I could see during observation where most students interacted among themselves using as a basis what they have heard from the teacher during the reading.

In the same way, in table one, students’ perception was investigated through learners participation in order to gain successfully the proposed goal offering a confident and properly documented information concerning English teaching in small classes in Ecuador.

Continuing with this task, I will show how this important segment regarding field investigation was carried out.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

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

Tabla 2

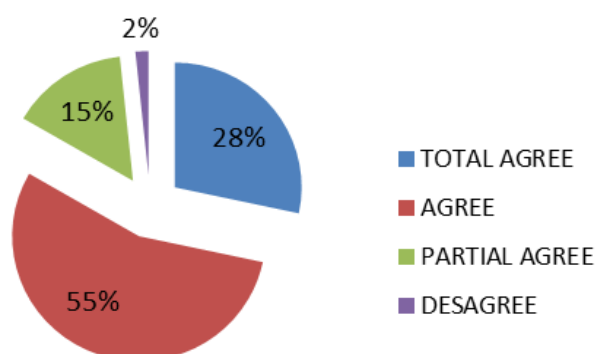
Students' perceptions

In class with small number of students		TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The activities realized allow students to put into practice what they have learned.	17	28%	33	55%	9	15%	1	2%	60	100%
2	Students are attentive to participate in developed activities in small classes.	13	22%	32	53%	12	20%	3	5%	60	100%
3	Students are more concentrate because the noise is lesser.	22	37%	26	43%	12	20%	0	0%	60	100%
4	The classroom space allow students to carry out the activities assigned by the teachers.	21	35%	24	40%	14	23%	1	2%	60	100%
5	The teachers give an adequate feedback.	16	27%	27	45%	16	27%	1	2%	60	100%
6	There is interaction between students.	22	37%	25	42%	12	20%	1	2%	60	100%
7	There is interaction between teacher students.	22	37%	33	55%	5	8%	0	0%	60	100%
8	The teacher remember students' name.	21	35%	26	43%	13	22%	0	0%	60	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

1. Activities realized allow students to put into practice what they have learned.



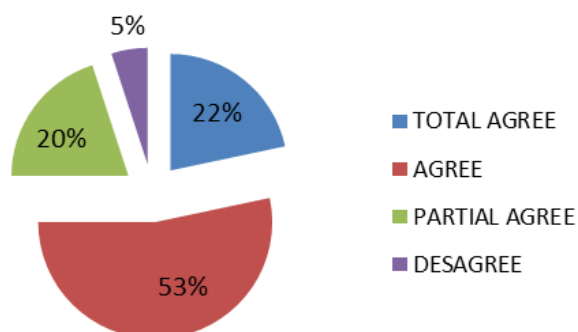
Student's answers about the practice of what they have learned, 55% agree; the other 28% totally agree; and 15% partially agreed, and only 2% disagree about the topic. Most students agree with small classes because it allows them to practice all academic material in order to increase their achievement; further, data reveals also that the teacher can prepare activities to practice in the classroom as Eison, J. (2010) suggests "activities learning concerning instructional strategies can be created and used to engage students in thinking critically or creatively; involve students in what they are thinking about the things they are doing; give and receive feedback; and reflecting upon the learning process". (Bonwell & Eison 1991).

During observation, I saw three types of feedback activities: vocabulary learned earlier; dictation; and writing. This job was carried out under teachers direction using traditional furniture arrangements and without didactic material. Consequently, I disagree with statistics illustrated in the above graph because this does not match with class observation.

About academic support; the majority of statements around small classes are the

same, the academic support will be equal for both groups except item 3.

2. Students are attentive to participate in developed activities in small classes.

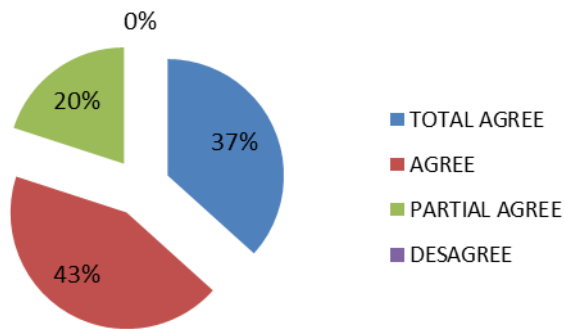


According to students' answers, 53% agree that they are attentive to participate in activities developed in small classes; 22% totally agree that a small number of students increased their interest and motivation in their English study; 20% partially agree, it means that this group of participants are not entirely satisfied with this class size; it indicates that they do not feel comfortable in this type of classroom. However, the majority of students feel favorable with small classes' benefits.

However, what I saw during class observation, all students remained attentive when developing activities assigned by the teacher, such as, interaction between students. It was easy carrying on due to class size, the diversity of students' ages, and the place where they were sitting.

According to the Kaufman and Felder (2000) method: the teacher ought to form groups joining weaker and stronger students in order to reinforce teaching and learning, thus students gain confidence and encourage interacting between them.

3. *Students are more concentrate because the noise is lesser*

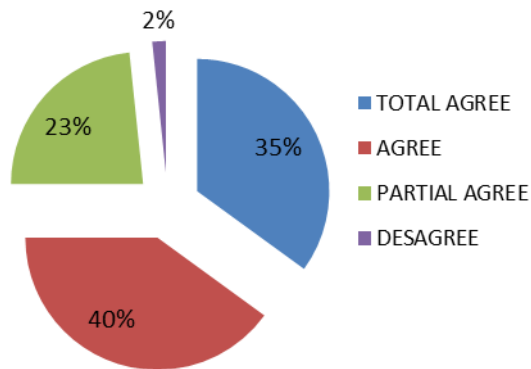


Forty-three percent agreed about better level of mental concentration when the noise in the classroom is less; 37% totally agreed; and 20% partially agree.

According to observations carried out in a class with a small number of students, they concentrate best and the teacher can take control of all learners in an adequate manner. Bronzaft (2011) remarks that the noise in schools can also impede the learning process. She adds that the children exposed to noise complained that it is difficult for them to think and their teachers complained they came home more exhausted after teaching in these noisy classrooms. When something is done to lessen the noise in classrooms, students do better! (Bronzaft 2002)

Regarding statistics and observation, both agree in results, therefore, I can authenticate that students' concentration is better in classes without noise.

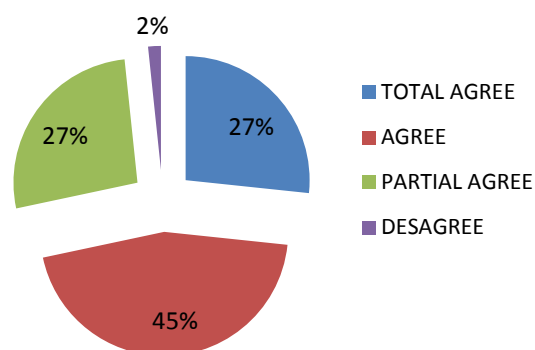
4. The classroom space allows students to carry out the activities assigned by the teacher.



From the graph, we can see that 40% of students agree that small classes allow teachers to take advantage of classroom space for developing adequately the activities assigned; while 35% totally agree; and 23% partially agree; However, during observation, I could see that the school furniture kept a conventional set up during all classes. Woolffolk & Brooks (1983) recommend that the school furniture should be adequate according to each lesson because where students sit in classroom determines their attitude to each other, how they interact, the type of activities that they can do, group collaboration, and the use of materials.

This time the class focused on writing and discuss about activities, but the teacher had difficulty correcting errors due to the seat position of students in class. In consequence, I cannot agree with statistics results showed in the above graph because it and my perception during observation show different results.

5. The teacher gives an adequate feedback



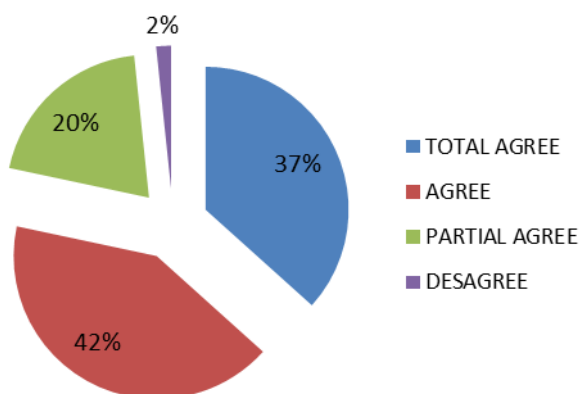
According to student's answers 45% agree that giving feedback to students in small classes is possible; while, 27% totally agree regarding this topic; and 27% partially agree; and just 2% disagree.

Nevertheless, during observation I did not see any type of feedback. The teacher started the class with a new topic and when students asked him about something that they did not know he answered "after". The teacher's attitude toward the student's errors is crucial; students appreciate a kind attitude to correct reflexively and positively their mistakes because emotional factors, such as the attitude to error treatment, are extremely sensitive. It is really important to keep in mind what Scrivener, J. (1994) says; he states that a good teacher needs to take note while he /she monitors pupils for in order to give them adequate feedback subsequently. Do not forget that the feedback is an essential part in each lesson.

As it can be seen, the graph above shows different results from what I saw during observation.

I think that this type of omission is provoked by lack of knowledge, so, it is mandatory for English teachers to update their information and methodology constantly in order to teach responsibly.

6. *There is interaction between students.*

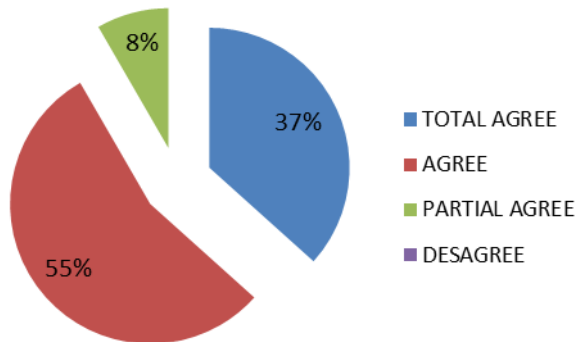


This item shows that 42% of students surveyed agree with facilities to interact between themselves in a class with small number of students; 37% totally agree; it means that these students believe that small classes promote a positive environment in the classroom; 20% partial agree; and only 2% disagree; In short, both teachers and students can benefit from small classes.

Concerning observation, during it I could see all students interacting under the teacher's directions. Many of them enjoyed doing it because the theme was: holiday on the beach between teenagers. Consequently, I agree with statistics.

This investigation is endorsed by *Bowell & Eison (1991)* who point out: in small classes the teacher can help students to concentrate in all that they are thinking and doing. And, *Adler (1987)* adds: one authentic student uses the mind not just the memory.

7. *There is interaction between teacher students*

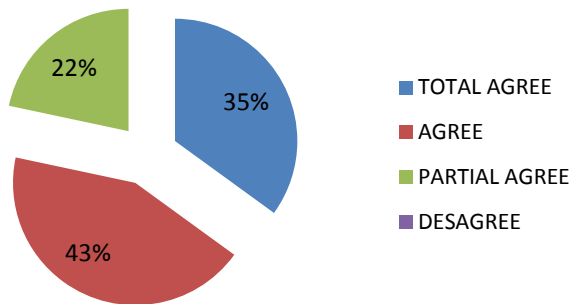


Regarding students' answers about teacher student interaction, 55% agree; 37% totally agree; and 8% partially agree; matching results, the 100% of them agree that small classes the interaction between teacher and students is more effective and more productive.

This time the interaction between teacher and students was carried out through dialogues, questions and answers, as it could be seen during class observation. Furthermore, the teacher was motivating them constantly according to Meng, & Wang, (2011) recommendations; they say that interaction between teacher and students is an effective strategy for teaching English especially initial students learning, in order to get successful results in the learning process.

As teacher and students' behavior and statistics illustrated in the graph above coincides, I totally agree with both outcomes.

8. *The teacher remembers students' names.*



According to what this graph illustrates, 43% of the students surveyed agree; 35% total agreed; and the other 22% partially agree that small classes facilitate teachers to remember their names. In fact, during class observation, the teacher called each student by their name without any problem.

This is another benefit resulting from small classes. In this sense (Anderson 2000; Molnar, Smith, and Zahorik 1999; Wang and Finn 2000) document three aspects: “better knowledge of students; more instructional time and teacher satisfaction; and more individualized pedagogy in the class room”.

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

Second part of

Taabla 2

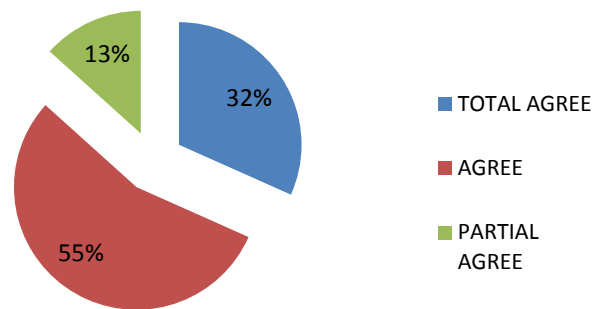
Students' perception

In classes with small number of students is easy:		TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		9	Apply activities that allow to students to put in practice listening skills.	19	32%	33	55%	8	13%	0	0%
10	Apply activities that allow to students to practice speaking skills.	23	38%	28	47%	9	15%	0	0%	60	100%
11	Apply activities that allow to students put in practice lecture skills.	25	42%	25	42%	9	15%	1	2%	60	100%
12	Apply activities that allow to students to put in practice writing skills.	15	25%	35	58%	9	15%	1	2%	60	100%
13	Applying group acativities.	23	38%	28	47%	7	12%	2	3%	60	100%
14	Apply individual acativities.	21	35%	24	40%	12	20%	3	5%	60	100%
15	To put in practice the use of technologic resources.	18	30%	19	32%	18	30%	5	8%	60	100%
16	Didactic materials are used.	26	43%	20	33%	10	17%	4	7%	60	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

9. Applying activities that allow to students to put in practice listening skills.

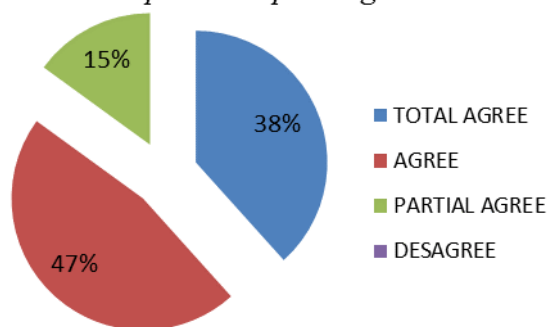


Concerning the practices of listening, students' answers show that 55% agree; 32% totally agree; and 13% partially agree; it means that most students believe that small classes are useful to English students.

As statistics agree with observations, I approve the data because during it, I could see listening practices through reading. The teacher was reading while students were listening attentively; after that, the teacher asked them to make a summary in order to provoke a listening interaction; all students participated in class practicing what Tharp, Estrada, Dalton and Yamauchi (2000) suggest "Teaching through conversation is among the Five Standards for an Effective Pedagogy in order to enhance learning."

Note: Because the items from nine to fifteen are focusing on the same strategies and resources regarding teaching and learning English in small classes, I will endorse these with the same scientific support.

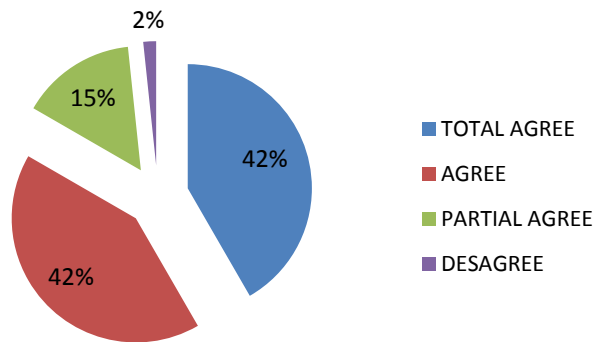
10. Applying activities that allow to students to practice speaking skills.



According to the graph, 47% of students surveyed agree that classes with less number of students make the practice of speaking skills easier; 38% totally agree in this aspect; and 15% partially agree with it.

In the course of observation, the teacher wrote on the board the most relevant information about the statement, after, all students orderly read on the board the summary under the teacher's directions that provoked a lecture among all participants while the teacher corrected their errors of pronunciation as Gower, Phillips, and walters, (1995) remark: Some activities demand that the teacher directs what students do; the teacher needs to stand at front of students to see what everyone is doing," to maintain control through gestures and eye contact; walking around enough to help them and correct errors individually. Small classes facilitate to put in practice speaking skills like statistics and class observation reveals, I agree with both results.

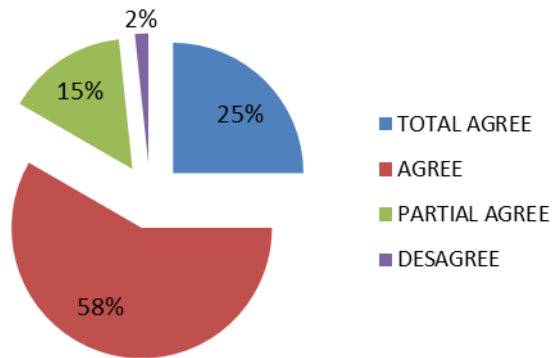
11. Applying activities that allow to students put in practice lecture skills.



According to students answers shown in this graph, small classes allow students to put into practice lecture skills. Forty-two percent totally agree in this aspect; the other 42% agree; means that both groups verify that classes with a small number of students allow practicing speech talents; 15% partially agree, and only 2% disagree in this aspect.

During observation, I saw lecture practices where the teacher formed two work groups with all students; after, the group nominated “A” spoke about the nature and the group “B” made a summary, both groups interchanged ideas about the topic under teacher direction. In consequence, statistics and observation matched outcomes.

12. Applying activities that allow to students to put in practice writing skills.

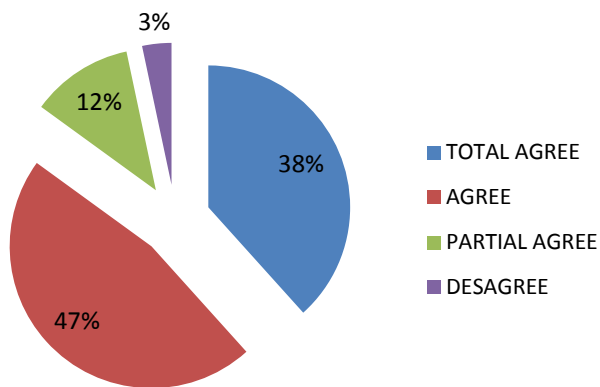


Regarding writing skills, the majority of students inquired, (58%), agreed with the chances to practice writing in small classes; 25% totally agreed in this respect; 15% partially agreed; and only 2% disagreed. According to learners' answers, most of them agreed that small classes let them put into practice writing skills.

In the same way that items nine and ten above were analyzed, during class observation of statement twelve, I saw writing practices, the teacher formed two groups of students; after, he dictated individual words to the first group which were written on the board; the second one formed sentences with it on the board also. Students finished the tasks copying from the board into their notebook always under the teacher's control.

Gower, Phillips, and Walters, (1995) recommendations say that some activities demand that the teacher directs what students do , the teacher needs to stand at front of students to see what everyone is doing," to maintain control through gestures and eye contact; and walk around enough to help them and correct their mistakes individually.

13. Applying group activities.

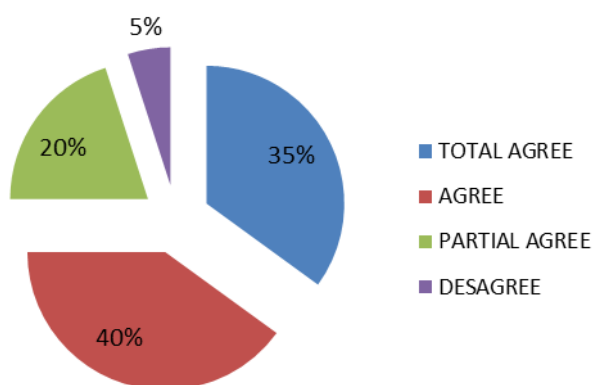


This graph illustrates students' answer concerning group activities. Forty-seven percent agreed; 38% totally agreed; 12% partially agree in this respect, and only 3% disagree in this item.

In the course of observation, I could see all students practicing activities in a collective form. Moreover, the space unfilled in the classroom was not used by the teacher. Even though Kumar, (2007) suggests that practices among teacher -students and vice versa in groups and in pairs facilitate and enhance their knowledge. This is a principle that all teachers should keep in mind.

So, I partially agree with statistics because the teacher does not take advantage of the spaces that the classroom provides, neither formed work groups, nor pairs.

14. Applying individual activities.

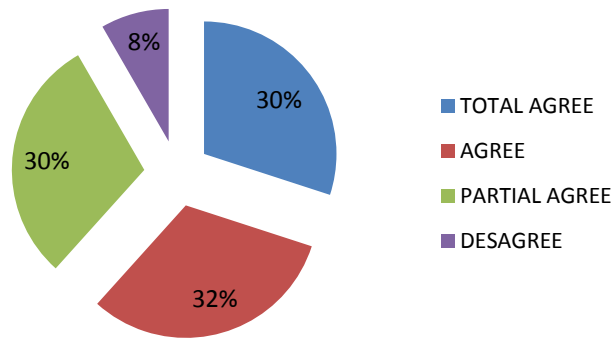


As this graph shows, 40% of students inquired agreed that individual activities are possible to practice in small classes; 35% totally agreed; 20% partially agreed; and only 5% disagreed in this aspect.

During observation, the teacher applies individual activities through dictation, writing, and copying. Students practiced doing it from their desks, and the teacher assisted them individually because a small number of students facilitated doing it. Regarding this topic, Kumar, (2007) tells us: the practices among teacher -students and vice versa, in groups or in pairs increase knowledge. This is a principle that all teachers should keep in mind.

So, I totally agree with students' answers because what I saw throughout class observation coincides with statistics results.

15. To put in practice the use of technologic recourses.

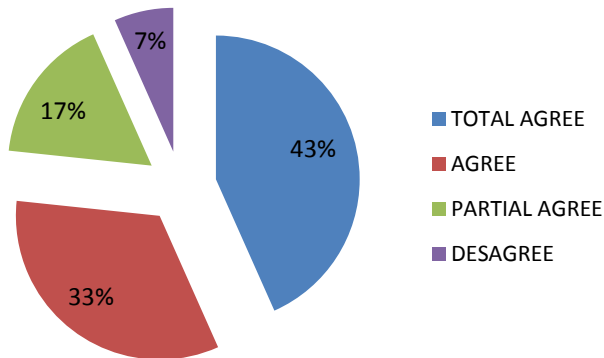


Student's answers' regarding the use of technologic resources illustrated in this graph are really disconcerting because during observation, I did not see any type of technology in the classroom, tools indispensable in order to get successful results for teaching – learning English specifically. Nevertheless, the graph reveals that 32 % of the students agreed; 30% totally agreed; the other 30% partially agreed; and only 8% disagree about the subject. I believe that the majority of learners answered this question without thinking in what they were writing or maybe, they were thinking in the aid that the teacher gives due small classes' benefits. Because during observation I could see that the teacher applied strategies and resources providing individual feedback and special advising according to students' needs. Consequently, I partially agree with data in the above graph illustrated.

Regarding technology, Wolffolk & Brooks (1983) tell us that the use of computers is an essential resource for teaching English. Some classes have many computers, but others have only one. When a class has only one, make a schedule and

arrange students around the computer, this will help all students to have computer access and the teacher to have complete control of over time.

16. Didactic materials are used.



Regarding didactic materials' use, students surveyed reveal that 43% totally agree that small classes allow the development of activities using didactic materials; 33% agree; 17% partially agree and only 7% disagree in this aspect.

During class observation, I could appreciate the use of didactic materials, such as, flash cards and charts. Some students enjoyed practicing vocabulary and reading due to a small number of them that allowed to share didactic materials with all their partners.

Consequently, I agree with statistics illustrated in the above graph because both results match. As academic support,(Chickering & Gamson, 1987) state: didactic materials are necessary for supporting learning approaches, the lack of these can be an obstacle for developing learning activities successfully.

How do students feel about learning English in small classes?

Third part of

Tabla 2

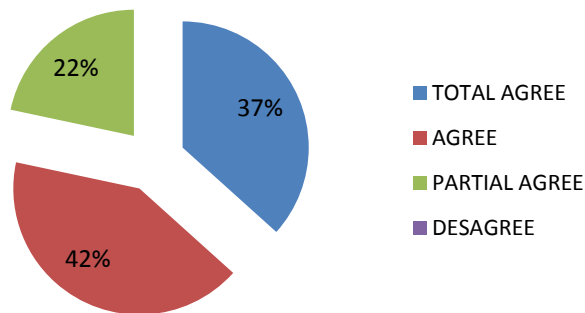
Students' perception

C		TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL			
		In classes whit small number of students they feel:		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
17	I am relaxed when speaking in front of my classmates.	22	37%	25	42%	13	22%	0	0%	60	100%		
18	I am taken into account by the teacher because I have more opportunities to participate in class.	19	32%	27	45%	14	23%	0	0%	60	100%		
19	I am motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates.	21	35%	27	45%	10	17%	2	3%	60	100%		
20	I am at ease because I can healthy compete with the classmates.	23	38%	24	40%	11	18%	2	3%	60	100%		

Author: Marlene Maldonado

Source: Howard and Practice English Institute

17. I am relaxed when speaking in front of my classmates.

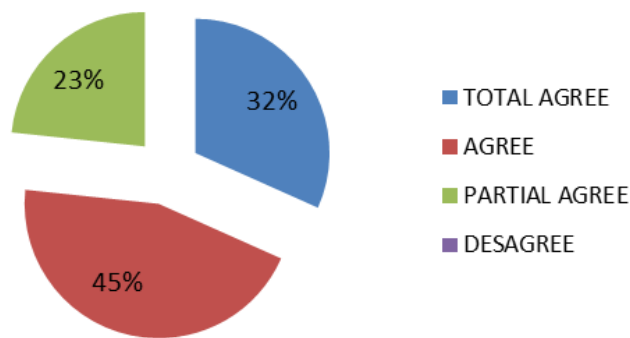


This graph shows that 42% of students inquired agree with small classes; 37% total agree; and 22% partial agree, because it allows the teacher to give students an integral guidance for increasing their self-confidence that is reflected in students' behavior. For example, as I could see during class observation, students spoke in front of their classmates without problems and all of them interacted speaking in English without worry about their pronunciation. This class started giving students psychological and emotional assistance.

Regarding this aspect, Hodgkinson (2003) advises the use of the educational program "Head Start" which takes account not only the academic needs, but recognizes children as whole people with social, emotional, and psychological needs into the family context.

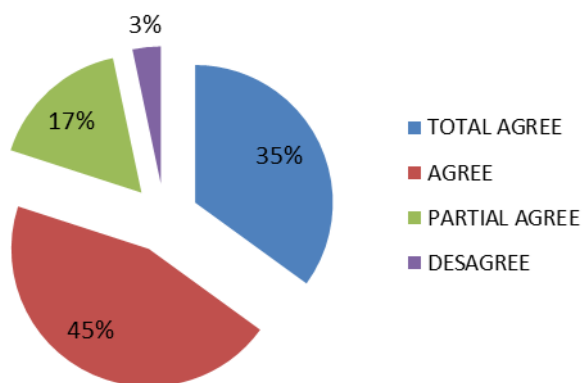
Note: As this recommendation is linked with items 17, 18, 19, and 20 due to the four items involving feelings in classes, the academic support will be the same for these last four subjects.

18. Important because they have more opportunities to participate in class.



According to what the graph exhibits, 45% of students agree with having more opportunities to participate when the class is small; 32% totally agree, and 23% partially agree in this aspect. In conclusion, 100% of students agree because they feel successful sharing with all classmates as it could be seen during class observation where all students participated and with the teacher speaking in English all the time and asking the teacher about what they did not understand. So, I can approve that data illustrated above is real.

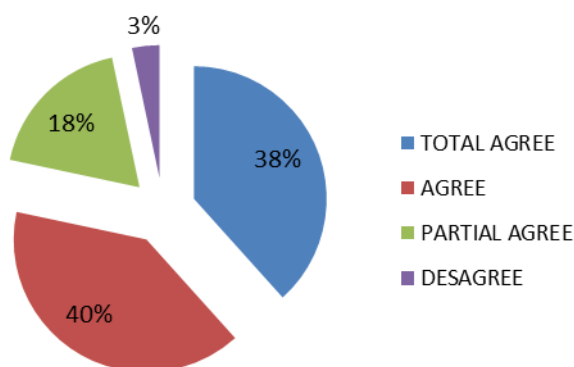
19. I am motivated to participate because of the small number of classmates.



In this statement, the graph shows that 45% of students inquired agree to have a better opportunity to participate, increasing their self-confidence; 35% totally agree; and 17% partially agree about it; and only 3% disagree.

Regarding class observation, all students were so happy interacting among themselves, writing single words and forming sentences in present, past, and future under the teacher's directions. So, it can be seen that small classes let students practice academic matter as observed during a grammar lesson.

20. I am ease because I can healthy compete with the classmates.



This block finishes with item 20 which refers to how students feel working in small classes; as the graph presents, 40% agree; 38% totally agree; 18% partially agree about this topic, and only 3% disagree.

In general, through all classes observed, I could see happy students enjoying English classes because the small number of students allowed both teacher and students to put into practice all strategies and techniques needed in order to achieve successfully the proposed goal according to Hodgkinson (2003). He says that the educational program "Head Start" takes into account not only the academic needs but recognizes

children as whole people with social, emotional, and psychological needs. So, I agree with the statistic results concerning this topic.

Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?

Fourth part of

Tabla 2

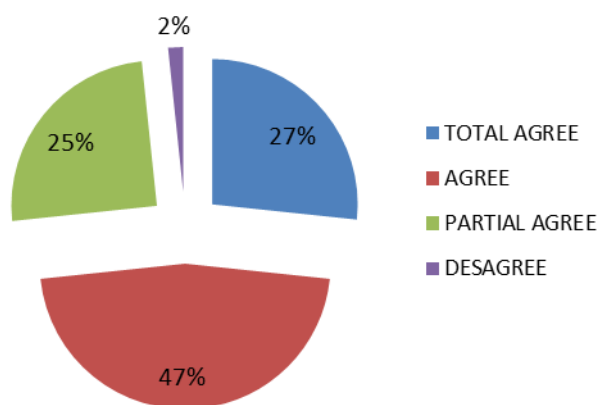
Students' perception

In classes with small number of students		TOTAL AGREE		AGREE		PARTIAL AGREE		DESAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
21	There is anxiety among students because there is more control on the part of the teacher.	16	27%	28	47%	15	25%	1	2%	60	100%
22	Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.	7	12%	24	40%	25	42%	4	7%	60	100%

Author: Marlene Maldonado

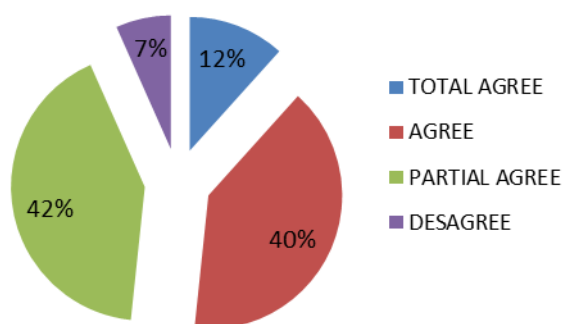
Source: Howard and Practice English Institutes

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



This statement refers to students feelings regarding teachers' control. According to students' answers, 47% agree; 27% totally agree; 25% partially agree about students' emotional state under excessive teacher control; and just 2% disagree about it. Nevertheless, during class observation, students seem to be relaxed, self-confident, and collaborative. In general, students' behavior contrasted with the statistics in the graph above; so, I disagree with data manifested by students because there is not coherence between it and the observation results.

22. *Listening and speaking skills are more difficult to develop.*



About listening and speaking practice in small classes, 42% of the students inquired partially agree with this statement; 40% agree with it, 12% totally agree in this respect; and only 7% disagree.

According to what the graphic illustrates, the majority of students surveyed prove that in small classes it is not easy to practice listening and speaking skills and only 7% responded the contrary. Nevertheless, throughout observation, I could see different student behaviors. For example, the teacher arranged the school furniture in circle for this class; he was standing at the center reading a book while students were listening mindfully. After, the teacher asked learners to do a summary in order to

provoke speaking interaction. Finally, students wrote on the board sentences concerning the reading and all students participated in a calm manner. Thus, the teacher practiced what the authors Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, and Yamauchi (2000) advocate: Teaching through conversation “is among the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy” in order to enhance students’ learning. In Consequence, I do not agree with statistic figures.

Conclusiones

- Results of the research clearly demonstrate that small classes benefit the teaching process and improve student's achievement.
- Researchers have found that small classes allow students to develop activities in-class successfully and for the teacher to give appropriate assistance.
- Furthermore, in small classes the teacher has enough time to carry out activities to reinforce students learning as the class goes on.
- Small classes allow students to practice what they have learned.
- Small number of students allow teachers to give an integral education covering social, emotional and physical needs because the teacher does not need to work in a rush.
- In small classes the lack of technology can be replaced by strategies and individual aid from the teacher like writing on the board sentences and discerning about it, taking into account all students' intervention.

Recommendations

- The teacher should take advantage of small classes and give an appropriate assistance to their students.
- As in small classes, the time is not a difficulty; it is advisable for the teacher to carry out activities to interact with students during the class, because it increases learner's confidence.
- The teacher should give feedback to students according to their needs in order to reinforce knowledge.
- It is recommended that teachers give students emotional and psychological assistance to complement integral education.
- In order to improve future investigations, I suggest addressing research with a larger sample which might involve more schools and participants; furthermore, small classes' results should be compared with the ones found in large classes.
- I think that a good English teacher should modernize their knowledge constantly because the lack of information provokes several errors.

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